

## **To Switch Or Not – The Role of Brand Hate and Protest Behavior on Consumer Switching Behavior: The Case of Sri Lankan Mobile Telecommunication Industry**

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Brand hate, which refers to intensely negative feelings that customers have toward a brand, can have serious repercussions for the company, especially in the mobile telecommunication industry where switching costs are relatively low. This study investigates the relationship between brand hate and consumer switching behavior with focusing on the mediation aspect of protest behavior in the Sri Lankan mobile telecommunication sector. This research study employs a positivism research paradigm and follows a deductive approach to examine facts using the developed model called “Consumer Brand Relationship: Brand Hate Perspective”. Primary data of the research will be collected through a structured questionnaire survey with 24 questions, involving 384 respondents aged 18-35, using Judgmental Sampling Technique. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between brand hate and consumer switching behavior to transfer from brands. Additionally, it is discovered that protest behavior partially mediates the relationship between brand hate and consumer intention to switch brands, suggesting that negative feelings may trigger protest behavior. The study has major implications for telecommunication companies in general and Sri Lankan mobile operators in particular, emphasizing the necessity for efficient complaint management and customer service recovery techniques with additional benefits and service availability to reduce the impact of brand hate and avoid customer switching.

**Keywords:** *Brand Hate, Consumer Switching Behavior, Mobile Telecommunication Industry, Protest Behavior*