



Research Report

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Abstract

This study focusses on the negative form of brand perception and the drivers that motivate such feelings in consumers.

A 2009 study by Lee, Motion, & Conroy identified the three main motives for a consumer to avoid a brand, namely experiential avoidance (when there is an incongruence between a consumer's expectations and the actual brand experience), identity avoidance (when there is a discrepancy between the consumer's personal identity and the image portrayed by the brand) and moral avoidance (when there is an incongruence between the consumer's moral beliefs and the values portrayed by the brand). The findings of that study have been used to develop a conceptual framework that helps to clarify why consumers avoid some brands.

This research paper tests the findings of Lee *et al.* (2009) against a South African test group to measure whether these same brand avoidance motives are applicable to a local audience, as well as dealing with the implications of such findings.

Declaration:

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the IIE BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communication degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes

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Drivers of Negative Brand Perception in Gauteng

1. Introduction

1.1 Contextualisation

Research in the areas of branding and marketing has historically focussed on the positive relationships that consumers have with brands, as well as the practical implications and benefits of those relationships. This is completely natural, as many studies have confirmed the idea that consumers use brands to express themselves and establish their identities (Aaker, 1999). Consumers who love brands are particularly important for companies, as they become loyal customers who spread positive word of mouth and defend the brand from negative publicity (Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi, 2012). Investing time and money in research projects in order to gain a deeper understanding of existing customers is thus a sensible move for any brand to make, as it will keep loyal customers happy and maintain the flow of revenue. This might be all good and well, but what about all the consumers that do not like a company or a brand? Could one, by better understanding those who do not love or even like a brand, be able to connect with them and foster a relationship in order to gain a new target audience and thereby increase market share?

This topic of negative brand perception, or “brand hate”, as it has been increasingly referred to by scholars, has only recently seen an influx of interest from academic institutions, which is rather surprising, as research has shown for years that positive information is not weighed as heavily as negative information by most people (Kanouse, 1984) and that knowing what consumers do not want is equally as important as knowing what they actually do want (Banister and Hogg, 2004). Recent literature and studies that are relevant to this topic include Lee, Motion, & Conroy (2009), which identified three main motives that drive consumers to avoid certain brands, namely experiential avoidance, identity avoidance and moral avoidance. Van Delzen (2014), Hegner, Fetscherin, and Van Delzen (2017) and Fetscherin (2019) all build on this existing study by identifying the motives and behaviours of brand hate, presenting a taxonomy of main determinants and outcomes of brand hate, and recommending strategies for dealing with such outcomes. Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, and Bagozzi

(2016) offer a first conceptualisation of the phenomenon of brand hate and develop a valid scale for measuring that hate.

As these studies show, failure to maintain positive relationships with consumers can potentially have seriously detrimental consequences for brands – consumers are much more likely to share negative experiences than positive ones, and with the advent of the internet and social media, negative word of mouth can spread like wildfire, crashing share value and prompting boycotts from consumers all over the world. Studies in this field are particularly lacking in South Africa and further research is urgently needed in order for brands to avoid these negative effects. The research question of this paper will thus read as follows: ‘What are the motives that drive South African consumers in Gauteng between the ages of 18 and 30 to have negative brand perceptions of certain brands?’ By being able to identify and gain a better understanding of the motives that drive this particular group to dislike or hate certain brands, the researcher is able to identify the managerial implications of these consumer reactions and thereby suggest methods of avoiding and minimising the damage caused by it.

Following this introduction will be the rationale of the study, containing the problem and purpose statements, as well as the research question and hypothesis. Secondly is the literature review, which includes the theoretical foundation of this study, as well as the previous literature reviewed by the researcher, and the conceptualisation, in which the key terms, concepts and variables are conceptualised based on authoritative sources. The study’s research design and methodology then follow, which includes the research paradigm. Section four reviews the study’s population and sampling techniques, followed by the data-collection and analysis sections. The findings and interpretations are discussed in section seven and the conclusion follows in section eight, including the study’s anticipated contribution, ethical considerations and limitations, followed by a list of sources and the annexures to the document.

1.2 Rationale

This study will thus focus on the concept of negative brand perception (or brand hate) for 3 main reasons: firstly, despite many studies on the effects of positive brand perception and brand love, there is currently a shortage of studies focussing on this negative brand perception. There is thus a serious call for academics and researchers

to explore the negative aspects of the brand-consumer relationship in order to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of this symbiotic exchange. Secondly, previous studies have shown that negative brand perception and brand hate can have a serious negative impact on the public perception of brands, often causing lasting damage to a brand's reputation, customer loyalty and of course, revenue (Kucuk, 2015). Further studies are therefore needed in order to avoid, or at least mitigate, such pitfalls for current and future brands. Lastly, the majority of studies that have indeed been conducted on this topic have happened in Europe and Asia and there is currently a major lack of understanding of negative brand perception in a South African context. South Africa is a unique nation with an extremely wide variety of different demographics who do not all share the same tastes and values, and the findings of European and Australian studies may not directly translate into the South African market. Further studies focussing specifically on South African consumers are thus of paramount importance. In order to narrow down the population for this paper and as the researcher is a student domiciled in Pretoria, this study will zero in on consumers between the ages of 18 and 30 in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

Problem Statement: Young people between the ages of 18 and 30 are amongst the most opinionated and outspoken of all age groups in South Africa and are therefore much more susceptible to brand hate. Understanding the motives behind their brand hate is essential in order to navigate and avoid its negative effects.

Purpose Statement: The purpose of this quantitative study is to describe the motives that drive young South Africans in Gauteng consumers to hate certain brands in order to better anticipate and avoid such hate and any subsequent negative impact on brand image.

Research Question: What are the motives that drive South African consumers in Gauteng between the ages of 18 and 30 to have negative brand perceptions of certain brands?

Hypothesis: Based on existing research, there will be several factors that that motivate brand hate in South Africans between the ages of 18 and 30, such as previous bad experiences with a brand or general incongruence with and individual's sense of identity or morality.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualisation

This first section of the literature review will proceed to conceptualise the key terms, concepts and variables that are relevant to the research and based on referenced, authoritative sources.

Brand avoidance: “a phenomenon whereby consumers deliberately choose to keep away from or reject a brand.” as defined by Lee, Motion, & Conroy (2009). Further described by Grégoire, Tripp, and Legoux (2009) as “customers’ need to withdraw themselves from any interactions with firms”.

Brand hate: described by Lee, Motion, & Conroy (2009) as a more intense emotional response by consumers towards brands than mere dislike, supported by psychology literature of Steinberg (2003), who suggested that “interpersonal hate is not only a more intense form of interpersonal disliking but also an empirically and conceptually distinct construct.” Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009) view brand hate as a desire for revenge or a desire for complete avoidance, describing revenge as “customers’ need to punish and cause harm to firms for the damages they have caused” and avoidance as “customers’ need to withdraw themselves from any interactions with the firm.” Brand hate therefore has an active, confrontational side, as well as a passive, non-confrontational side, according to Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009). Other literature describes brand hate as a strong opposition to a brand, often represented in the form of revenge arising from critical incidents (Johnson, Matear and Thomson, 2011), as well as “an intense negative emotional affect toward the brand” originating from four potential antecedents, namely the brand’s country of origin country-of-origin, dissatisfaction that the customer has with the product, negative stereotypes of brand users and the brand’s corporate social performance (Bryson, Atwal and Hultén, 2013).

Negative brand experience: negative experiences that consumers have with brands, relating to faults in the product or service of the brand (Hegner, Fetscherin, and Van Delzen, 2017). Consumers’ most basic expectations are adequate product and service performance (Lee, Motion, & Conroy 2009). When consumers purchase a product or service, they subconsciously compare their expectations with the actual performance of the brand, leading to expectations either being met or not. Confirmation of the

expectations naturally usually leads to satisfaction in the consumer and disconfirmation leads to dissatisfaction (Oliver, 1980).

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

This second section of the literature review discusses the theoretical foundation of the research and how it connects to the research problem. The main theories identified to be discussed are non-choice vs anti-choice and brand-avoidance motives.

Non-choice vs anti-choice

This theory was developed by Hogg (1998), in which it is described how the decision not to make a purchase can be caused by one of two aspects of negative decision making: non-choice or anti-choice. The non-choice aspect centres on three distinct situations, all of which the consumer cannot influence: affordability, accessibility, and availability. The anti-choice aspect, in contrast, refers to three situations in which the consumer has to make a specific choice, i.e., has an influence over: abandonment, avoidance, and aversion. The focal point of this research paper is the latter of the aspects – anti-choice – where the consumer has the ability and opportunity to make a purchase, but explicitly chooses not to.

Brand-avoidance motives

A qualitative study by Lee, Motion, & Conroy (2009) identified the three main motives for a consumer to avoid a brand: experiential avoidance, identity avoidance and moral avoidance.

The first, experiential avoidance, has to do with unmet expectations. This occurs when there is a discrepancy between the personal expectations that a consumer has of a brand and their actual experience with the brand. According to the study, when consumers' brand consumption experiences are disconfirmed, it leads to dissatisfaction and general future avoidance of that brand. The study also found that unmet expectations are not only in relation to inadequate quality of products, but also to the standard of service received as well as the general environment, culture and atmosphere that the company or brand portrays.

The second motive for brand avoidance is identity avoidance – when a brand's image and the consumer's individual identity are not compatible. This form of avoidance, also known as symbolic incongruence, found that consumers will explicitly avoid a brand in

order to avoid being associated with what they perceive to be negative brand traits or meanings. Consumers place a high value on their personal image and how they are perceived by others, and they will accordingly go to extreme lengths to avoid anything, including brands, that they believe to be inauthentic or will in any way negatively impact their identity as an individual. This includes brands that they believe to be over-saturated due to popularity or over-commercialisation, as well as brands that they will avoid due to negative connotations or inauthentic behaviour exhibited by its typical (or stereotypical) user. The study suggests that the over-consumption or popularisation of brands may in fact undermine individuality in its consumers, as a brand's ability to create a unique self-identity decreases when it is consumed by more people. Many popular and mainstream brands fall under this category, especially in the fashion industry.

The third and last motive for a consumer to avoid a brand is moral avoidance – when consumers' personal ideological beliefs do not match the values portrayed by a brand, also known as ideological incompatibility. In the context of brand-avoidance, a person's ideology refers to the system of ideas and rules that they live their life by, and particularly to their political and socio-economic views. According to the study, the key elements of moral avoidance include the resistance of oppressive/dominating forces (anti-hegemony), a societal concern that goes further than the needs of the individual, and the belief that it is a consumer's personal, moral duty to avoid certain immoral brands. Consumers might thus avoid brands that they believe to be unacceptably exploiting the free market, such as underpaying workers or not adhering to environmental rules and regulations. Political ideology and anti-war sentiment can certainly also influence a consumer's decision to avoid certain brands, as we have seen in plenty of examples in the United States and more currently in Russia and Ukraine. A phenomenon called “financial patriotism” was also observed to be part of moral avoidance, as consumers across the world have been noted to prefer brands that come from their own country and avoid those that do not. Consumers were observed to be harbouring a patriotic connection to local, community-based brands, as they believe that buying local is a form of resisting global homogenization, preserving culture, and making sure that the financial profits of their purchases will be recycled back into their own economy.

These three main motives for brand avoidance are of course not mutually exclusive and we will often see overlapping between two or even all three of the motives. The aim of this research study is aim is to measure if, and to what extent, these motives are applicable to South African consumers, specifically for consumers between the ages of 18 and 30 who are residing in Gauteng.

2.3 Previous Literature

The third and final section of the literature review is thematic review of relevant studies, research and other literature, aiming to provide a sufficient empirical base for this research study. The researcher pulls from a broad range of literature including business, marketing and psychology journals. The main themes identified are negative brand perception/brand hate, brand avoidance/anti-consumption, and finally the managerial implications of negative brand perception and strategies on managing brand hate.

Negative Brand Perception/Brand Hate

The base of this research, and therefore much of the literature that the researcher has reviewed, has to do with the negative perceptions that consumers have of certain brands, which even extends into the extreme area of brand hate, on which much of the current literature and studies are focussed. The majority of literature in the field of brand-consumer relationships centre on the positive perception of brands and its outcomes (customer loyalty, brand love), as it has long since been confirmed that consumers express themselves and form their identities through the brands that they use (Aaker, 1999). Recent studies have, however, been much more focussed on the detrimental effects of negative brand perception from consumers.

According to Harrington (2004), hate as an emotion has been studied by many different disciplines, including psychology, social psychology and marketing. Harrington (2004) describes hate a psychological context as “an attitude or disposition that includes intense feelings of dislike, animosity, hostility, and aversion toward a person, group, or object”. Johnson, Matear and Thomson (2011) conceptualize hate as a ‘strong opposition to brands’ in a marketing context.

Negative perception and hate in the context of branding is where most literature is to be found, and also where the focus of this research study lies. Van Delzen (2014)

builds on Lee, Motion, and Conroy's (2009) model of the three types of brand avoidance in order to identify the motives and behaviours of brand hate. Van Delzen uses customer surveys to provide evidence to support the model and prove that negative brand experiences can lead to negative word-of-mouth, brand rejection, and even go as far as to lead consumers to seek revenge against the brand. The study also investigates the outcomes of negative brand perception as well as possible prevention methods.

Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, and Bagozzi (2016) aim their study at the nature of brand hate, its antecedents, and its outcomes. Their study provides three incremental contributions to existing research, namely offering a first conceptualisation of the phenomenon of brand hate and developing a valid scale for measuring hate, relating their conceptualisation and measurement to the behavioural outcomes of consumers and relating brand hate and its outcomes to the antecedents of this emotion (hate) to show to what extent they differ depending on the reasons why consumers hate brands.

Hegner, Fetscherin, and Van Delzen (2017) also explore and examine the concept of brand hate by presenting a taxonomy of the main determinants and outcomes of brand hate and then empirically assessing that model. They also build on the qualitative Lee, Motion, and Conroy (2009) model to show that brand hate is triggered by three determinants, namely product-related, consumer-related and contextual-related, and leads to three behavioural outcomes, namely brand avoidance, negative word-of-mouth and brand retaliation.

Fetscherin (2019) further builds on existing research by assessing to which extent brand hate is a multi-dimensional construct by using Sternberg's (2003) duplex theory of hate. The authors confirm Sternberg's theory of interpersonal hate relationships as it connects to brand relationships and then proceed to empirically prove that brand hate is indeed a multi-dimensional construct made up of three seminal emotions: disgust, anger and contempt. Based on this research, the authors then illustrate that, depending on specific combinations of the three emotions mentioned, there are currently five types of brand hate in existence, namely brand switching, private and public complaining, brand retaliation, and willingness to make financial sacrifices to hurt the brand. The study concludes by noting the management implications of brand hate, as well as recommending two main strategies for dealing with brand hate.

Brand avoidance and anti-consumption

This research study further reviews literature in the over-arching theme of brand avoidance, as brand avoidance is the ultimate outcome of negative brand perception and brand hate. Iyer & Muncy (2009) and Portwood-Stacer (2012) explain anti-consumption as a consumer movement that aims to avoid certain brands that are not aligned with the consumer's views or values. These movements can be motivated by many things such as social issues, personal convictions or even political or religious reasons. Lee, Motion, and Conroy (2009) view brand avoidance as a form of anti-consumption and they define it as 'the incidents in which consumers deliberately choose to reject a brand'. As a seminal source to this study, this journal attempts to better understand why people avoid certain brands, even though they can financially afford it. By using qualitative data, the authors develop a conceptual framework as to the reasons why consumers avoid certain brands, namely the theory of three types of brand avoidance: experiential, identity and moral brand avoidance. This theory, as is explained in more detail above, forms part of the foundation of this study, as it is tested against South African consumers in order to determine whether these factors also play a role in South African brand avoidance.

Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009) explore the connection between brand avoidance and customer revenge, as well as their effects over time, finding that although a customer's need for revenge after a negative brand experience subsides over time, brand avoidance by consumers will become stronger over time. Additionally, the literature also argues that brand avoidance is non-confrontational and even a passive type of behaviour. Bryson, Atwal and Hultén (2013) state that brand avoidance is a behavioural response to brand hate and suggest that brand managers should try to prevent brand hate from ever occurring, as its long-term adverse consequences are difficult to eliminate. The connection between brand avoidance and brand hate is further established by Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, and Bagozzi (2016).

Managerial Implications

Some of the studies and research conclude with the managerial implications of negative brand perception and brand hate, as well as by suggesting possible strategies for brands to avoid such pitfalls. Lee, Motion, and Conroy (2009) provide insights to help marketing strategists and managers prevent and avoid brand hate by identifying four themes that play a role in the prevention of brand avoidance, namely

the influence of other people on the consumer, a lack of suitable alternatives to the brand, the absence of inertia (cost of switching) and the level of involvement that the consumer has with the brand.

Hegner, Fetscherin, and Van Delzen (2017) recommend three strategies of dealing with brand haters. First, they suggest that companies keep a tight record of consumer interactions with front line employees, the customer service department, and the brand's social media. They state that having such tracking systems installed is the first step to effectively managing consumer-brand relationships and taking the necessary action to avoid negative brand experiences. Second, the study highlights the fact that the behavioural outcomes of brand hate are not all triggered for the same reasons and can therefore not all be handled in the same way. Importantly, they note that only the first motive of brand hate, experiential avoidance, deals with existing customers and that the other two motives, identity and moral avoidance, affect both customers and non-customers. Third, because the last two motives are more difficult to measure and manage, the study provides scales to measure symbolic incongruity and ideological incompatibility.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Paradigm

Dominant research tradition: as this research includes conducting a quantitative study, the dominant research tradition of this paper is naturally positivism. The research included gathering factual knowledge from data collection (surveys/questionnaires) and interpreting that data. This data collection and analysis took place in a scientific and objective manner, based on the model designed by Lee, Motion, & Conroy (2009), and positivism is therefore the obvious choice of paradigm. Positivism can be described as the approach of the natural sciences, often applied when studying phenomena, including social phenomena (Bezuidenhout, Davis and du Plooy-Cilliers, 2013).

Epistemology: epistemology is the belief and scope of knowledge, or what is regarded as valid knowledge by students of a paradigm. Positivists support a clear separation between science and non-science gather knowledge and believe that the observation of objective, empirical evidence and that knowledge gained in this fashion is the only

truth. Knowledge is gained by testing hypotheses against the real world and by carefully observing and documenting the results, thereby confirming or rejecting such hypotheses. The scientific method and hard facts and numbers are integral to positivism, which thereby forms an intrinsic part of any quantitative study. The aim of positivist research is to discover causal relationships so that similar future events may be predicted and controlled.

Ontology: positivism supports the notion of universalism, or the fact that only one true reality exists. This reality is a single, objective, and stable physical and social external reality that is ruled and governed by certain laws (Bezuidenhout, Davis and du Plooy-Cilliers, 2013). Followers of this school of thought believe that reality can be observed, measured and quantified so that predictions about similar future events can be made. Cause and effect are important concepts to a positivist, who believes that that human nature and behaviour can also be predicted by using these same techniques.

Axiology: positivism has a strong objectivist axiology that is intrinsically woven into the fibre of the paradigm. Followers of this school of thought believe in objectivity above all else and value-free research that is uninfluenced by any personal bias. Honesty and personal integrity are core values of positivism, implemented with the goal of conducting trustworthy research that accurately and objectively reflects reality. Data and findings therefore need to be represented and interpreted as accurately as possible in order to effectively represent the true nature of reality.

3.2 Design

As this research paper aims to test existing theories, the researcher's approach is deductive instead of inductive. The main theory to be tested was the established brand avoidance motives developed by Lee, Motion, & Conroy (2009), namely experiential avoidance, identity avoidance and moral avoidance. The aim of the deductive research was to test these drivers of negative brand perception against a South African target market in order to measure if, and to what extent, these motives are applicable to South African consumers between the ages of 18 and 30 who are domiciled in the Gauteng province. The limitations of a deductive approach to research include the fact that the conclusions of such an approach can only be confirmed if all the premises set in the inductive study are true and the terms are clear and unambiguous. The

downside of this method is that any conclusions drawn based on an inductive method can never be proven, but it can always be invalidated.

The study also took on an explanatory character, working to expand upon and explain the exploratory research done by earlier scholars such as Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, and Bagozzi (2016), Lee, Motion, & Conroy (2009) and Hegner, Fetscherin, and Van Delzen (2017), amongst others. Explanatory research, often also referred to as the “cause and effect” model, aims to investigate patterns and trends in existing data and is most often used to inquire into how or why certain phenomena take place, in this instance focussing on how and why specific drivers cause consumers to dislike or hate certain brands.

A cross-sectional approach was also taken by the researcher, whereby data was collected from many individuals at a single point in time, observing variables without influencing them in any way. A cross-sectional approach essentially takes a snapshot of the target population at a given point in time. Although a longitudinal approach, whereby data is repeatedly collected from the same subjects over time would be ideal for this type of research, as it would allow for a more complete comprehension of the drivers of negative brand perception in the target population, the cross-sectional approach was used as it is less expensive and time-consuming.

4. Population and Sampling

4.1 Population

The population of this study, defined as the set of elements (persons or objects) that possess certain characteristics stipulated by the sampling criteria established by this researcher, is composed of two groups – the target population and the accessible population. The target population must meet the following criteria:

- South African nationality.
- Residing in Gauteng.
- Between the ages of 18 and 30.
- Preferably working or studying.
- No preferred race, gender or religion.
- No specific education or specific skills required.

- Must hate/actively dislike a specific brand.

Although the research would preferably have been done on a larger scale to include all adult South Africans, the population needed to be narrowed down for convenience, time and budget purposes in order to make the study more feasible. It is for this reason that the accessible population only includes people from the Gauteng province of South Africa who are between the ages of 18 and 30. Due to the selected population being extremely large and demographically diverse, the accessible population was also limited to people who the researcher was able to contact via the chosen sampling methods of the study, thereby making the accessible population significantly smaller than the target population.

4.2 Sampling

The sampling method of this study, or the process of selecting the group of people, behaviours, or other elements with which to conduct the study, is non-probability sampling, making use of a mixture of convenience, purposive, voluntary response, and snowball sampling. This sampling method was chosen due to its ease of access and relative inexpensiveness. The participants were thus selected in a non-random fashion, with the researcher distributing the questionnaire online via social media to friends, acquaintances, and classmates, in order to restrict generalisation and to minimise responses from participants who do not meet the target market criteria, despite the increased risk of bias. Limitations and potential biases were given due consideration in order to have a sample group that is as representative as possible. The sampling size was aimed to be a minimum of 30 people, in order to achieve a normal distribution (i.e., a “bell curve”) as described by the Central Limit Theorem, but the researcher aimed to achieve between 50 and 100 participants.

5. Data Collection

This study aims to collect primary data, which is data that is acquired directly from participants in order to achieve the objectives and aims of the study (Maree, 2016). The study also takes on a quantitative character, meaning that the study aims to find causal relationships or connections between variables and therefore the data collection methods are developed with these objectives in mind. In the quantitative

research process, due consideration and care is given to the collection of data as it plays a crucial role in the validity and reliability of the findings (Sadan, 2017).

The data collection instrument used was a digitally distributed questionnaire that consisted of a specially formulated set of questions designed to gather primary data for the purposes of the research. This specific survey instrument was chosen for its efficiency in gathering quantitative or numeric descriptions of trends, attitudes, beliefs and opinions from a chosen population group (Maree, 2016). The questionnaire takes the form of a cross-sectional design, as the data collection will only be done at one specific point in time and no repetition by the researcher will take place.

There are several advantages to questionnaires which include:

- The method is inexpensive and not as time-consuming as many other methods.
- Online distribution of questionnaires means that the target population can easily be selected and have questionnaires administered to them.
- The anonymous nature of questionnaires improves participation.
- Substantial amounts of data can be collected and then standardized. (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davids and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Questionnaires also have a few disadvantages, including the chance that respondents might not understand the questions or might misinterpret the format of the questionnaire. Questionnaires also tend to lack any personal aspects, which can often discourage participation in the study (Debois, 2019).

The majority of negative brand perception and brand hate studies to date have applied a qualitative approach to their research (Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, and Bagozzi, 2016) (Lee, Motion, & Conroy, 2009). This study will aim to develop and implement the frameworks developed by this previous research by collecting primary data from members of the sample group through the use of fill-in questionnaires in order to prove (or disprove) their findings in a South African context, with specific emphasis on the scale and questions developed by Van Delzen (2014). Although this paper did not use all the questions developed by the Van Delzen (2014) study, adapted versions of her questions relating to her brand hate scale as well as the questions pertaining to the three main motivations of brand hate have specifically been used.

The brand hate scale (BH), as devised by Van Delzen (2014), was derived from a combination of two different studies, namely Zeki & Romaya (2008) and Salvatori (2007). Zeki & Romaya (2008) developed a passionate hate scale (PHS) based on Sternberg's (2003) triangular theory of hate. The passionate hate scale, however, was focussed on hate against and between humans, and it was thus adapted by Van Delzen (2014) for a brand hate context. Secondly, the findings of Salvatori (2007), whereby a qualitative brand hate study was conducted, and a brand hate scale was developed according to the results, were also adapted by Van Delzen (2014) and included in her brand hate scale (BH). According to Van Delzen (2014), the main difference between the two included studies is that that Salvatori's (2007) qualitative research focuses more on brand hate and that the study of Zeki & Romaya (2008) focuses on hate between individuals and groups.

Van Delzen (2014) also developed the scales for the three main brand avoidance motives (experiential avoidance, identity avoidance and moral avoidance), based on two pre-existing studies. The first study is Salvatori (2007) again, based on the brand hate questionnaire with statements for possible reasons to hate a brand developed by this study. Unsurprisingly, the second study is Lee, Motion and Conroy (2009), in which the three main brand-avoidance motives were first identified and conceptualised. According to Van Delzen (2014), both studies are taken into account, as Lee *et al.* (2009) is focussed specifically on avoidance, while Salvatori (2007) is focussed on brand hate in general. The scale developed by Van Delzen (2014) for experiential avoidance (ME) consisted of 6 questions, identity avoidance (MI) of 7 questions, and moral avoidance (MM) of 4 questions. Some examples of statements included in the questionnaire are: 'the performance of brand X is poor,' 'the products of brand X do not fit my personality' and 'brand X does not fit my values and beliefs.' The questions used in this South African study have, at the advice of the IIE ethics board, been adapted to be less leading and more balanced, as there were concerns that the original questions developed by Van Delzen (2014) may, intentionally or unintentionally, "evoke increasingly negative emotions or thoughts in the participant", thereby potentially jeopardising the integrity of the data and posing a possible risk to participants as well as the brand that they are experiencing a negative perception towards. This researcher therefore adapted the questions developed by Van Delzen (2014) to suit the criteria of the ethics board, resulting in a questionnaire that is much

more balanced, consisting of 7 questions to measure the intensity of the brand hate, and 7 questions for each of the main brand-avoidance motives, namely experiential avoidance (ME), identity avoidance (MI) and moral avoidance (MM).

Van Delzen (2014) also developed questions and scales for brand exit (BE) and brand rejection (BR), as well as for direct and indirect brand revenge based on the survey conducted by Grégoire *et al.* (2010). These questions and scales will however not be used in this study, which has a more limited scope.

All the questions were represented on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 as 'strongly disagree' and 5 as 'strongly agree'. The answers are entered in ascending order (with the most negative option at the left and the most positive answer at the right) in order to prevent the biased responses often received from questions structured in descending order, as described by Chyung, Kennedy and Campbell (2018). Participants to the study had also the option to fill out 'Neutral for every question. The questionnaire was created online via Google Forms, an online program used to create and distribute surveys and questionnaires and was also distributed online via WhatsApp and Instagram. A copy of the questionnaire is attached to Annexure A of this document.

6. Data Analysis Method

After the data-collection phase of the study, the data that was obtained from the questionnaires filled out by respondents was analysed using a deductive data analysis strategy, thereby allowing the researcher to test whether the relationship between the variables under study (the three main brand avoidance motives as developed by Lee, Motion and Conroy (2009)) would still be present in South African consumers who dislike or hate a certain brand.

The deductive data analysis strategy was utilised to analyse the data collected from the 58 respondents who responded to the researcher's questionnaire, thereby further supporting the positivist paradigm underpinning the study and ensuring the validity and reliability of the data, as the sample size is in the recommended range of between 30 and 500 (Hair et al., 2006; Malhotra, 2009; Maree, 2019).

Participants started by filling in their demographical questions, followed by a control question ("do you hate/dislike a certain brand?") in order to filter out participants who

did not conform to the standards of the test. Participants then filled in the 7 questions relating to the brand hate scale (BH), as well as 7 questions for the three main brand avoidance motives (experiential avoidance, identity avoidance and moral avoidance), thus equating to 4 sections of 7 questions for a total of 28 questions, excluding the demographic and control questions. These questions were developed by the researcher, based on the questions and scale developed by Van Delzen (2014).

As with the Van Delzen (2014) study, all the questions were represented on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 as 'strongly disagree' and 5 as 'strongly agree'. Participants to the study also had the option to fill out 'Neutral' for every question.

Google Forms, the online program that was used to create and distribute the questionnaires for this study, has integrated summary reports and data filtering tools that the researcher used to collect feedback, and then to analyse and visually represent the findings. The data collected from the questionnaires was represented in table form on Google Sheets, enabling the researcher to make accurate measurements and averages for the answers filled in by the participants in order to measure how strongly they hate/dislike a brand, as well as to test whether the three main brand-avoidance motives developed by Lee *et al.* (2009) are applicable to a South African market. This was accomplished by assigning numerical values to each of the possible answers for the questionnaire in the following fashion:

0 – Strongly Disagree

1 – Disagree

2 – Neutral

3 – Agree

4 – Strongly Agree

The sum of these numerical values could then be calculated in order to give each correspondent a score out of 28 for each of the 4 sections. The highest score of 28 would naturally indicate the highest level of brand hate for the specific section and a score of 0 would indicate no brand hate at all, with a neutral score being the median score of 14. For convenience purposes, the scores have been reworked to reflect a

percentage, meaning that 0% indicates no brand hate at all, 50% indicates a neutral score and 100% indicates the highest brand hate.

7. Findings and Interpretation

7.1 Presentation of Findings

This section will proceed to describe the findings and results of the data collected from the questionnaires distributed via Google Forms by the researcher. This section is presented from a quantitative data analysis perspective and will make use of descriptive statistics, which is a data analysis method designed to observe a small sample without the development of generalisations or an excess of statistical formulae. The data is visually presented in the form of charts and tables, both of which illustrate the questionnaire findings in the form of percentages, making the analysis of the data much more convenient. The bar charts, pie charts and tables are interpreted and discussed in depth in order to gain a deeper understanding of the data, allowing the researcher to discover insights into the research findings.

7.2 Demographic Questions

As previously described, this study places a very narrow scope on the population, with all respondents having to be South Africans between the ages of 18 and 30 years old and residing in Gauteng, with no preference as to their preferred race, gender or religion and no specific education or skills being required to participate. The demographic questions therefore focus on a few basic identifiers such as

What is your gender?
59 responses

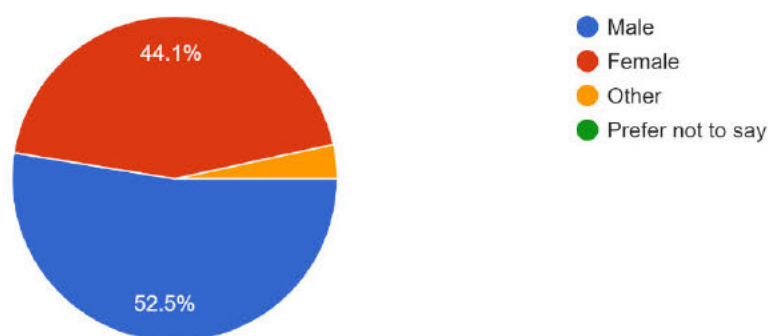


Figure 1: Genders of Respondents

gender and occupation in order to form rudimentary demographic groupings, including a control question.

Gender

The genders of the respondents were relatively balanced, with 44.1% of respondents identifying themselves as female and 52.5% identifying as male. 3.4% of respondents identified as a gender other than male or female and although there was an option to not state one's gender, it was not chosen by any respondents.

Occupation

Unsurprisingly, as the being between the ages of 18 and 30 was part of the criteria for the target population, the most common occupation selected was "Student", with 37.9% of respondents filling in this option. Other occupations selected have a very broad spectrum, ranging from managerial positions to unemployed.

Control Question

Is there a specific brand that you dislike or even hate? Think of a brand and keep this brand in mind when answering the all of the questions for this sur...nd. It will henceforth be referred to as "Brand X".

59 responses

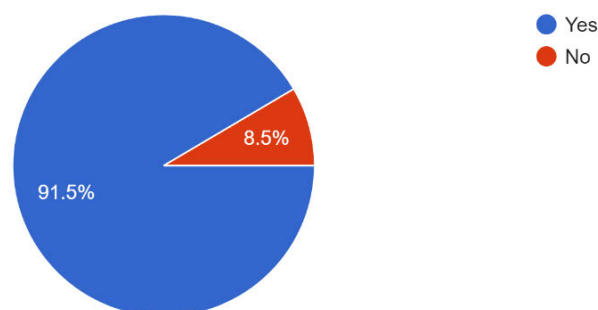


Figure 2: Control Question

The control question, "Is there a specific brand that you dislike or even hate?", received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with 91.5% of respondents replying in the affirmative and only 8.5% replying in the negative.

Brand Hate

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Scroll to the right if you do not see all 5 options)

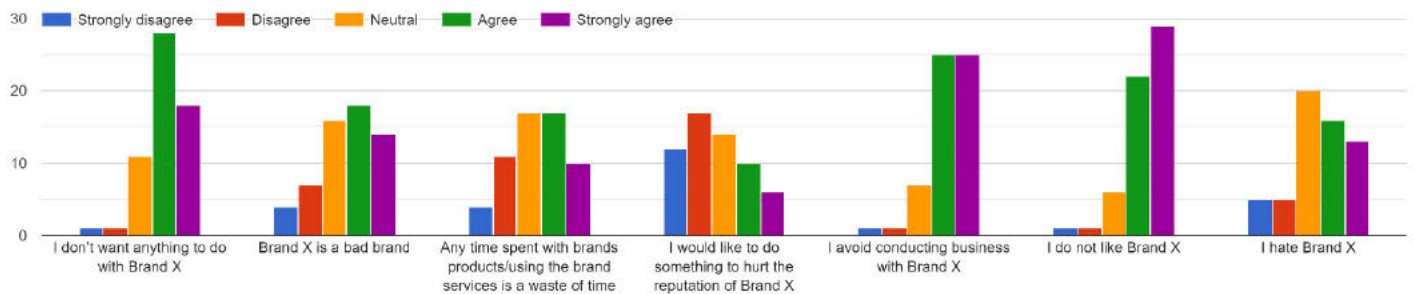


Figure 3: Brand Hate Bar Graph

The first section of questions was intended to measure general brand hate in respondents in order to establish a baseline score which can be measured against the three brand hate motives and compared to other respondents. The answers to the questions were grouped into a chart graph, from which several observations can be made. Question 1 [I don't want anything to do with Brand X] shows strong levels of Agree [28] and Strongly Agree [18], indicating that brand hate may lead to customers actively rejecting the brand in question. This ties in with the responses to question 5 [I avoid conducting business with Brand X], which received very high scores in both Agree [25] and Strongly Agree [25]. Questions 2 [Brand X is a bad brand] and 3 [Any time spent with brands products/using the brand services is a waste of time] both received relatively neutral responses. Question 4 [I would like to do something to hurt the reputation of Brand X] received surprisingly negative responses, contradicting the Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux (2009) description of revenge behaviour, whereby which customers who experience brand hate feel the need to "punish and cause harm to firms for the damages they have caused". Questions 6 [I do not like Brand X] and 7 [I hate Brand X] were developed to observe whether consumers discern between 'dislike' and 'hate'. The scores for 'dislike' were much higher, with 22 respondents selecting Agree and 29 selecting Strongly Agree. The scores for 'hate' received only 16 Agrees and 13 Strongly Agrees, with Neutral being the most common answer for the question at 20, indicating that more respondents from the sample group experience brand dislike rather than brand hate.

Experiential Avoidance

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Scroll to the right if you do not see all 5 options)

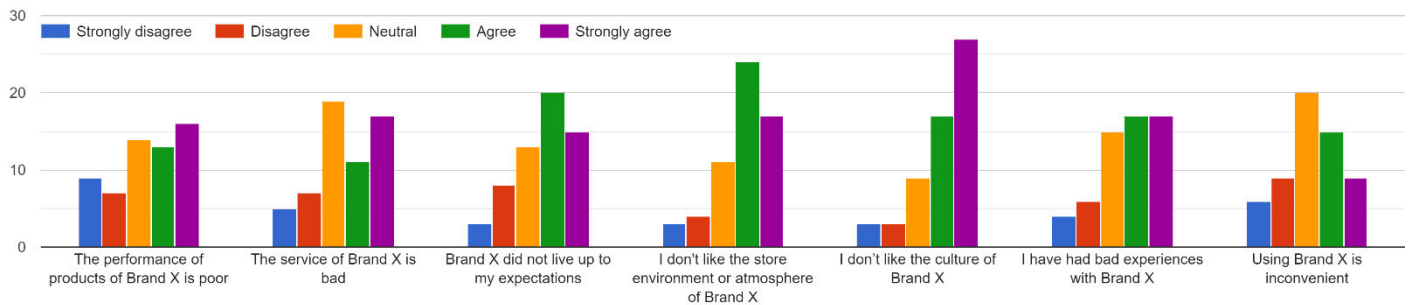


Figure 4: Experiential Avoidance Bar Graph

This second section of questions was intended to measure the first main brand-avoidance motive of experiential avoidance, as described by Lee *et al.* (2009), in order to gain an understanding of whether or not this brand hate motive is applicable to the sample group. This motive for brand avoidance occurs when there is a discrepancy between the personal expectations that a consumer has of a brand and the actual experience that the consumer has with that brand. When consumers' brand consumption expectations are disconfirmed, it leads to dissatisfaction and general future avoidance of that brand. The answers to the questions were again grouped into a chart graph, from which more observations can be made. Questions 1 [The performance of products of Brand X is poor] and 2 [The service of Brand X is bad] both received high scores in the Neutral and Strongly Agree categories, possibly indicating that these two sections are not mutually exclusive and that some respondents may have experienced both poor quality products and services from their chosen brand. Question 3 [Brand X did not live up to my expectations] received the highest scores in Agree [20] and Strongly Agree [15], suggesting that respondents' dislike of the brand may stem from being underwhelmed by the brand promise, or that the brand did not live up to its brand promise. The responses to questions 4 and 5 are also significant, as they suggest that the store environment and culture are both of major importance to consumers, with 24 respondents agreeing that they did not like the store environment of their chosen brand, and 27 respondents strongly agreeing that they did not like the culture of the brand. 17 respondents selected Agree and 17 more selected Strongly Agree for question 6 [I have had bad experiences with Brand X] and

the majority [20] of respondents selected the Neutral option for question 7 [Using Brand X is inconvenient].

Identity Avoidance

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Scroll to the right if you do not see all 5 options)

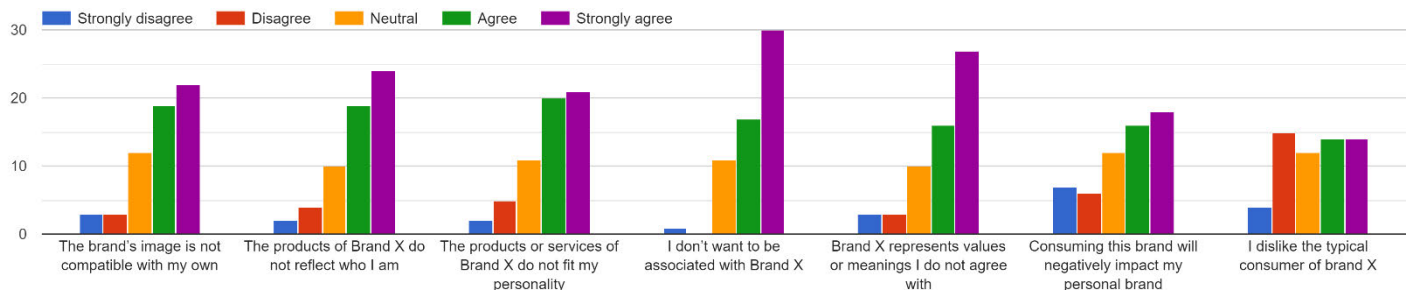


Figure 5: Identity Avoidance Bar Graph

The third set of questions was developed to measure the second main brand-avoidance motive described by Lee *et al.* (2009), namely identity avoidance, which occurs when the brand's image is not compatible with the consumer's individual identity. This form of avoidance, also known as symbolic incongruence, found that consumers will explicitly avoid a brand in order to avoid being associated with what they perceive to be negative brand values or meanings connected to that brand.

A chart graph was once again used to visualise the data collected from the responses to the questionnaire distributed by the researcher, from which certain observations can be made. The responses to the first three questions were very similar, with 19 respondents selecting Agree and 22 selecting Strongly Agree for question 1 [The brand's image is not compatible with my own], 19 respondents selecting Agree and 24 selecting Strongly Agree for question 2 [The products of Brand X do not reflect who I am] and 20 respondents selecting Agree and 21 selecting Strongly Agree for question 3 [The products or services of Brand X do not fit my personality], showing a general tendency in the sample group of not relating to these brands that they dislike or hate. Question 4 [I don't want to be associated with Brand X] received the strongest response, with 17 respondents selecting Agree and 30 selecting Strongly Agree, indicating an adverse reaction in the control group towards being linked or related to the brand in question, which could encourage brand avoidance in these persons. These responses tie into the answers for question 6 [Consuming this brand will

negatively impact my personal brand], which also received a majority of responses in Agree and Strongly Agree (16 and 18, respectively). This can be interpreted as a rejection of the brands by the respondents in order to protect their own personal brand or image, possibly due to social pressure or stigmas connected to supporting brands that are generally disliked or hate by the public (Lee *et al.*, 2009). Question 5 [Brand X represents values or meanings I do not agree with] received the majority of responses in Agree [16] and Strongly Agree [27], again supporting the findings of Lee *et al.* (2009), which stated that this type of brand avoidance occurs when there is a dissimilarity between the brand's identity and the consumer's own identity. Question 7 [I dislike the typical consumer of brand X] received the most balanced responses for this specific question, with the majority [15] of consumers even selecting Disagree, indicating that consumers in this sample group do not judge each other as harshly for using disliked or hated brands as could be expected. Overall, this section received the highest total average scores for questions, which will be discussed in further detail below.

Moral Avoidance

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Scroll to the right if you do not see all 5 options)

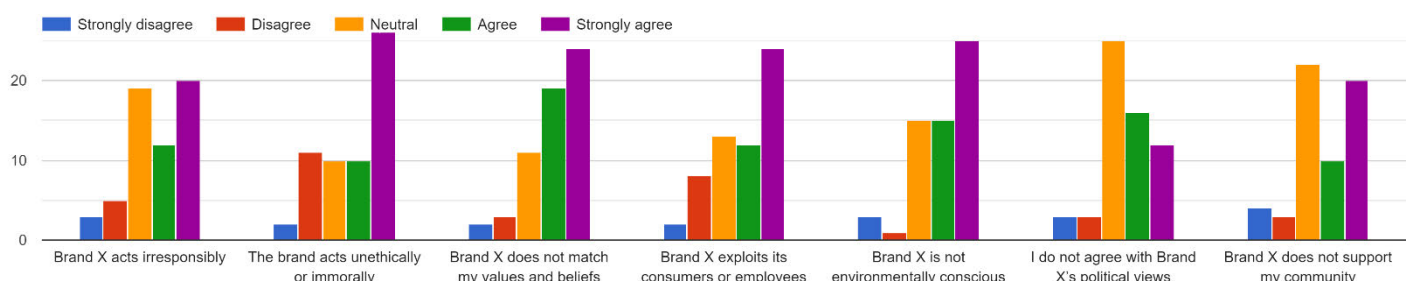


Figure 6: Moral Avoidance Bar Graph

The fourth set of questions was developed by the researcher to measure the third and final main brand-avoidance motive described by Lee *et al.* (2009) - moral avoidance. This form of brand avoidance occurs when the personal ideological beliefs of a consumer do not match the values depicted and embodied by a brand, also referred to as ideological incompatibility. In the context of brand-avoidance, a consumer's ideology refers to the system of ideas and rules by which they live their life, particularly relating to their political and socio-economic views.

The responses to the questions were once again represented in chart graph format for ease of access, from which the researcher could make observations. Question 1 [Brand X acts irresponsibly] received conflicting responses, with 19 answers recording the Neutral response and 20 recording the Strongly Agree response, showing that although this question is strongly applicable to some members of the sample group, a brand acting responsibly was not equally important to all members. Question 2 [The brand acts unethically or immorally] recorded a high number [26] of Strongly Agree responses, and question 3 [Brand X does not match my values and beliefs] also received the majority of answers in the affirmative, with 19 Agree responses and 24 Strongly Agree responses, supporting the findings of Lee *et al.* (2009) that state that this type of brand avoidance occurs when there is an incongruence between the personal ideological beliefs of the consumer and the values of the brand. Questions 4 [Brand X exploits its consumers or employees] and 5 [Brand X is not environmentally conscious] also received strong positive answers, with 24 and 25 Strongly Agree responses, respectively. These answers also support the theory of Lee *et al.* (2009), which suggests that moral avoidance is connected to a societal concern that goes further than the needs of the individual, and that the belief is that it is a consumer's personal, moral duty to avoid certain immoral brands. Question 6 [I do not agree with Brand X's political views] received mostly Neutral [25] responses, suggesting that the brands' political views may not be as important to members of the sample group as expected. Question 6 [Brand X does not support my community] received almost an equal amount of Neutral [22] and Strongly Agree [20] responses, indicating that although community support from a brand is not important to all members of the sample group, it holds more value than a brand's political views.

7.3 Heat Map

Due to the complexity and scale of the data collected, a heat map was chosen as the most accessible form of visual data representation for a better, more generalised overview of the full set of findings. A heat map, according to IBM (2021), is a data visualization type where the individual values contained in a matrix are represented through variations in colouring. By applying a heat map to a tabular set of data, this data analysis technique becomes a useful, visually appealing tool for cross-examining multivariate data and they are a convenient way to reveal any patterns in the data, to

display any similarities in the variables, and to detect if correlations exist between them. The data collected has been arranged according to the intensity of the brand hate score from the first set of questions (an interactive version of the table is available whereby the data can be arranged according to the intensity of any of the brand hate motives as well).

By displaying the data by way of a heat map, it is much easier to view the individual scores of a respondent for each of the three brand-avoidance categories in relation to their general brand hate score. It is clear to see that the average brand hate scale score for the respondents is high, with an average score of 67.3%, a median score of 67.9% and a mode of 71.4%, most likely due to respondents being asked to specifically focus their answers on a brand that they hate or dislike. This section also has a standard deviation of 15.9%, which is the lowest of all the sections. Applying this set of questions to a specific named brand would likely yield more diverse answers and has potential for further research, which will be discussed below. The next section, experiential avoidance, also has a mean of 67.3% and both a median and a mode of 67.9%. The standard deviation for this section is slightly larger, at 19.9%. The third section, identity avoidance, has the highest average out of all four sections at 72.6% and a standard deviation of 19.7%, making it the most common brand-avoidance motive in this control group, surpassing both experiential and moral avoidance. Section three has a median of 73.2% and a surprising mode of 100%, illustrating how strongly many respondents felt about this specific motive for brand hate. The last section, moral avoidance, has a more balanced average of 70.8%, but with the highest standard deviation of all categories at 21.9%, showing that this section was the most controversial, with many respondents either strongly agreeing or strongly disagreeing with it. The section has a median of 75% and a relatively high mode of 85.7%.

An interesting discovery made by the researcher using this heat map is that the different brand-avoidance motives described by Lee *et al.* (2009) are certainly not mutually exclusive in the subjects of this control group. More than half (53.4%) of the respondents surveyed scored above 70% in at least two of the three brand-avoidance categories, illustrating that the motives often overlap and that the brand hate or dislike does not necessarily need to stem from only a single motive.

There were a few outliers in the data that also helped to provide some potential insights. Some of the respondents who answered 'no' the control question [Is there a specific brand that you dislike or even hate?] or received a low score in the first

category of brand hate still ended up receiving much higher scores than anticipated in some of the brand avoidance motives categories, for example respondent 26, who only received a brand hate score of 25%, received a score of 75% for identity avoidance and a score of 82.1% for moral avoidance, indicating that although a consumer's perception of a brand may not initially be seen as negative, they could still experience a disconnect with that brand's identity or moral values. In sharp contrast to this lies the respondents who have scored very high in the brand hate section, but received lower scores for some of the brand avoidance motives sections. An example of this would be respondent 12, who received a 100% score for brand hate (meaning that they had selected 'Strongly Agree' for every question in this section) but received a score of only 39.3% for the moral avoidance section, an indication that although the brand-avoidance motives are not mutually exclusive, this respondent did not need to experience every driver for brand avoidance in order to experience intense brand hate.

No.	Hate Scale	Experiential	ID	Moral
26	25.0%	21.4%	75.0%	82.1%
21	28.6%	10.7%	60.7%	89.3%
16	42.9%	39.3%	28.6%	17.9%
52	42.9%	71.4%	60.7%	50.0%
45	46.4%	96.4%	57.1%	82.1%
56	46.4%	42.9%	46.4%	39.3%
42	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
48	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
7	53.6%	57.1%	67.9%	85.7%
9	53.6%	67.9%	100.0%	60.7%
19	53.6%	53.6%	64.3%	85.7%
32	57.1%	42.9%	82.1%	64.3%
41	57.1%	46.4%	78.6%	78.6%
49	57.1%	67.9%	71.4%	57.1%
50	57.1%	67.9%	82.1%	64.3%
55	57.1%	71.4%	89.3%	67.9%
8	60.7%	64.3%	75.0%	75.0%
18	60.7%	50.0%	57.1%	78.6%
35	60.7%	75.0%	57.1%	64.3%
38	60.7%	75.0%	85.7%	57.1%
43	60.7%	67.9%	71.4%	53.6%
4	64.3%	39.3%	85.7%	10.7%
11	64.3%	53.6%	71.4%	60.7%
17	64.3%	92.9%	50.0%	100.0%
22	64.3%	67.9%	96.4%	96.4%
44	64.3%	67.9%	67.9%	28.6%
3	67.9%	71.4%	25.0%	64.3%
6	67.9%	75.0%	75.0%	50.0%
25	67.9%	60.7%	78.6%	42.9%
28	67.9%	50.0%	67.9%	64.3%
33	67.9%	82.1%	60.7%	92.9%
15	71.4%	85.7%	67.9%	85.7%
20	71.4%	57.1%	60.7%	32.1%

No.	Hate Scale	Experiential	ID	Moral
23	71.4%	82.1%	35.7%	57.1%
24	71.4%	92.9%	100.0%	85.7%
27	71.4%	71.4%	89.3%	92.9%
40	71.4%	35.7%	71.4%	92.9%
47	71.4%	42.9%	64.3%	82.1%
58	71.4%	89.3%	57.1%	75.0%
14	75.0%	71.4%	100.0%	57.1%
29	75.0%	92.9%	92.9%	96.4%
36	75.0%	46.4%	78.6%	100.0%
37	75.0%	50.0%	89.3%	92.9%
39	75.0%	92.9%	71.4%	92.9%
54	75.0%	57.1%	85.7%	46.4%
1	78.6%	78.6%	21.4%	82.1%
2	78.6%	32.1%	78.6%	71.4%
31	78.6%	67.9%	100.0%	60.7%
34	78.6%	85.7%	92.9%	96.4%
51	78.6%	82.1%	96.4%	100.0%
46	82.1%	85.7%	85.7%	100.0%
57	82.1%	78.6%	78.6%	85.7%
13	85.7%	71.4%	89.3%	85.7%
5	96.4%	53.6%	100.0%	75.0%
10	100.0%	89.3%	50.0%	78.6%
12	100.0%	82.1%	64.3%	39.3%
30	100.0%	92.9%	100.0%	92.9%
53	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	85.7%
Mean	67.3%	67.3%	72.6%	70.8%
Median	67.9%	67.9%	73.2%	75.0%
Mode	71.4%	67.9%	100.0%	85.7%
Std Dev	0.16	0.20	0.20	0.22

Colour Scale				
0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	75.0%	100%

7.4 Cumulative Score Frequency Map

Cumulative Score Frequency Map

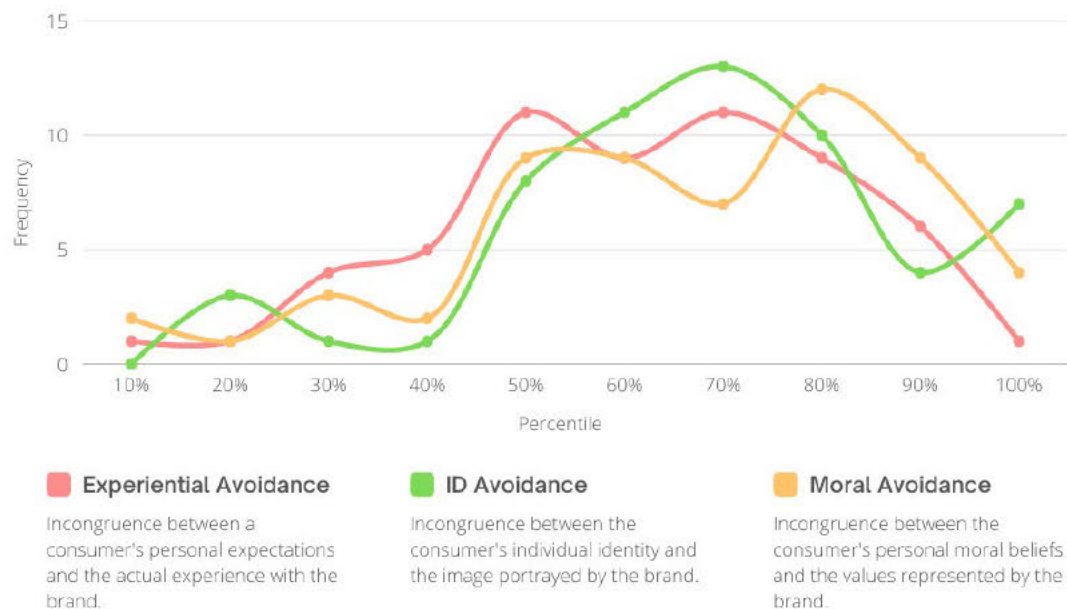


Figure 7: Cumulative Score Frequency Map

Next, the researcher developed a frequency map to illustrate the number of respondents scoring in each percentile for every one of the three brand-avoidance motives. As is clear from the map, the lowest frequencies of scores appear in the 10% to 40% range, and the highest frequencies of scores appear from 50% to 80% for all three of the motives, an indication of the general hate or dislike that respondents feel towards their chosen brand. One could reasonably infer that these percentages would be lower if the questions were aimed at a specific brand rather than brands that the respondents specifically hate or dislike.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

Validity, as the accuracy of the results measured, and reliability, as the consistency of those measurements, are important factors to consider during any academic study. Reliability refers to consistency when measuring things, or being able to achieve the same results by using the same methods under the same circumstances when testing. Validity, on the other hand, refers to accuracy when measuring – that the results produced by the tests mirror the properties and characteristics of the physical or social world (Scribbr, 2019). Results can be reliable without being valid and measurements that are valid, are usually reliable.

Reliability in this specific study was ensured in two ways:

- Consistent application of methods: stable, reproducible results are the goal when using tools or techniques to collect data. By planning out the data collection method carefully, the same process can be followed every time, thereby increasing the reliability of any data collected.
- Standardised conditions of research: the circumstances of data collection must be kept as homogenous as possible in order to reduce the impact of external factors on the results.

Validity was also ensured in two ways:

- Appropriate measurement methods: the techniques used for method and measurement must be of high quality and calibrated to measure exactly what the researcher wants to know. Thorough research is needed and it should be based on existing knowledge. The techniques used for this research is based off the work by Van Delzen (2014).
- Appropriate sampling methods: the population to be studied must be clearly defined, there must be enough participants, and they must be representative of their population. This research is specifically aimed at South Africans between the ages of 18 and 30, and the researcher will ensure that they are represented as such.

8.2 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations of a study, as the set of principles that aim to guide the researcher and any work that they conduct, are an integral part of any academic study that wishes to present itself as valid and trustworthy. The people who were questioned and observed during this study are human beings with rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and they must be treated as such. Such ethical considerations of an academic study must seek to protect these rights of the participants to the study, as well as to enhance the validity and scientific integrity of the research. They further strive to make sure that any and all participation in the academic study is informed, voluntary and safe for participants.

Important ethical considerations that needed to be addressed for this study included the following:

Participants of appropriate age: in order to avoid any ethical fallacies involving minors, this study strictly avoided working with any person below the age of 18. The participants' age range has specifically been set to ages 18-30 with this consideration in mind.

Voluntary participation: all research participants were free to choose to participate and are free to withdraw from the study at any time without fear of pressure or prosecution. Participants do not need to provide a reason for withdrawal and will not face any consequences for doing so.

Informed consent: all potential subjects received all the necessary information about the study and their participation before they made a choice to participate. The information received comprehensively covered all the details of the study including the goals, benefits, risks, and institutional approval of the study, as well as any necessary information about their own participation in the study. This information was given in writing and needed to be electronically signed by the participants.

Confidentiality: the participants are anonymous and their information will remain confidential in the hands of the researcher in order to protect their right to privacy and to uphold the academic integrity of the study.

Results communication: the researcher strived to avoid plagiarism and research misconduct, in the sense of falsifying data or misrepresenting results, at all costs.

Disclaimer: the questionnaire filled in by participants was accompanied by a legal disclaimer that reads:

“The purpose of this research study is to gather consumer information and insights. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you may choose not to participate. Your responses will be confidential and will be used by no one else other than the researchers conducting the study. By filling in and submitting the form, you are agreeing to voluntarily participate in this study, as well as that you are a South African citizen between the ages of 18 and 30 years old.”

8.3 Limitations

The researcher encountered several limitations during the course of conducting the study:

Lack of prior research in the field: as stated above, despite the recent surge in interest, there are still a limited number of studies that have been conducted in the fields of negative brand perception and brand hate in comparison with other fields, especially in South Africa and the Gauteng province. There is thus a limited pool of knowledge that the researcher was able to draw from, and the study was very much reliant on primary research.

Lack of available data: due to the lack of prior research in the field, limited data has been collected on the topics of brand hate and negative brand perception. The researcher therefore had to gather primary data in order to better understand and explain the phenomenon.

Sample size: the recommended sample size of 50-100 participants is comparatively small and a larger sample size will be needed to fully collect all the data and insights needed to create an impactful study.

Limited scope: this study would ideally be conducted on South Africans of all ages and provinces, but this is not possible due to the nature of the study.

Limited time: A cross-sectional approach was taken by the researcher, whereby data was collected from many individuals at a single point in time, as it is less expensive and time-consuming. A longitudinal approach, whereby data is repeatedly collected from the same subjects over time would be ideal for this type of research, as it would

allow for a more complete comprehension of the drivers of negative brand perception in the target population.

Limited budget: the researcher did not have any type of financial budget for this study.

8.4 Research Question, Problem, Hypotheses/Objectives Addressed

Research problem: Young adults between the ages of 18 and 30 are amongst the most opinionated and outspoken of all age groups in South Africa and are therefore much more susceptible to brand hate. Understanding the motives behind their brand hate is essential in order to navigate and avoid its negative effects.

Research question: What are the motives that drive South African consumers in Gauteng between the ages of 18 and 30 to have negative brand perceptions of certain brands?

Hypothesis: Based on existing research, there will be several factors that that motivate brand hate in South Africans between the ages of 18 and 30, such as previous bad experiences with a brand or general incongruence with an individual's sense of identity or morality.

From the data analysis completed above it is clear to see that the three main brand-avoidance motives developed by Lee, Motion and Conroy (2009) are indeed applicable to the subjects of the sample group, seeing as the cumulative averages of all three motives are above 65% agreement scores. The researcher's hypothesis has thus been confirmed and the research question has been answered – South African consumers in Gauteng between the ages of 18 and 30 are driven to have negative brand perceptions of certain brands by the three brand-avoidance motives established by Lee *et al.* (2009), namely experiential avoidance, identity avoidance and moral avoidance.

8.5 Implications and recommendations

Confirming the applicability of the three brand-avoidance motives developed by Lee, Motion and Conroy (2009) to this sample group has far-reaching implications. Knowledge in this specific field of study is currently still lacking, and the findings of this

study may represent a substantial contribution on which further research can be based. Establishing that the findings of their seminal study are relevant to this small South African test-audience suggests that it might be relevant to all South Africans, meaning that local marketers and brand strategists finally have a way to effectively measure and analyse brand hate in South African consumers. Brand hate, or a general negative public perception, can have seriously detrimental effects on a brand, often causing lasting damage to a brand's reputation, customer loyalty and the flow of revenue (Kucuk, 2015). By being able to measure brand hate and pinpoint its motives, South African brands will be able to avoid, or at least mitigate, such pitfalls and thereby create more sustainable, profitable brands with strong brand equity that are loved by local consumers.

The researcher's recommendations include repeating this study and using the questionnaire developed by the researcher on a broader population in order to find out whether these same brand-avoidance motives are applicable to other groups of South Africans. Studies can include variables such as different cultures, races and geographical regions to determine what impact such factors have on brand perception, thereby enabling brands to tailor specific marketing techniques towards different demographics, and thus maximising profits. A qualitative study is also highly recommended in order to gather more in-depth information on non-numerical data such as consumers' opinions and experiences with negative brand perception and to generate new ideas for future research, such as any other, uniquely South African brand hate motives that might exist. Future studies could also take on a longitudinal format in order to better understand how consumer perceptions change over time and whether these same brand-avoidance motives will still be applicable in the years to come. Lastly, this same set of questions developed by the researcher can be applied to specific brands by marketers and brand strategists in order to gain an understanding of consumers' perceptions of these brands. Such insights can then be used to develop a brand's identity to better perceived publicly, which could be especially useful for older brands that need to adapt their image to suit the modern market.

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10. Annexures

10.1 Consent Form

To whom it may concern,

I, [Name] am a student at IIE-Vega (a brand of the Independent Institute of Education). I am currently conducting research for my [degree] in [field] in which I am investigating [short description].

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.
- Your participation will be anonymous.

The study has been approved by my supervisor and the IIE-campus ethics committee. I can be contacted at: [email] if you have any questions or concerns.

I hereby acknowledge and give my full consent to the participation to this study as stipulated above.

(Single choice).

YES

☐

The purpose of this research study is to gather consumer information and insights. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you may choose not to participate. Your responses will be confidential and will be used by no one else other than the researchers conducting the study. By filling in and submitting the form, you are agreeing to voluntarily participate and that you are a South African citizen between the ages of 18 and 30 years old.

What is your occupation?

Fill in: _____

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

What is your age?

As indicated in the introduction, we are interested in the brands that are hated by consumers.

Please indicate if there is a specific brand that you hate. Select a brand and keep this brand in mind when answering the following questions. Do not indicate the name of the brand. It will henceforth be referred to as "Brand X"

☐ No, I don't hate a brand.

☐ Yes, I hate a brand.

10.2 Questionnaire

PART 1 – Brand hate

Brand hate questions represented on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 as strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree.

	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
BH1	I don't want anything to do with Brand X					
BH2	Brand X is a bad brand					
BH3	Any time spent with brands products/using the brand services is a waste of time					
BH4	I would like to do something to hurt the reputation of Brand X					
BH5	I avoid conducting business with Brand X					
BH6	I do not like Brand X					
BH7	I hate Brand X					

PART 2 – Brand hate motivators

Motivation questions represented on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 as strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree.

	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
ME1	The performance of products of Brand X is poor					
ME2	The service of Brand X is bad					

ME3	Brand X did not live up to my expectations					
ME4	I don't like the store environment or atmosphere of Brand X					
ME5	I don't like the culture of Brand X					
ME6	I have had bad experiences with Brand X					
ME7	Using Brand X is inconvenient					
MI1	The brand's image is not compatible with my own					
MI2	The products of Brand X do not reflect who I am					
MI3	The products or services of Brand X do not fit my personality					
MI4	I don't want to be associated with Brand X					
MI5	Brand X represents values or meanings I do not agree with					
MI6	Consuming this brand will negatively impact my personal brand					
MI7	I dislike the typical consumer of brand X					
MM1	Brand X acts irresponsibly					

MM2	The brand acts unethically or immorally					
MM3	Brand X does not match my values and beliefs					
MM4	Brand X exploits its consumers or employees					
MM5	Brand X is not environmentally conscious					
MM6	I do not agree with Brand X's political views					
MM7	Brand X does not support my community					

10.3 Ethics Clearance Letter

Date: 6/20/2022

Student name: George Frederick (Erik) Minnaar

Student number: [REDACTED]

Campus: Pretoria

Re: Approval of RESE8419/RMET8429 Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS/PGDip ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor name: Ayanda Sibuya

Signature:

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC) name:

Signature:

10.4 Updated Concept Document

<u>Project details</u>						
Your Name: George Frederick Minnaar			Student Number: [REDACTED]			
Supervisor: Ayanda Sibuya			Date: 7 April 2022		Version: 1	
<u>Proposed Title</u>						
Title	Drivers of Negative Brand Perception in Gauteng					
<u>Research details</u>						
Problem statement	Young people between the ages of 18 and 30 are amongst the most opinionated and outspoken of all age groups in South Africa and are therefore much more susceptible to brand hate. Understanding the motives behind their brand hate is essential in order to navigate and avoid its negative effects.					
Purpose statement	The purpose of this quantitative study is to describe the motives that drive young South Africans in Gauteng consumers to hate certain brands in order to better anticipate and avoid such hate and any subsequent negative impact on brand image.					
Research question/s	What are the motives that drive South African consumers in Gauteng between the ages of 18 and 30 to have negative brand perceptions of certain brands?					
Hypotheses/ Objectives	Based on existing research, there will be several factors that that motivate brand hate in South Africans between the ages of 18 and 30, such as previous bad experiences with a brand or general incongruence with an individual's sense of identity or morality.					
Research rationale	Due to the interconnected nature of modern society, young adults today are exposed to more news and information than ever before. This overload of different sources has lead to 18- to 30-year-olds being one of the most opinionated and outspoken age groups in South Africa, thereby also making this group much more inclined to brand hate. By gathering data and completing this study, I hope to better understand the increasing phenomenon of brand hate in order to avoid making the same mistakes that those brands have made.					
<u>Literature overview</u>						
Key theories	- Non-choice and anti-choice. Hogg, 1998. - Negative experience avoidance, identity avoidance and moral avoidance. Lee, Motion, & Conroy, 2008.					
Seminal authors/ sources	Hogg, M. K. 1998. Anti-constellations: Exploring the impact of negation on consumption. <i>Journal of Marketing Management</i> , 14(1-3), 133–158. Lee, M. S. W., Motion, J., & Conroy, D. 2009. Anti-consumption and brand avoidance. <i>Journal of Business Research</i> , 62(2), 169–180. Hegner, S.M., Fetscherin, M. and Van Delzen, M. 2017. Determinants and outcomes of brand hate. <i>Journal of Product & Brand Management</i> , 26(1): 13-25.					
Literature review themes	<u>Theme 1</u> Introduction and definitions.	<u>Theme 2</u> Overview of brand hate literature.	<u>Theme 3</u> Types of brand hate (negative experience, identity and moral).	<u>Theme 4</u> Non-choice v anti-choice.	<u>Theme 5</u> Hate scales and data analysis.	<u>Theme 6</u> Conclusion.
Sources	Aaker, J.L. 1999. The malleable self: The role of self-expression in persuasion. <i>Journal of marketing research</i>, 36(1): 45-57.					

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Key concepts	Brand hate, negative brand perception, brand avoidance, anti-consumption, managerial implications.

Provisional Research Approach

<u>Paradigm</u>	<u>Paradigm</u>	<u>Epistemology</u>	<u>Ontology</u>	<u>Axiology</u>
	My dominant research tradition will naturally be positivism. I will be gaining factual knowledge gathered from data collection	Positivists support a clear separation between science and non-science gather knowledge and believe that the observation of	Positivism supports the notion of universalism, or the fact that only one true reality exists. This reality is a single, objective, and stable	Positivism has a strong objectivist axiology that is intrinsically woven into the

	(surveys/questionnaires) and interpret that data. This data collection and analysis will take place in a scientific and objective manner, based on the model designed by Lee, Motion, & Conroy (2009), and positivism is therefore the obvious choice of paradigm for me. Positivism can be described as the approach of the natural sciences, often applied when studying phenomena, including social phenomena (Bezuidenhout, Davis and du Plooy-Cilliers, 2013).	objective, empirical evidence and that knowledge gained in this fashion is the only truth. Knowledge is gained by testing hypotheses against the real world and by carefully observing and documenting the results, thereby confirming or rejecting such hypotheses. The scientific method and hard facts and numbers are integral to positivism, which thereby forms an intrinsic part of any quantitative study. The aim of positivist research is to discover causal relationships so that similar future events may be predicted and controlled.	physical and social external reality that is ruled and governed by certain laws (Bezuidenhout, Davis and du Plooy-Cilliers, 2013). Followers of this school of thought believe that reality can be observed, measured and quantified so that predictions about similar future events can be made. Cause and effect are important concepts to a positivist, who believes that that human nature and behaviour can also be predicted by using these same techniques.	fibre of the paradigm. Followers of this school of thought believe in objectivity above all else and value-free research that is uninfluenced by any personal bias. Honesty and personal integrity are core values of positivism, implemented with the goal of conducting trustworthy research that accurately and objectively reflects reality. Data and findings therefore need to be represented and interpreted as accurately as possible in order to effectively represent the true nature of reality.
Approach/ design	This study will be quantitative, as I will be collecting and analyzing data obtained from questionnaires and surveys in order to find averages, make predictions and describe relationships. The study may have some qualitative elements such as the collection of opinions and experiences, although I do not believe I will be using mixed-method. Although a longitudinal approach would be ideal for this topic, I will be conducting a cross-sectional study due to time constraints.			

<u>Provisional Research Plan</u>	
Population	South African young adults. Must be: • South African nationality, residing in Gauteng. • Between the ages of 18 and 30. • Preferably working or studying. • No preferred race, gender or religion.
Sampling	For convenience purposes, I will be using non-probability sampling, mostly making use of friends, peers and volunteers to complete the surveys and questionnaires. Limitations and potential biases will be given due consideration in order to have a sample group that is as representative as possible. The two main methods I will be using will most probably be convenience sampling and voluntary response sampling. The sample size will be the recommended number, most likely between 50 and 100 people.
Data collection method(s)	Fill-in questionnaires or surveys using available online resources like Qualtrics or Google Forms. Observations. Secondary data collection
Data analysis method(s)	The available online tools like Qualtrics and Google Forms include data analysis tools to refine and graphically represent my uncovered data as usable information. This information can be used to summarize data and test my hypothesis.

<u>Ethical considerations and limitations</u>	
Ethics	The ethical considerations of this study will include: ○ Participants of appropriate age ○ Voluntary participation ○ Informed consent ○ Confidentiality ○ Results communication. ○ Disclaimer
Limitations	Based on the researcher's insights gathered so far, it can be concluded that this study will have several limitations: ○ Lack of prior research in the field ○ Lack of available data ○ Sample size ○ Limited time ○ Limited budget

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