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BOOK REVIEW:

Brand Hate:

Navigating Consumer Negativity in the Digital World,

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A branded market offering which is embedded with brand image could be admired or hated. Both admired and hated brands have strong positioning in a consumers mind. Unlike admired brands, hated brands are likely to be embedded with brand image and are a target of attack (Farshid, Ashrafi, Wallström & Engström, 2015). This explains the darkest side of branding phenomenon coupled with consumer negativity in the digital world. Kucuk's book titled "Brand Hate: Navigating Consumer Negativity in the Digital World" has answered the urge for an examination of consumer negativity that is channelled in the digital world. As explained in the introduction of the book, Brand Hate is not simply developed as a reaction to a lack of brand love. Indeed, Brand Hate is an innate part of Emotional Branding that should not merely be a polarized version of brand love. The book consists of 7 chapters and explores Brand Hate from its inner layers, which is adapted from

elements and dimensions of Hates theories, into the outer layers which denotes management of Brand Hate.

The discussion of the book develops Brand Hate from Psychology theory of hate. In Chapter 1, the author explores the Psychology of Hate and aims to argue that perceived hate, coupled with the digital world, emerges as an anti-branding online community. Brand Hate influences people and society in general and it constructs brand attachment and/or brand aversion specifically. The discussion of this chapter centres on exploring how hate formation emerges, i.e. from threatened egoism and perceived injustice, in to an examination of dimensions of hate which are categorised into cold hate-cool hate-hot hate. The first chapter concludes with a discussion of the severity of hate in a branding context.

In Chapter 2, Brand Hate is developed by discussing anti-branding and "brand bullying" as a strong reaction of ending consumer-brand relationships. Furthermore, Brand Hate antecedents and its consequences are discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, unmet expectations, e.g. dysfunctional products and services and corporate social irresponsibility, are believed to be antecedent of consumer-related Brand Hate in addition to the rather new concept of Consumer Personality Problems which revolves around public egoistic and selfishness. As a consequence, Brand Hate revolves around e-complaining, negative Word of Mouth (WOM), and boycott. Unfortunately, there is no indication that Brand Hate could emerge as a useful core element of brand image attributes. Chapter 4 focuses on brand haters that go beyond their base-line audiences, can access neutral market actors and influence negative WOM without acknowledging that branded market offerings, which are attached with brand image, are resulting in consumers that are most likely well-educated. In addition, coupled with the advent of Information Communication Technology (ICT), consumers now have the power to search for customisation of facts, details and the uniqueness of market profile and its attributes. Farshid et al., (2015) suggest that some issues discussed regarding anti-brand image websites were not familiar to some participants, but the anti-brand website made them aware of these issues. Regardless, Brand Hate may be attributed to negative brand image and accelerate positioning; although it merely influences consumer acknowledgement rather than brand favourability. Nonetheless, in general the book, which is aimed at absorbing the concept of Brand Hate and its anti-branding, offers great discourses.

Chapter 5 examines extreme consumer boycott and how consumer-brand relationships are getting worse and difficult to be resolved that it results in the anti-branding discourse. The main point of anti-branding discourse becomes very powerful; it lies on the expressive hatred that is projected as it leads to the semiotics of Brand Hate. These aspects are conferred in Chapter 5. Utilising world top branded cases, Brand Hate is examined from a semiotics perspective. The effect of boycott and its anti-branding discourse is argued as fertile ground of Brand Dilution. In Chapter 6, legal aspects of Brand Dilution are explored and discussed from the likelihood of consumer confusion, blurring and/or tarnishment into the discourse of anti-branding dilution testing. It is believed that distinctiveness and favourability of a brand can be diluted by either a "blurring" or "tarnishment" of the brand (page 99). It is argued that consequently brand dilution could lead to anti-brand image and that anti-brand image has some delusionary effects on viewers (page 103). In this sense, anti-brand image contains anti-branding symbolic codes and its latent meanings. However, with this as a backdrop, the book seems to not cover-up the reverse perspectives of how this anti-brand image which may also be impactful, as a core essence of brand image formation. Considering that unmet expectations have occurred, it is suggested that anti-brand image results in consumers becoming Brand Haters as depicted in Figure 7.1, page 127. It may be worth exploring how this brand negativity projected in to hatred acts as acceleration positioning.

After all, embodiment on anti-brand image that makes producers work too hard in managing Brand Hate may also lead the branded market offering in to generic brand as it will loosen strong characteristics of shared values needed by branded offerings (Olins, 2014). In other words, just because a brand becomes an object of anti-branding, it does not mean the public would un-love it or disregard it. Arguably, brand image is attached with shared values, which are very subjective and pluralistic. Consumers are well-informed and have the power to search for customisation of facts, details and the uniqueness of market profile and its attributes (Gretzel, 2016; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). Extreme e-complaints which are in this case one of the antecedents of Brand Hate may or may not influence consumer decision making to purchase, albeit it may slightly emerge as a factor to be aware of.

Chapter 7 explores the art of listening, engaging and negotiation which is rooted within contemporary theory of complaint management. This explains why the phenomenon of Brand Hate and its anti-branding would not simply emerge if the

producer did not over-promise (Olins, 2014). However, it is worth noting here that this book provides mapping of how to understand the semiotic rules of the meanings of Brand Hate (page 72). Although, this book has explained the importance of Brand Hate, which has not only an enriched body of knowledge but also is useful for practical/ management purposes, implication of these issues raises fundamental questions which require further exploration. For example, if Brand Hate could be included as an inimitable branding strategy, would anti-brand image as an output of Brand Hate's elements and/or its dimensions have a reverse impact on brand image attributes? If so, how would it explicate the emotional branding domain of future studies? With this in mind, it may be useful for future research to link Brand Hate with anti-branding reverse theories. Reverse theories construct consumer's memory from objectification of anti-brand image. As mentioned in the book, research suggests that negative brand associations might play a more active role rather than a positive one. Therefore consumer-generated anti-branding activities could dramatically develop consumer awareness and boost the positioning of a brand. Consequently, the effects of the dark side of Brand Hate and its anti-branding may stimulate consumer curiosity and attract the public's attention to notice the existence of a brand. What is more, Brand Hate, with its anti-branding mainstream, could add the attributes of authenticity identities attributed to the brand. Regardless, it may be interpreted as negative attributes attached with a brand, the hatred toward brand in the realm of Brand Hate and its anti-branding have got the public's attention and assists a brands existence. If the business is managed based on the etiquette and its shared values, any anti-brand image would not be able to influence a brand´s positioning. Therefore, anti-branding symbolic codes and its latent meaning which say "hatred" is no more dangerous than "fake" Brand Love.

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