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Service Brand Avoidance

A qualitative study of the drivers in
the service industry

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Abstract

Background

Branding is a significant asset for a company, and can provide a firm with sole association and a special meaning for the consumer. Consumer research generally stresses the idea of positive consumption of brands and a gap in the consumer behaviour studies regarding brand avoidance can be exemplified. Subsequently, brand avoidance has recently received more attention, as the importance to identify what brands consumers deliberately avoid is as valuable to recognize. In order to get a more comprehensive image of the market, the relevance to examine the drivers of service brand avoidance has been identified.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the drivers of why people deliberately avoid certain service brands. Based upon the purpose, three questions have been framed: What are the drivers of brand avoidance in the service industry? How can the drivers identified connect to previous research, primarily made by Lee et al. (2009b) and later revised by Knittel et al. (2016)? Is it possible to draw conclusions regarding all services?

Method

The thesis is mainly exploratory in its nature due to the insights that is required in order to investigate people's behaviour. The data has been collected through 16 semi-structured interviews where participants have shared their stories connected to service brand avoidance. The data has then been interpreted and in most cases been connected to previous literature.

Conclusion

Most consumers avoid several types of service brands, both deliberately and unconsciously. The findings from interviews have been connected to previous literature, but also some new conclusions have been made regarding the service industry. Five categories with sub-themes have been identified and linked to earlier studies by Lee et al. (2009b) and Knittel et al. (2016); experiential, identity, moral, deficit-value, and marketing avoidance. The findings show a deeper knowledge of brand avoidance but solely in the service industry.

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1 Introduction

The following chapter will provide the reader with background information to get a deeper knowledge of the phenomena branding in order to understand the research theme of this thesis. The problem leading to the purpose of the paper will be presented, as well as three more specific research questions. Lastly, the chapter contains delimitations of the research to ease understanding of the subject as a whole.

1.1 Background

Branding has established more attention in both literature and marketing, and is a significant asset for the company. Since brands and consumption appear nearly every day in the modern society, there are major characteristics of our lives (Kapferer, 2012). A brand in this perspective can be stated as “a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other seller” (American Marketing Association, 2013a).

Brands have the power to provide firms with sole associations and give them a special meaning for the consumers. They often provide a competitive advantage, which makes it more difficult for the competitors to enter the same market (Keller, 2008), and are consequently critical to the success of the company (Wood, 2000). The market today values most successful corporations at far more than the value of their tangible assets. The major companies’ intangible objects, including brand equity, increased in market value from less than 20% in 1975 to 80% in 2005 (Clifton, 2009).

Consumers often purchase brands for the several positive benefits they represent. Many studies confirm the idea that consumers express themselves, and create their identities and self-concepts through the brands they purchase (Lee, Motion & Conroy, 2009a). Most large brands are created on a foundation of trust resulting from customers’ experience of purchasing and consuming products and services sold under the brand name. For several brands, such as Coca-Cola and Marlboro, consumers find it hard to separate other similar competing brands in blind tests. In these situations, brand communications have a more essential role together with great products or services, and exceptional distribution (Clifton, 2009).

Moreover, strong service brands have existed for years, and the extensiveness of service branding and its complexity have accelerated in the past decade. It has been stated that some of the greatest branding successes in the last 30 years have come in the area of services (Keller, 2008).

1.2 Problem Discussion

Traditional consumer research generally stresses the idea of positive consumption of brands (Lee et al., 2009a), and also the development on favourable consumer-brand relationship to support positive consumer behaviour (He, Li & Harris, 2012; Lopez & Sicilia, 2013; Quinton, 2013).

However, issues such as brand avoidance and brand hate have received more attention, as the importance of knowing what consumers do not want has been identified (Lee et al., 2009a; Liao, Chou & Lin, 2015). Various explanations for avoiding certain brands may exist, but these have not been researched to a wider extent. The specific topic brand avoidance has become more interesting and significant to scholars, managers, and consumers (Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009b). When only studying successful companies, one may never recognize the causes of unsuccessful businesses. Consequently, studying consumption phenomenon excluding its antithesis, will most likely limit the process of gaining knowledge about consumers (Lee, Fernandez & Hyman, 2009c).

When looking narrowly at the existing literature, it becomes clear that most findings observing anti-consumption emphasize the dissatisfaction with products and services (Lee et al., 2009b). This exemplifies a gap in the consumer behaviour studies regarding brand avoidance. It is important, specifically for marketers, to understand why consumers have negative attitudes, emotions, and relationships towards specific brands, and therefore consciously start to avoid them (Knittel, Beurer & Berndt, 2016). Of all threats, consumer avoidance is most likely to harm brand relationship quality (McCull-Kennedy, Patterson, Smith & Brady, 2009).

Moreover, there is less research into services branding but it is vitally important for brand success of both its image and its identity. Services branding has mostly relied upon the assumption of having the same ideas as traditional product brand management (De Chernatony, Drury & Segal-Horn, 2004), and efforts in defining and measuring quality have come largely from the goods sector. However, knowledge about goods quality is insufficient to understand service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985), which Crosby (1979) defines as “conformance to requirements”. Services can be seen as less tangible than products, hence more likely to vary in quality, depending on the person providing them. Therefore, branding can be particularly essential for service brands in order to manage intangibility and inconsistency issues (Keller, 2008).

Furthermore, it can be concluded that the spreading of negative information about firms and brands can have serious consequences (Bailey, 2004). Since the quality of the consumer-brand relationship contributes greatly to the financial outcome (Liao et al., 2015), and as a brand is considered a market-based asset when it adds value to the company by helping to enhance and sustain the cash flow for the company, it is of great interest for marketers (Srivastava, Shervani and Fahey 1998). It is therefore relevant to investigate in the drivers of service brand avoidance in order to get a more complete image of the market. This will help to prevent the causes of service brand avoidance, at least to a greater extent, and to gain improved knowledge of the market behaviour.

1.3 Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the drivers of why people deliberately avoid certain service brands. Based upon the purpose, two main research questions and one sub-question have been formulated.

1. What are the drivers of brand avoidance in the service industry?
2. How can the drivers identified connect to previous research, primarily made by Lee et al. (2009b) and later revised by Knittel et al. (2016)?
3. Is it possible to draw conclusions regarding all services?

1.4 Delimitation

This research will not be precisely connected to any specific service category or market since the field of study is not yet greatly explored, hence it is considered to be more representative to investigate a less narrowed field. As a result of previous studies regarding the product field within brand avoidance, the authors believe the study of the complete service industry exclusively to be a suitable supplement to earlier findings of both products and services.

However, the research will delimit itself in terms of country and age. Firstly, the studies will be examined in Sweden solely with participants speaking Swedish as their native language. This will ease the communication with the respondents and minimize any possible errors due to language barriers. The delimitation of country will also help the researchers to access interviewees from personal networks located in Sweden, and thus be time saving as the study comprises limits in time. Secondly, the authors will include participants only above the age of 20, mainly because people below that age are considered to not have the experiences required, neither do they in most occurrences have an economy relevant for the study.

2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents a theoretical framework in order to understand the subject of the paper; service brand avoidance. The characteristics of services and how those can be distinguished are presented. Furthermore, previous literature in avoiding consumption such as anti-consumption and boycotting are defined and followed by a thorough explanation of the drivers of brand avoidance identified in earlier studies.

2.1 Services

According to Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2012, p. 5) a service can be defined as: *“all economic activities whose output is not a physical product or construction, is generally consumed at the time it is produced, and provides added value in forms (such as convenience, amusement, timeliness, or health) that are essentially intangible concerns of its first purchaser”*.

Services are characterized by four factors recognized in the definition: intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability. Each factor represents distinctive features of a service. A service cannot be seen, felt, tasted or touched in the same way as a product (Wilson et al., 2012). Those traits distinguish the intangibility of a service since it is often a performance or an action. The complexity of a service, in sense of the not similar outcomes that might occur, is called heterogeneity. Services may differ from case to case, depending on both the customer and the supplier of the service, which contributes to the heterogeneity of services. Furthermore, services are inseparable from the supplier, and in most cases the service is sold first and produced later. The production often involves customer presence, which affects the service experience. Another force that affects the experience is other customers that may be present during the production of a service. A service is perishable meaning that it cannot be stored, saved, returned or resold (Wilson et al., 2012). These four well-documented characteristics of services – intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability – must be acknowledged for a full understanding of service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

A general method used to recognize values for a new brand in the goods industry is to research consumers' needs, thenceforth develop a manufacturing process and a communication approach that are fundamental to the brand's principles (De Chernatony et al., 2004). In the services segment personnel have a larger effect on creating the brand's values, hence they need to be more observant regarding the determination of brand values (De Chernatony et al., 2004).

2.2 Critical Issues of Services

Companies today believe that more efficient competition comes from improved customer satisfaction (Wilson et al., 2012). The customer satisfaction derives from perception of the service quality delivered and how

satisfactory the experience is (Wilson et al., 2012). Today's situation indicates that many companies offer services that meet basic expectations of customers. Moreover, the services also fulfil the functional requirements demanded by the customers. Therefore companies may draw on the opportunity to develop strategies that enables superior service quality delivered (Sandström, Edvardsson, Kristensson, & Magnusson, 2008). Service quality and satisfaction are two similar expressions, but they are not to be mistaken for being the same. The two expressions originate and result in different aspects (Sandström et al., 2008). According to Sandström et al. (2008) satisfaction can be seen as a result of service quality, where service quality is a product of five dimensions of service: responsiveness, empathy, assurance, tangibles, and reliability. *Responsiveness* is the ability of providing quick and high quality service to the customers, at the same time *empathy* is important since it is the relationship between the personnel and customer. *Assurance* regards the expertise provided by the personnel to increase the credibility. Moreover, tangibles are all the physical evidence that can be found when delivering a service. Lastly, the confidence that the service will be delivered persistently and accurately on time depends on the *reliability*. All of these five strategies create service quality and are crucial to a service's success (Wilson et al., 2012).

There are several measurements to service quality (Calabrese, 2012), but the dominating tool and a paradigm in the field, is SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988a; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988b; Calabrese, 2012). SERVQUAL is based on the idea of gaps between customer expectation and customer perception of service quality (Calabrese, 2012).

Expectations have a vast role in services since that is the reference point for customers when evaluating the service from the actual performance. Consumers have a *zone of tolerance*, which is the gap between *desired service* that is what the consumers wish for and *adequate service* that is the least acceptable service. However, if a service not delivers the expected service it becomes a service failure and may lead to customers dissatisfaction and exit from the company (Wilson et al., 2012).

Servicescape is a part of the physical evidence when delivering a service, and mostly all tangible objects related to the facility where the service is carried out are included in the servicescape. Both the exterior and the interior measures of the facility such as parking, landscape, exterior and interior design, layout, lightning, and scents, comprises the servicescape. The customer's service experience is influenced by the tangibles available to the extent that memories and feelings are often connected to tangibles in order to actually evaluate a service, hence the servicescape plays a critical role for satisfaction (Wilson et al., 2012).

According to Bitner (1992) and Wilson et al. (2012) the servicescape where the service is produced is highly visible to customers and can therefore impact customers' experience of the service. Bitner (1992) also states that the perception of the servicescape together with the emotions connected to the servicescape can lead to positive or negative emotions towards the organization or brand. Consequently, the negative emotions considered

internal responses may lead to avoidance of the company or brand (Bitner, 1992).

2.3 Avoiding Consumption

It is significant for marketers to understand both of the different reasons for avoiding consumption, as each cause requires special managerial actions (Banister & Hogg, 2004). Consumers often purchase brands in order for them to give positive benefits, and to build their identities through the products and services they use (Lee et al., 2009a). As stated, less investigation emphasizes on the reverse concept when consumers reject brands. However, understanding why consumers avoid products and services, and knowing what consumers do not want, is highly valuable and important for managers (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Lee et al., 2009a). Researchers suggest that the brands consumers intentionally avoid are an important aspect of both individual and group identity, as well as distastes could say a lot about consumers personality (Hogg & Banister, 2001).

This theoretical framework will include different aspects of avoiding consumption as well as the brand avoidance framework will be explained in depth. Avoiding consumption does not explore occurrences where consumers do not purchase brands because they are too expensive, unavailable, or inaccessible, as such behaviour is intuitive and therefore does not improve understanding in the research of brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a).

2.3.1 Anti-Consumption

The incentives for anti-consumption can vary among personal, political, and environmental concerns. It does not only expose a general reduction in consumers' behaviour, but also confirm that anti-consumption can be aimed towards specific products, services, and brands (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). According to Zavestoki (2002) anti-consumption, refers to "a resistance to, distaste of, or even resentment or rejection of consumption". Hogg, Banister and Stephenson (2009) further state that rejection is at the heart of anti-consumption. It can be seen in different forms, and have varying levels of visibility. Current branding research has investigated positive consumer brand relationships such as brand love and affection or emotional attachment, which consumers commonly have with frequently used brands, expressing the idea of customer loyalty (Knittel et al., 2016). But as mentioned, this investigation will focus on the reverse notion of consumer behaviour, avoiding brands. Active behaviours can form one of the ideas, resistance (e.g. boycotting, ethical consumption, voluntary simplicity). Rejection, on the other hand, illustrates a more passive behaviour. Rejection covers services or products not purchased nor accessed, and brands not chosen, and thus much more challenging to identify and respond to (Hogg et al., 2009).

2.3.2 The Undesired Self

Hogg and Banister (2001) argue that it is of central significance in consumer behaviour research to recognize how individuals define themselves through their consumption experiences. Notions of disgust and rejection in

consumption can be associated with the “undesired self” and “undesired end state”, which is important to understand since they potentially translate into the rejection of products and services (Hogg & Banister, 2001). Lee et al. (2009a) discuss these concepts further by stating that consumers protect their identity by avoiding brands that represent their undesired self, meaning that they avoid brands that are related to negative reference groups, inauthenticity, or a loss of individuality. The undesired self is the most relevant physiological construct for brand avoiding consumption (Lee et al., 2009a).

The choice of consumers’ acceptance or rejection of brands, are often based on their symbolic attributes. The negative features of consumption decisions carry important symbolic meaning for consumers when creating their personal, social, and cultural characteristics (Lee et al., 2009a). Earlier studies also suggest that consumers avoid certain brands that could possibly add undesired meaning for them, or brands they consider to be dissimilar to their existing self-concept (Lee et al., 2009a).

2.3.3 Boycott

Organizational disidentification can occur when consumers distance themselves from brands and boycott the products or services of companies that they believe are unrelated to their own values and beliefs (Lee et al., 2009a). The concept of boycotting seems to be synonymous with brand avoidance even though dissimilarities can be found (Friedman, 1985). Friedman (1985) states that boycotting appears when consumers refrain from purchasing products or services when some form of ideological discontent with a company or country arises. Hirschman (1970) further argues that boycotting builds upon the idea that the boycotter will re-enter the relationship once certain complaints, for instance, change of policy by the company are adjusted. The most recognizable difference between brand avoidance and boycotting is that boycotting is often triggered by attitudes of how a company or a brand is dealing with political opinions (Friedman, 1985).

2.4 Brand Avoidance

Brand avoidance is applicable when consumers avoid a brand despite the fact that the brand is accessible and the consumers have the financial resources to purchase the brand. However, brand avoidance is a multifarious phenomenon and there are several explanations for avoiding brands. More specifically, brand avoidance focuses on the deliberate rejection of brands (Lee et al., 2009a). Compared to similar concepts previously explained, the investigation of brand avoidance aims to recognize why consumers put brands into their inept sets and choose to avoid a purchase even though they are financially capable to access the brand (Lee et al., 2009a; Hogg & Banister, 2001). In contrast to boycotting, there is no guarantee that the consumer will re-enter the relationship with the brand in the future when brand avoidance occur (Lee et al., 2009a).

Previous investigators offer the idea that brand avoidance is the anti-thesis of brand loyalty, and the term brand avoidance is used almost as a synonym to brand switching (Olivia, Oliver & MacMillan, 1992). Lately, this phenomenon

has been further explored by Lee et al. (2009b), and according to Lee et al. (2009a), earlier categorization of avoiding consumption has been too one-dimensional and the focus has been aimed at only one aspect such as politically motivated brand rejection (Sandıkçı & Ekici, 2009).

Moreover, Lee et al. (2009b) argue that brand avoidance can occur when brand promises have been undelivered, broken, or when they appear to be socially damaging or lacking functionally. Lee et al. (2009b) further discuss other outcomes of brand avoidance that arise when a consumer's values regarding a brand are changing and become incongruent with their own values. This may not only result in avoidance of a specific brand but also could the promise of a competitor be more appealing, and consequently lead to a purchase of a competitor on the market to satisfy the needs of the consumer (Lee et al., 2009b).

2.5 Brand Avoidance Framework

Lee et al. (2009a) added new relevant and important information to the field of brand avoidance by exploring that there are different reasons behind the phenomena depending on the consumer. Lee et al. (2009b) then established a revised framework for brand avoidance containing four different categories: experiential avoidance, deficit-value avoidance, identity avoidance, and moral avoidance. The model by Lee et al. (2009b) was later revised by Knittel et al. (2016) with a fifth category to complement previous studies: advertising. In order to develop existing literature, the following model will be used in the thesis for further research.

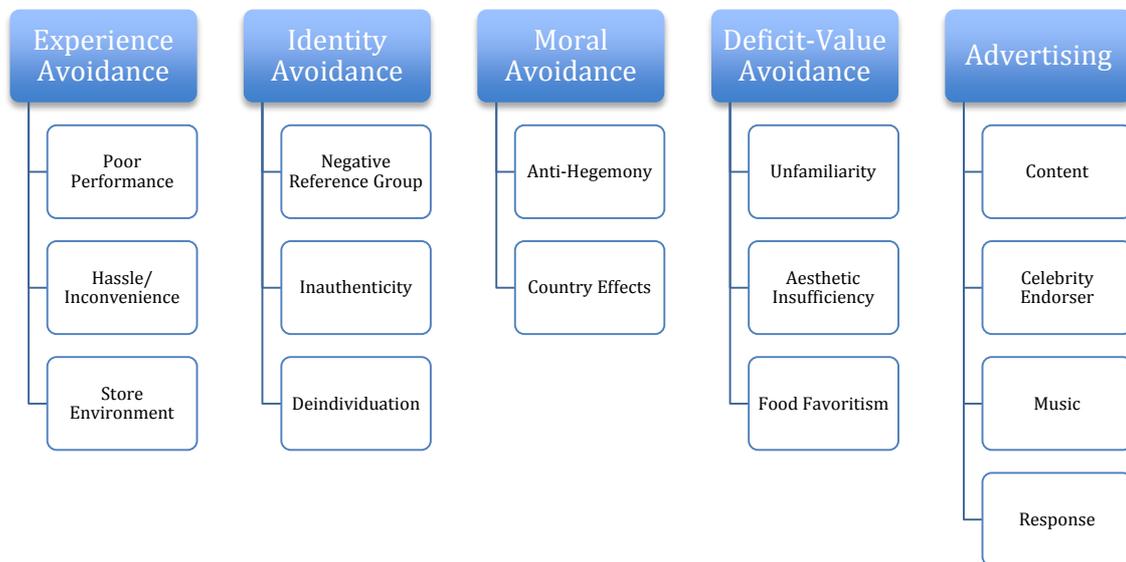


Figure 2.1 The Expanded Framework - Five types of Brand Avoidance
Source: Knittel et al., 2016, p. 11

2.5.1 Experiential Avoidance

The main reason to avoid both products and services in the category of experiential avoidance is negative first hand experiences, typically involving

unmet expectations (Lee et al., 2009a). The value of a brand is partially based on the consumer's expectations about the actual happening that will occur when the product or service is purchased (Dall'Olmo Riley & De Chernatony, 2000). Basically, negative experiences of brands lead to dissatisfaction and later avoidance of brands that fail to meet expectations of customers (Kelley, Hoffman & Davis, 1993; Lee et al., 2009a). Lee et al. (2009b) discovered additional findings suggesting that it is the customer's construction of the brand as an undelivered brand promise, which subsequently motivate the participant to avoid a specific brand (Lee et al., 2009b). A promise is a motive to expect something from a product or service that will or will not occur, so consequently a brand promise leads to expectations (Grönroos, 2006). Promises can be based on real or imaginary resources, and can therefore be either unspoken or obvious (Lee et al., 2009b).

A negative disconfirmation between the customer's expectations and the actual delivery of the brand, influences all occurrences of experiential avoidance, and can be implemented in both service and product brands (Lee et al., 2009a). There are three different reasons associated with this type of brand avoidance: *poor performance*, *inconvenience* of repairing failed purchase, and unpleasant *store environment* (Lee et al., 2009a).

The customers does not always have a memory of the actual product brand, but only recollect the retailer where the brand can be purchased. The retail brand obtains negative associations and is blamed for *poor performance* (Lee et al., 2009a). Since a brand is a developing value constellation (De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998), the product brand and the retail brand become linked. The negative association of the retail brand, caused by product or service failure, may therefore generate in an assumption that poorer retail brands tend to stock poorer product brands (Lee et al., 2009a).

A failed product disconfirms the customer's expectations, and adds redundant complications. Hence, the brand is not only rebuilt to represent an unmet expectation, but also increases *inconvenience* for the participant. Keaveney (1995) identified following critical events in service encounters leading to customer-switching behaviour: inconvenience, pricing, core service failures, service encounter failures, employee responses to service failures, ethical problems and attraction by competitors. The same reasons can also be identified as drivers for brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a).

The last cause of experiential avoidance can be initiated by unpleasant brand experiences within the brand's *store environment*, referring to non-interpersonal factors of the shopping experiences, such as stimuli, ambience, and social factors (Lee et al., 2009b; Arnold, Reynolds, Ponder & Lueg, 2005). For instance, a dirty and noisy environment at a restaurant or grocery store, which could possibly result in avoidance of the brand.

2.5.2 Identity Avoidance

The drivers of identity avoidance can be described as a negative symbolic meaning that a certain brand represents to a consumer and how those values are incongruent with his or her self-concept (Lee et al., 2009a). The theories of undesired self and disidentification are frequent throughout the idea of

identity avoidance. Not only do consumers purchase desirable brands, but also maintain their self-concept by avoiding brands perceived to be incongruent with the desired or actual self-concept (Hogg & Banister, 2001). Lee et al. (2009b) further contribute to the literature by stating the concept of a symbolically unappealing promise as an innovative, and more managerially important way of understanding the idea of identity avoidance. It is possible for consumers to interpret certain brand promises as symbolically unappealing, and therefore have the potential to get them closer to the undesired self. The disidentification with the brand's symbolically unappealing promises will consequently lead to brand avoidance in order for the consumer to manage his or her self-concept (Lee et al., 2009b).

Disidentification concept indicates that consumers may develop their self-concept by disidentifying with organizations that are inconsequential with their own values (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001). The fundamental idea is that consumers engage in brand avoidance because they want to avoid to be associated with brands they perceive to have negative brand meaning or values. For instance, a consumer may choose to disidentify with a product or service for being to "cheap", and consequently avoid budget brands to distance himself or herself from an undesired self of the past. Specifically, consumers avoid a brand because it represents a *negative reference group*, a *lack of authenticity*, or the *loss of individuality* (Lee et al., 2009b).

Within undesired self, consumers may also avoid brands that are associated with a *negative reference group*, because of the fact that those products or services are symbolically opposing to the individual's sense of self (Lee et al., 2009a). The concept of the undesired self is similar to avoidance of a negative reference group, although a sensitive distinction between these two theories exists. The idea of a consumer's undesired self is generally concrete and specific, while the perception of negative reference groups may be less precise and more stereotypical in practice, thus based on generalisations of the characteristic brand user (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Lee et al., 2009a).

Another reason for identity avoidance occurs when a consumer perceives a type of person that obviously consumes branded equipment as being *inauthentic*, an undesirable characteristic that he or she does not want to integrate with the self-concept. Subsequently, the consumer avoids the association with the brand because of the inauthentic identity presented by its stereotypical consumer (Lee et al., 2009a). Some brands can even become too popular, since over-commercialization, or mass production to meet mainstream demands of a brand can lead to a loss of authenticity (Holt, 2002).

The final sub-category in identity avoidance is *deindividuation*, where consumers avoid mainstream brands in order to abstain from a loss of individuality and self-identity. The avoidance arises when the consumer, in a symbolic meaning, does not want to be the same as everyone rather than the functional quality of the product or service. Instead of adding meaning through the consumption of brands, the use of some brands may actually debilitate or damage individuality (Lee et al., 2009a).

2.5.3 Moral Avoidance

The drivers of moral avoidance are ideological incompatibility and the critical view of the role of marketing in society. It is the consumer's perception of a brand as a socially detrimental promise that motivates moral avoidance (Lee et al., 2009b). Contrasting to the other avoidance types that are based on how brand promises impact the individual's immediate well-being, moral avoidance contains a societal focus that extends outside the needs of the consumer (Lee et al., 2009a). The expression ideology is used to refer to political and socio-economic beliefs. According to Hodge and Kress (1993), ideology is "a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view". Lee et al. (2009b) suggest that moral avoidance consists of two core explanations for brand avoidance: *country effects* and *anti-hegemony*.

Issues regarding *country effects* occur when a consumer feels animosity towards a specific country, and consequently start to dislike iconic brands of those countries. For instance, brands such as Coke and McDonald's are representative of the countries from which they originate. In other situations, consumers who are financially patriotic may have reasons to avoid products and services that they consider redundant for the economic development and well being of the country (Lee et al., 2009b).

In terms of *anti-hegemony*, or against domination, the previous findings in the area of consumer resistance are similar (Holt, 2002). In contrast to other types of brand avoidances, moral avoidance is based on the perception of the brand at an ideological level and how it negatively impacts the wider society. Some consumers avoid leading brands in order to prevent the growth of monopolies and large businesses that are questioned concerning corporate irresponsibility. Usually, multi-national firms have a greater visibility and they are often under higher inspection, hence they are held responsible for their actions (Lee et al., 2009b). These findings are similar to previous research on consumer resistance, where larger firms have a higher risk of being targets of consumer criticism (Holt, 2002). Consumers may also have a reason to avoid brands when they perceive products or services as being impersonal. Furthermore, they dislike the way large brands dehumanize the representatives of the brand, and rather prefer to foster a local business relationship (Lee et al., 2009b).

The final characteristic of moral avoidance is when consumers believe that the avoidance of a brand is their moral duty, if the brand is perceived to be oppressive and overly dominant. This ethical viewpoint is another distinguishing feature of moral avoidance, not visible in the other categories of brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009b).

2.5.4 Deficit-value Avoidance

Lee et al. (2009b) developed the first model of Lee et al. (2009a) with a fourth category: deficit-value avoidance, and it is covered by three sub-themes: *unfamiliarity*, *aesthetic insufficiency*, and *food favouritism*. This type of avoidance occurs when consumers perceive a brand representing an unacceptable cost to benefit trade-off. From an ethical perspective, the fundamental issue regarding deficit-value avoidance is the rejection of a brand

because of the unacceptable trade-off that it characterizes to the consumer (Lee et al., 2009b). The sub-themes in deficit-value avoidance are all similar in the way that they involve an unfavourable perception of the brand's utility. Continuing with the negative promises framework, Lee et al. (2009b) believe that the idea of a functionally inadequate promise is an appropriate comparison for understanding this type of avoidance (Lee et al., 2009b).

When consumers compare *unfamiliar brands* with brands they better recognize, an avoidance of the unfamiliar brand may occur, since they believe those brands to be lower in quality and higher in risk (Richardson, Jain & Dick, 1996).

The second sub-theme of deficit-value avoidance is *aesthetic insufficiency*, where the consumers use the appearance of a brand as a measurement of the functional value and therefore avoid certain brands lacking aesthetical features, such as packaging, specific colours, and utilitarian requirements (Lee et al., 2009b). Even though the consumer is dubious about the connection between aesthetic and quality, he or she may still prefer the product 'to look good'. From a practical perspective, beauty stimulates confidence, while aesthetic inadequacy does the opposite (Lee et al., 2009b).

The last sub-category is *food favouritism*, which contains consumers avoiding food associated with certain value-deficit brands, but can still purchase other products with the same brand name (Lee et al., 2009b). When it comes to decisions concerning food alternatives, consumers are more likely to be 'better safe than sorry' and consequently avoid unfamiliar, contaminated, or harmful brands (Green, Draper & Dowler, 2003). The brand promise of lower quality for a better price is sufficient for specific products and services, but not for food (Lee et al., 2009b).

2.5.5 Advertising

Knittel et al. (2016) have identified an additional category to the brand avoidance framework initially made by Lee et al. (2009b), namely advertising avoidance, as a further reason for brand avoidance. Knittel et al. (2016) suggest that advertising as a driver for brand avoidance consists of four specific components: *content*, *celebrity endorser*, *music*, and *response*.

The *content* of advertisement is built upon several different components in advertising such as the story and the message. The fundamental idea conveyed to the consumers is represented by these factors, and thus they are a significant part of the advertisement. The content of the advertisement is an influencer of disliking a specific commercial, which later may lead to a brand avoidance movement of that brand. Another reason for consumers to avoid a brand in the context of advertisement could be that the audience sees an advert as provocative (Knittel et al., 2016). The use of violence is perceived as distasteful by some consumers and therefore lead to an avoidance of the brand using that type of advertisement, since strong taboo ideas has a negative effect on brand attitudes and buying intentions. The fact that an audience react differently depending on the emotions towards taboo themes, a

brand may be careful with using that marketing strategy (Sabri & Obermiller, 2012).

The second sub-theme, *celebrity endorser*, refers to the fact that the consumer solely focuses on the endorser of the product or service, rather than how the advertisement itself is perceived. The consumers regularly identify themselves with the celebrity, and consequently purchase the brand as an outcome of the positive symbolic association (Walker, Langmeyer & Langmeyer, 1992; Apéria & Back, 2004). Celebrities have an image and subsequently transfer that image to the advertised brand (Apéria & Back, 2004). If a consumer dislikes a celebrity it can lead to a disapproval of the advertised brand as well, and result in brand avoidance (Knittel et al., 2016).

The advertising avoidance referring to *music* can be identified as one of the most commonly used creative tools in advertising to stimulate the audience and their estimation of an advert (Lantos & Craton, 2013; Shimp & Andrews, 2013). Music affects attitudes and can have an impact on purchasing behaviour, and consequently also influence an avoiding behaviour (Knittel et al., 2016).

The last sub-category, *response* to advertisement, refers to the individual interpretation of the message, as a part of the communication process, and is dependent on the receiver (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman & Hansen, 2009). Meaning that the same advertisement generates different outcomes and responses, depending on the viewers (Percy & Elliott 2009). This type of reaction is often vague in terms of details described and level of rationality, but can be explained as “stupid”, “annoying, or “senseless” advertisement (Knittel et al., 2016).

3 Methodology

In this chapter the research design in terms of mainly exploratory studies will be presented as well as the abductive and qualitative research used. In order for the reader to easier understand the collection of data, the method of semi-structured interviews will be outlined together with the sampling approach. The chapter ends with a review considering trustworthiness of the research to strengthen the reliability of the paper.

3.1 Research Design

The nature of the research design is closely linked to the purpose of the research, and can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. The decision of the most suitable approach for the study is connected to the research question (Saunders et al., 2012).

Exploratory studies explore topics of interest to gain understanding and insights. This way of conducting research is effective if the precise nature of the problem is uncertain. Exploratory studies come with a wide range of data collecting methods (Saunders et al., 2012). However, due to the complexity of the topic of interest it is important to collect data that are exploring enough to be relevant. Interviewing experts on the subject, in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups are all common methods used to exploratory studies, which support that the study executed for this paper suits the type of interviews selected. Another important aspect is that the exploratory purpose forces the interviews to be unstructured in order to access high-quality data contributions (Saunders et al., 2012).

Descriptive studies highlight the importance of acquiring knowledge about the topic before collecting data. This type of study can be an extension or a part of exploratory or explanatory studies. The focus lies on describing an accurate picture of events, persons or situations. It has been criticized for being too descriptive instead of reaching further to conclusions (Saunders et al., 2012).

Explanatory studies is linked to quantitative methods. The focus lies on the relationship between variables deriving from a situation or problem. The data collected can be statistical investigations that through correlation may be connected to various events of interest (Saunders et al., 2012).

This study is mainly exploratory in its nature, since the primary goal is to investigate and explore the drivers of service brand avoidance, and is closely connected to the purpose driving the thesis. However, since the thesis investigate the drivers of service brand avoidance, the drivers also need to be described in the events of the consumers, and these descriptions lay the foundation of the empirical material and later the analysis. Therefore, it is important to highlight the descriptive elements of the thesis essential for the outcome. Thus, to gain insight of personal acts and the understanding of why people act as they do in particular situations an exploratory design with descriptive elements will apply.

3.2 Research Approach

3.2.1 Abductive Approach

When research is conducted to explore phenomenon, recognize patterns and detect themes in order to create new models or modify already existing ones, an abductive is suitable. Abductive research approach can be considered a combination of the two approaches deduction and induction, with some elements combined from each approach. Inductive reasoning is built on the foundation of empirical observations that leads to the concept. Deductive reasoning is based on the concept or theory, which decides which data that is relevant for the data collection (Yin, 2011). Thus, the deduction approach focus on theory and moves towards data, and induction form data to theory, where an abductive approach fall into an on-going process that goes back and forth between data and theory (Saunders et al., 2012).

The deductive approach is common in areas of economics, natural science, and formal social science theories of human behaviour, and is therefore more applicable on theoretical fields where the phenomena cannot always be observed. The deductive approach is built upon already existing knowledge and established theories, that through deductive reasoning leads to new theory building (Woodwell, 2014). In contrast to the inductive approach, the accuracy of the conclusion using the deductive approach is based on the premises on which the theory is built. Subsequently, the deductive approach is rarely criticized in terms of the interpretation of the result. However, there are fields where the deductive approach is limited and not effective. To research the world or human behaviour where assumptions are not constant, the deductive approach will not work and the result can be discussed. Lastly, deductive reasoning is mostly sensitive when the assumptions are dubious (Woodwell, 2014).

The inductive approach works by using the collected empirical data in order to come to conclusion (Woodwell, 2014). The empirical data is not founded in any particular findings of previous knowledge, as an opposite of the deductive approach. The empirical data collected is later interpreted in order to reach a conclusion and develop theories or concepts. This reasoning approach is based on the set of limited observations that is required to retrieve empirical data. One of the issues with using an inductive approach is the generalisation that can happen by giving only one explanation (Woodwell, 2014). Consequently, it is important to engage a process that can eliminate alternative explanations. Another problem that might occur is the fact that the sample does not represent the general population and will therefore lead to misguided information, and these issues are always a risk when conducting qualitative research (Woodwell, 2014).

The most appropriate approach for this thesis is the abductive approach, as it consists of various elements of both inductive and deductive outlines. However, the approach in the paper tends to comprise more inductive elements than deductive as the particular research field is rather unexplored, and there is a lack of theories to deduct from. Although, Lee et al. (2009b) developed a general model regarding brand avoidance from which parts of the thesis is based on. The brand avoidance framework of Lee et al. (2009b) together with the revised model by Knittel et al. (2016) can be considered the initial steps of the research. Previous literature generalises theories regarding both products and services, and thus opens up a gap to explore whether service brand avoidance is similar or depends on other parameters. The aim of this

thesis is to connect previous literature, if possible, to service brand avoidance. By focusing on the data collected to recognize patterns and behaviour, either a new model or a revised model of Lee et al. (2009b) and Knittel et al. (2016) will be presented. Hence, the focus continues to return back and forth between theory and empirical data, in order to develop a model exclusively suitable for service brand avoidance.

3.2.2 Qualitative Approach

In order to collect data a suitable approach for data collection must be chosen. There are two main approaches, namely qualitative and quantitative approach, and data collection can also be completed with a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approach. Moreover, the different types of research approaches are more usable in some types of research, therefore it is important to thoroughly reflect upon which one to use (Woodwell, 2014).

Quantitative research is often associated with large numbers and statistics. This type of research functions by using a large sample and after analyzing the data collected a conclusion can be drawn. This approach is suitable for confirming previous knowledge or identifying trends. It is shown that quantitative research often leads to understanding of general trends opposed to qualitative research, where detailed information of a particular cause can be found (Woodwell, 2014).

Qualitative research can be described as a profound circumstantial understanding of those being studied. The sampling quantity of qualitative research is fewer than quantitative research because of the complexity in the data collected (Woodwell, 2014). Different areas tend to lean different ways regarding which research method to use. Natural science leans more on quantified data in order to come to general conclusion of different patterns. Social science and humanities on the other hand can work with both quantitative and qualitative, but to get a greater understanding of the behaviour of a phenomenon, emphasis is put on qualitative studies (Woodwell, 2014).

Since this thesis investigates the drivers that motivate service brand avoidance, a qualitative research approach is more suitable for the objective. Thus, a qualitative research approach will provide a more thorough understanding of why consumers deliberately choose to avoid certain service brands. In order to understand why people behave as they do, it is essential to conduct interviews providing information of which parameters that are taken into consideration when deliberately avoiding service brands. The interviews will also give an insight in why these parameters are determinants in service brand avoidance.

3.3 Data Collection Method

Data collection can be done in several different ways, given that the approach is to acquire qualitative data eliminates several of them. A common way to collect qualitative data is through opinion seeking which includes interviews, focus groups and open-ended survey research. Through a qualitative perspective, interviews are most often valuable since they provide the possibility to identify others characteristics, opinions and perspectives (Woodwell, 2014).

Commonly used typologies to separate the different forms of interviews available are structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews, mostly used in quantitative data collections, are standardised where the interviewer asks questions from a questionnaire and record the answers (Saunders et al., 2012). Both unstructured and semi-structured interviews can be considered non-standardised, meaning that there is no predetermined questionnaire sheet that strictly will be followed. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with some structure where the interviewer has a sheet with a few questions and themes that will be covered. This technique stimulates discussion and makes the interviewee reflect more easily about the theme. Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, are conducted without prepared sheets of questions to rest on. During this informal method, it is important for the interviewer to focus on the aspect required to be explored since the interviewee will talk about events, beliefs and behaviour more straightforwardly (Saunders et al., 2012).

This thesis is qualitative in its nature, thus the use of semi-structured interviews are suitable. Compared to unstructured interviews the thesis requires some structure during the interviews since its primary goal is to identify which drivers that motivate deliberate service brand avoidance. It is therefore necessary to make use of opinion seeking research to explore and understand why people act as they do.

3.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are relevant in the research for this thesis, since it can be conducted to explore a deeper insight of the interviewee. It provides an opportunity to engage the interviewee to explain or add information to the topic. This type of interview invites to a discussion making it possible for the interviewer to not only explain phenomenon where the interviewee is confused, but also to probe the interviewee's answers which can lead to valuable data and insights (Saunders et al., 2012).

However, the interview is semi-structured in nature due to the preparations of questions but the order of questions is not important (see appendix 1). During the interviews, the questions were repeated several times as the interview was built to inspire and engage the interviewee. Consequently, it was possible for the participant to recall new stories and present valuable data as the dialogue went on.

3.4 Sampling Selection

When collecting data, some research fields are narrow enough, which opens up the possibility to collect data from the whole population (Saunders et al., 2012). In the case of this thesis it was not achievable to collect data from a total population. When researching service brand avoidance the total population is all service consumers who make deliberate choices of purchasing or not. Therefore, instead of using the total population it was suitable to use sampling. A sample is a subset of the total population that represent the full set in a meaningful way (Saunders et al., 2012; Becker, 1998). It was also relevant to use sampling for this examination as the impractical factor to study the full population was a decisive aspect as well as lack of resources in terms of money and time (Saunders et al., 2012).

There are several existing sampling techniques, each suitable for different scenarios. Different sampling techniques can at the broadest categorization be divided into probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is most commonly used when investigating quantitative data with regards of surveys and consists of several ways of choosing the sample, all resulting in a multi-stage sampling method. Non-probability sampling is used in order to subjectively be able to select the samples, which is common in business research (Saunders et al., 2012).

3.4.1 Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling is the most common form of haphazard sampling, where the samples are chosen out of convenience for the researcher. This form of sampling method is criticized in terms of credibility of the research (Saunders et al., 2012). Saunders et al. (2012) highlights that samples chosen out of convenience often meet the purposive sampling criteria. Convenience sampling can be used when resources are scarce, and if the time frame or financial resources are limited, convenience sampling is a way to still conduct the research (Saunders et al., 2012).

The convenience sampling was a suitable approach in order to accomplish the purpose of the thesis. The sampling criteria in this study is based on the idea that the people interviewed are consumers that deliberately commit purchase decisions, thus it was possible to interview anyone that fulfilled those requirements. By not allocating a large amount of time on the sampling process, more time was spent on analysing the data received. However, the credibility aspect may not apply fully on this thesis because of the low sample requirements, and the largest threat for using this method is bias issues. Nevertheless, the advantage in terms of money and time that comes with convenience sampling overweighs the negativities it brings.

3.4.2 Sampling Size

When collecting qualitative data through semi-structured interviews, it is difficult to determine a proper sampling size. Regarding interviews, there are no particular rules stating the general sampling sizes. The understanding, insights, and validity gained from the interviews are more likely to derive from the analysis of the collected data (Saunders et al., 2012). Nevertheless, when conducting semi-structured interviews literature recommend continuing collecting qualitative data, which means conducting supplementary interviews until the data collected reaches saturation. When the collected data provides only a few or no new insights, information or themes, saturation occurs. The suggested minimum sample size for semi-structured interviews is 5 to 25 (Saunders et al., 2012).

Moreover, when the numbers of interviews reached 13 it was agreed that no new information was collected. It was decided to conduct 3 additional interviews in order to confirm or disconfirm that saturation was reached. After 16 interviews there were no new themes, information, or insights at all, making the practical collection process complete.

3.5 Data Collection Process

The collection of data was done through semi-structured interviews, which gained several valuable insights regarding service brand avoidance. Before the actual interviews were conducted, the questions were tested, firstly on the authors followed by two external participants. The testing discovered a couple of minor flaws, which were solved, and subsequently the real interviews could begin. The questionnaire with the questions used during all the interviews can be found in appendix 1.

All of the interviews were constructed in the same way, where the interviewee initially was asked to define a brand and a service in order to create a more comfortable climate. Secondly, the interviewer shared a formal definition of the two concepts to generate a complete understanding of the subject. The following step allowed the interviewee to express what brands within the service sector that was favourable and why, which generated in an easier transition to the opposite, negative notions of brands. At this point, the interviewee was handed a paper with 44 different service brand logos (appendix 2) in order to increase the spectra of services that the interviewee came up with. Before continuing to the first actual question, the phenomenon brand avoidance was presented to the interviewee. A list of all participants can be found in table 1.

The first question was directly aimed at the subject and asked if the interviewee deliberately avoided any service brand. Here, the interviewee shared at least one or two stories related to service brand avoidance. However, it was obvious that the interviewees often had a hard time connecting it to services, since they found the concept easier applicable on products. Therefore, it was important for the interviewer to keep to services without making the interviewee uncomfortable, which could affect the sharing ability of the participant. The second question contained nearly the same content where the interviewee was supposed to imagine that they had all the money in the world and that all brands were available in order to open up the mind of the participant, even though the same premises as on the first question applied.

The following section consisted of five different scenarios where the interviewee and the interviewer discussed if any of these situations possibly could lead to brand avoidance. Originally, the scenarios were supposed to act as a “confirm or deny” section where previous literatures’ findings were discussed. However, the scenarios functioned as a help to open up the mind, and inspired the interviewee to recall personal stories, hence those became important for the thesis.

Lastly, the finishing question comprised a discussion where the interviewee was asked to share what reason that was the most common driver for people to engage in brand avoidance and a consideration of other causes than those discussed. Consequently, this led to new findings in terms of confirmation, but also new perspectives of service brand avoidance.

Table 1 List of Interviews

Interview	Gender	Age	Occupation	Duration (m:s)
A1	Female	56	Nurse	21:14

A2	Male	22	Industrial worker	23:32
A3	Female	25	Student	26:31
A4	Male	24	Student	39:21
A5	Male	24	Student	38:39
A6	Male	27	Student	34:24
A7	Male	24	Student	24:06
A8	Male	23	Student	30:53
B1	Male	46	IT-consultant	52:26
B2	Female	52	Middle-manager	47:16
B3	Female	25	Student	22:51
B4	Male	28	Student	24:40
B5	Male	22	Student	22:09
B6	Male	25	Student	33:14
B7	Male	25	Student	47:55
B8	Male	24	Student	31:59

3.6 Data Analysis Process

After the data was collected, the recordings were transcribed into quotes related to brand avoidance. The massive amount of quotes was later reduced and categorized depending on the cause of brand avoidance. Both authors coded the quotes together into the different categories to prevent biases or single angle views. When the collected data was coded, the essential findings were added to chapter 4 and later chapter 5 where the analysis continued. Connections to previous literature were recognized, but also patterns of new causes of brand avoidance were identified, allowing the authors to draw conclusions of the findings.

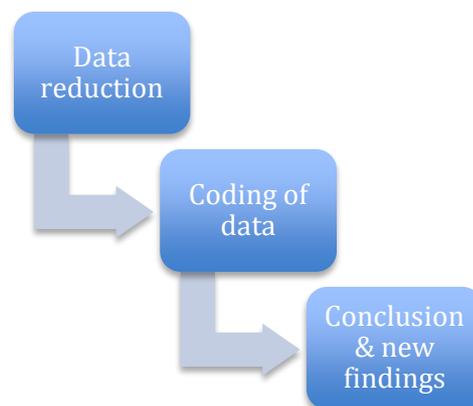


Figure 3.1 The Data Analysis Process

3.7 Trustworthiness

When conducting semi-structured interviews, the validity level is considered high since the interview opens up the questions and the interviewer may clarify the questions, which eliminates uncertainty of the interviewee. The interviewer may also

discover themes and explore the answers from multiple angles (Saunders et al., 2012).

Qualitative research reliability is questioned regarding whether other researchers would disclose comparable information. However, since semi-structured interviews can differ from interview to interview due to the complex findings that are expected, it is not essential that the interviews can be repeated as they mirror the reality at the time the data is collected (Saunders et al., 2012). Moreover, since the topic explored may be considered complex and dynamic, the necessity of using qualitative semi-structured interviews may outweigh the difficulties of replicate the study. An attempt to guarantee that the study could be replicated would not be realistic or possible without clarifying the power of this type of research. Therefore it is suggested to keep a clear research design where the motives support the decision of strategy, method, and data collected (Saunders et al., 2012).

The information gathered can also be questioned in matter of reliability due to several forms of bias. The interviewer can be bias through different actions during the interview, for instance hand-gestures, voice tone, and comments to the interviewee. The interviewee may be considered bias if the answers are not truthful or the interviewee withholds information (Saunders et al., 2012). Semi-structured interviews have a tendency to be invasive for the interviewee, since the aim is to understand complexity of a topic and seek explanations, which require information that can be considered sensitive. In order to avoid different forms of bias it is important for the interviewer to prepare for the interviews (Saunders et al., 2012).

Since convenience sampling was applied, all the interviewees were known, which made it possible for the interview to take place in a familiar environment. The interviewees were also informed that their contribution would be anonymous and could therefore share sensible information. A further reason to share sensible information could be the result of the relationship to the interviewer, which made the interviewee comfortable enough to share inner thoughts. Although, at the same time as the relationship can open up individuals it can also make individuals bias and not share the complete story or not even mention various scenarios that could have been important for the findings. Another negative aspect of using convenience sampling is that the participants may not qualify for the interviews, however, in this case with little requirements all participants were fully capable of participating. Finally, it was considered important that the interviewee was informed that there are no restrictions or wrong answers, in order to release tension that could appear.

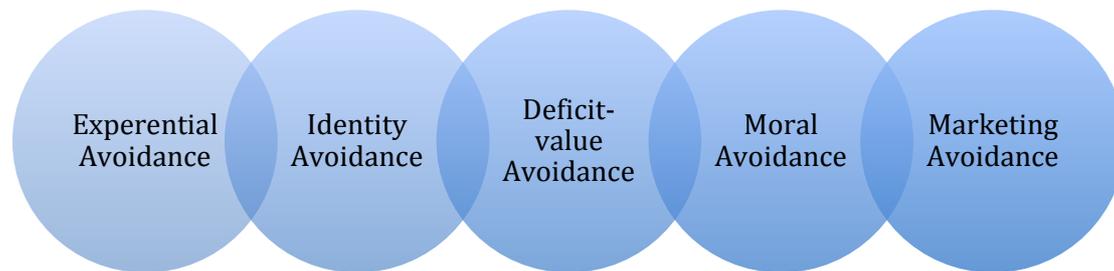
During the interviews the focus on the preparation was in line with the suggestions of Saunders et al. (2012) for overcoming biases. In order to complete the recommendations, the authors appeared professional and did not share more information to some of the interviewees nor any pre-hand information. Furthermore, the beginning of the interview was rather easy-going where the participant and the interviewer together reached definitions of the phenomenon that needed to be defined in order to proceed. The first few interviews gave the insight of people finding it difficult to recall actual service encounters or experiences, and to solve the issue some ideas of how to inspire the participants were discussed in order to be prepared for the rest of the remaining interviews. At last, the interviewers behaviours were

always appropriate during the interviews and more formal than usual in order to overcome the biases that might appear.

At last, the interviews were conducted in Swedish, which required translation for the thesis. The translation has been implemented by its qualifications in best way possible in order to convey the same message as the participants conveyed during the interviews. The translated quotations together with the original Swedish quotation can be found in appendix 3.

4 Empirical Findings

This chapter initially presents general findings from the interviews to provide the reader with a broad perspective of the results, followed by drivers of brand avoidance illustrated with a model. The model will be supported with quotations from the interviews and placed within the categories found.



*Figure 4.1 Main Categories of Service Brand Avoidance
Source: Developed by the authors*

4.1 General Findings

The aim of conducting semi-structured interviews was to gain deeper insights of people's behaviour regarding deliberate avoidance of service brands. The interviews quickly provided an insight in the broad spectra of different kinds of avoidance behaviour. However, during the interviews it became evident that people experienced a hard time to actually identify and describe services they use more or less frequently. Several interviewees expressed the difficulties of talking about services compared to products. This can be seen in a quote from participant B1:

“It is probably easier with products, that one may avoid certain product brands, services are probably a little more difficult in my opinion.”

B1 (male, 46)

Another participant highlighted the same issue when discussing the difficulties of realising service scenarios connected to brand avoidance:

“It is easier on products.”

B7 (male, 25)

Nevertheless, even if it was evident that people struggled in remembering and recalling services, each participant managed to share several stories connected to service brand avoidance in different ways.

The interviews gained another important insight on the issue of service brand avoidance. The different experiences and stories shared by the participants included a wide range of categories and brands, meaning that no general trends of either service categories or brands were identified, and the participants provided examples taken from different industries. As seen in appendix 3, participant A4 shared a story of a public transport company, Västtrafik, which basically has a monopoly in the Västra Götaland region, leading to brand avoidance, while participant B7 and A3 spoke about negative experiences of the mobile operator Halebop and Pizza Hut.

Among other drivers of service brand avoidance, one participant identified brand loyalty as a reason to avoid other brands. A scenario from A4, in appendix 3, revealed that the loyalty for the mobile operator Fello generated a more hostile attitude towards competitors, and consequently created service brand avoidance.

The findings and outcomes of the interviews generated a deeper knowledge of the fundamental drivers of service brand avoidance. However, various drivers could be found among different consumers, and some consumers also had more than one reason to avoid a brand. One example of a firm associated with avoidance by many participants was the airline Ryanair. The company was brought up several times during the interviews but was avoided for different reasons, as negative occurrences, unethical statements by the CEO, and deficit-value drivers, for instance, which can be found in appendix 3 in statements of participant B2, B3 and B4. Where also participant B4 had experienced more than one driver for service brand avoidance of the same brand.

4.2 Drivers of Brand Avoidance

After conducting the interviews, all of the answers from the participants were arranged into five categories: experiential, identity, deficit-value, moral, and advertising avoidance. The five drivers of service brand avoidance could all be connected to earlier studies by Lee et al. (2009b) and Knittel et al. (2016), and consequently be adapted into the model previously made by the authors mentioned. The following section will provide the readers with statements from the in-depth interviews in order to divide the answers into each category.

4.2.1 Experiential Avoidance

The type of service brand avoidance regarding self-experienced occasions was by far the most mentioned category among the participants. The central drivers for this type of avoidance was due to negative experiences, often related to unmet expectations since a high expectation easier may lead to dissatisfaction. The following example of SAS demonstrates that the anticipation of the brand led to unmet beliefs due to poor performance as the expectation was not fulfilled:

“When I flew with SAS to China last time, they had some sort of low price version. The plane was old and bad, and no beverage or anything was included. Then you had an expectation of what is

common practice for long flights and they did not deliver giving the expectation. It was probably because of the price class, it certainly says somewhere that it is not included, even if you can add that they did not live up to the expectation level, neither on service or entertainment.”

B1 (male, 46)

A brand obviously has to deliver a comprehensive service, however, many participants were clearly dissatisfied with the overall service performance of a firm. Participant A4 revealed that the poor performance and the unmet expectations generated in avoidance:

“If we take Pinchos for example, and when you have talked to other people where to go out eating, most people suggest Pinchos, but I have said no [...] I think it is a little overestimated and made it look better than it was, I believe. Maybe it is not anything wrong with the brand itself, but I have a negative attitude against it. For that reason, I would rather try, if we are eating tapas, another restaurant that I do not know of. They have a lack of service, and not the service that you expect from a restaurant. Mostly because they are using this app.”

A4 (male, 24)

Issues regarding core service failure were apparent in more than one interview. It obviously indicated that when a brand cannot deliver a complete service, especially the essential business that the customer should be able to expect, the brand avoidance behaviour is evident, showed by participant A6:

“I avoid 3 because I had service on my cell phone on, what it felt like, two places in Sweden. I could walk in the middle of Gothenburg without being able to talk [...] 3 will never have better service than Telia or Telenor whatever they do. Not even if I will get a phone for free and have to pay 100 SEK a month, I will not take them. I really do not like them.”

A6 (male, 27)

Another visible driver of avoidance arose when the environment was not satisfying. Due to unmet expectations, participant B2 consequently avoided the travel organizer SEMBO:

“SEMBO, I avoid them. It was when we rented an apartment in Italy and when we arrived it was horrible. It was nothing like the picture we had seen but just really, really bad. When we arrived, instead of cuddling and sunbathing, we had to search for new accommodation, which we could not find since the whole town was out of housing. When we got back, we got maybe 500 SEK. After that we avoid SEMBO.”

B2 (female, 52)

Another participant avoided the hotel chain Scandic because of an unhygienic atmosphere:

“We have stayed at that chain several times before, but this place was not good... For instance, the chairs in the restaurant were not fresh, it was dirty, it did not feel fresh. The cleaning did not work in public area.”

A1 (female, 56)

Furthermore, as seen in appendix 3, participant A2 further argued that the health centre Nordic Wellness's location did not meet the requests or expectations of an adequate service environment. Additionally, one of the reasons A5 avoided the bus company Swebus was due to the fact that the environment was lacking in comfort alternatives, which can also be found in appendix 3.

Regarding self-experienced occurrences with brands, the different avoidance drivers from the participant did not only concern the environment or the overall performance of the business, but the participants did also comment on issues regarding inconvenience and unreliability. B6 experienced the use of Apple's applications as hassled and therefore avoided the brand:

“A part of the reason why I avoid Apple is their services. It is very closed and controlled, all of their services are very odd in my opinion. It is a lot about that if you choose their product, you have to choose their services. That connection is not attractive to me at all. I want to use which programme and which service I want.”

B6 (male, 25)

Participant B8 did also find the hassle of using a service as a reason to engage in service brand avoidance. The insurance company Dina försäkringar, found in appendix 3, did not please the consumer's expectations.

Lastly, according to A3, a company must be reliable in order for the customer to be loyal. The participant consequently avoided SJ to a greater extent because of untrustworthiness as a driver:

“I avoid SJ as much as I can, and it is just because of the fact that they are not punctual or reliable.”

A3 (female, 25)

4.2.2 Identity Avoidance

The findings showed that identity avoidance was built on the basis of meanings and symbolism. Consumers do not want to engage in brands where negative meanings, symbolism, images or values become factors. Whether the

different components are considered negative is a perceived picture of the consumers that is created with assistance from the brand.

Participant A5 shared an example of Barbershop, a hairdresser salon where A5 could not identify with the other customers, which led to avoidance:

“For instance Barbershop, it is very masculine, there is much beard. But it looks very nice and it is not very expensive either and I was absolutely eager to cut my hair. My first feeling was ‘I do not want to go in there and cut my hair, I do not feel that I fit in there or this do not seem like my type of people’. It is outside the comfort zone, I do not know why but I only felt uncomfortable.”

A5 (male, 24)

Participant A3 shared another example where the customers served as a negative reference group as well as the brand image that was built upon advertising and the perception of their goods, which led to an avoidance of KappAhl:

“Like KappAhl, I would never enter that store. It can probably be that one does not identify oneself with their customers. It is not like you go in there and think that they might have something nice, I do not even go in there. But I have never shopped there, and it is not like I have heard something bad about them, it is just that I do not identify myself with their image. That is probably built up from their commercials and perhaps storefronts and when you see what kind of goods and models they have. I am probably their target group but it does not attract me.”

A3 (female, 25)

Brand image or brand identity is closely linked to what consumers think of the company due to the picture that is co-created with the company. Likewise the avoidance of KappAhl, as seen in appendix 3, participant B7 showed how Schenker has failed in establishing themselves as a brand for private customers which led to service brand avoidance.

Another example of how a brand image can contribute to the avoidance of brands was from participant A7, who spoke about Ryanair and felt that their image on the market was bad:

“[...] It is probably identity as well. Also their image, they do not have a good image on the market [...].”

A7 (male, 24)

Furthermore, participant A4 spoke about the mobile operator 3, and how the perception of that brand was low due to negative stories from friends, which consequently led to a negative brand identity:

“I would avoid 3 as well, and it is not something I have experienced myself, but it is perhaps the picture one has received from others who say that 3 is lousy. It feels a little sneaky, little like a scam. Then it also becomes like if one has been promised something and calls support, one gets an estimated excuse about why they should not take responsibility, it is the picture one has. They do not stand for their mistakes or take their responsibility. When I see the 3 logo I think that it does not matter what they offer, I would never trust them anyway. Their brand represents something that does not attract me. It is probably that the brand is not associated with quality. I do not identify myself with what the brand represent.”

A4 (male, 24)

Lastly, it was identified that the loss of individuality was a reason to avoid the brand Snapchat, in order for the consumer to not be the same as everyone:

“I felt that the service, even if everyone uses it and I have heard about ten people say ‘did you see this on Snapchat?’ and ‘I send it to you on Snapchat’, I do not have a motivation to use it anyway, it feels more fun to experience things together instead [...] You do not live your own life but look for what others do all the time.”

B8 (male, 24)

4.2.3 Moral Avoidance

Moral factors seemed to have a great influence when drivers of avoidance were recognizable. The participants’ from the interviews did not only consider the need from a consumer perspective or the service’s functionality, but also reflected upon corporate social responsibilities and the firm’s role in the society. These findings revealed that the consumers deliberately avoided companies that had been accused for child labour, unethical working conditions, or too strong political opinions, for instance. Participant B7 avoided two private schools because of the unethical viewpoint when grading students, found in appendix 3.

It was further indicated that unethical scandals might cause a loss of faith in the company. Participant A4 avoided Telia Sonera because of immoral actions and prejudice towards the firm:

“When looking at Telia Sonera, one did not trust them after the scandals in Azerbaijan and Gibraltar [...] It is those unethical things and it feels like they get more unreliable because of that. If a company did something like that, you do not know what they can lie about. If they can lie about frauds worth millions and billions, what else can they lie about...”

A4 (male, 24)

Another driver of avoidance was visible depending on the loyalty towards the brand:

“It matter if I am an existing customer or not. If I am a customer at H&M for instance, and it is revealed that they are using child labour, then I may continue shopping there because I am happy with H&M. But if I have never been shopping there before and hear that they are using child labour, then I might not have been testing H&M.”

A3 (female, 25)

Not only was brand avoidance affected by unethical activities, but also the avoidance of supporting hegemony. Accordingly, found in appendix 3, participant B6 stated that the avoidance of the music service Tidal was obvious due to multimillionaires earning “more money” seen as unnecessary.

Another reason for avoidance exposed in the interviews was from a cultural aspect and how different cultures reflect an image of what is acceptable or not. The following participants had the perception of being ethically wrong if using a service in their country of origin, but not necessarily in other countries:

“If a cleaning service uses child labour I would not hire that company, in that case it is something that is going on with child labour here in Sweden.”

B5 (male, 22)

B6 also believed that one should not use a cleaning service when living in Sweden:

“It will be a first world issue. If you live in a country where people do not have money from the start, it will be like ‘okay I deserve this’, while in Sweden it is more ‘wow, should I really do something like this’.”

B6 (male, 25)

As mentioned, a company with a highly visible political standpoint may generate in avoidance of the brand, if the consumer consider the brand to be outside that area. A2 consequently avoided the union due to their political stance of policy:

“I do not support the union, they are too politically oriented when they should not be that at all.”

A2 (male, 22)

4.2.4 Deficit-value Avoidance

When conducting the interviews the participants frequently had an issue with the price and quality relationship. It was mainly caused by the reason that the

consumer perceived a low price brand to be inadequate in quality. They also had a difficulty with too low prices that were incongruent with their expectations, and consequently argued that a higher price created more value for the consumer. Conversely, some of the participants felt that a higher price sometimes generated in an unacceptable trade-off, and therefore avoided premium brands.

The cost perception of a brand obviously differed depending on the consumer. However, several participants had a cautious approach toward hairdressers regarding price-quality ratio. A5 believed that a lower price at the hairdresser signifies a lower quality:

“I try to cut my hair as cheap as possible, but there is a bottom limit just as there is an upper limit [...] I have seen so many bad examples. That is one of the most obvious things one would avoid.”

A5 (male, 24)

The interviewee A7 also indicated that the low price would make the brand decrease in trustworthiness:

“If there is a hairdresser that only costs 100 SEK, then I feel that there is something wrong. Maybe it will take 15 minutes less and they use a shaver half of the time. Then I rather pay a little bit extra.”

A7 (male, 24)

As A7 mentioned, the importance of a higher quality sometimes motivates the consumer to pay a higher price. Some consumers are more cautious to brands concerning the quality. B7 stated that a low price of the mobile operators Hallon and Halebop indicated a lower perception towards the brands, but that the quality itself is probably adequate:

“Even though the low price mobile operators are available, and those are included in the calculations when buying a new phone, I never choose them. For instance, Hallon and Halebop. I actively avoid them even though they probably would have been just as good but for a better price.”

B7 (male, 25)

Conversely, some participants felt that a higher price does not always indicate a better quality, hence they avoided premium brands because of the inadequate value given. Participant A4 consciously avoided Hilton hotel due to several factors, one of the reasons were as follows:

“It is probably more nice than Elite Hotel, but let us say that it is twice as expensive. I do not think it is twice as good in quality and experience.”

A4 (male, 24)

Lastly, when unfamiliarity arose for some consumers, it led to brand avoidance since they believed that the competitors offered a higher value for them due to experiences from other brands:

“I am trying to avoid Coop, I believe that they have higher prices than ICA, their competitor. I have also worked at ICA, so I try to avoid Coop as much as I can. I avoid Coop and Willys because I am more familiar with ICA.”

B5 (male, 22)

4.2.5 Marketing Avoidance

During the interviews, consumers discovered reasons in different marketing techniques leading to brand avoidance. Different components of marketing approaches were brought up as drivers for avoiding a brand. For instance, participant B3 described how the content of an online retailer of shoes commercial was too annoying which led to brand avoidance:

“I have avoided Zalando.se for a very long time because of their annoying commercial, I hate it, it is so lame, they scream, I cannot handle it. [...] It is the execution of the commercial, it feels awkward, screaming. When those on the commercial shoots out stuff from the wells, there is a girl, very stereotypical that it is a girl who sits and shops shoes and a lot of shoes are coming out of the wells.”

B3 (female 25)

As seen in appendix 3, participant B8 further proved a similar response to Flygresor.se’s commercial, stating that the advertisement was annoying and consequently avoided the brand. Participant A4 talked about the same commercial but focused on the music as the factor leading to brand avoidance instead:

“If we talk about flight services, I will never use Flygresor.se in my life. It is only for the music. One gets annoyed at oneself, it is catchy, it gets stuck. It might be that the music is really good. It is how the company has presented themselves which has resulted in me saying actively no.”

A4 (male, 24)

Commercials are important as well as how the receiver conveys the context of it. Brands often use celebrity endorsement to convey the message, however, this might result in brand avoidance due to the desire to circumstance a specific endorser. Participant A5 described Justin Bieber as a personality to avoid:

“Like Justin Bieber, it feels very girly and no, that would never appeal to me. There are probably many similar things. [...] It would

absolutely make me to deliberately avoid that brand if he was to be their spokesperson. Someone like Justin Bieber, he is not a sane person.”

A5 (male, 24)

Participant B7 contributed another example of celebrity endorsement regarding Socialdemokraterna, one of the biggest political parties in Sweden, found in appendix 3. B7 believed that their choice of endorser, a comedian, made them look non-serious and more business minded than a political party should:

Furthermore, some consumers felt disturbed of companies using direct marketing as they were intruding into their privacy. Participant B4 shared a story of an electricity provider, Din El that continued to call each week, which at last led to complete brand avoidance:

“I have been called by a company regarding procurement of electricity many times by Din El in Gothenburg. They called me every week and kept nagging, finally I said that you cannot call me more, I will not purchase electricity from you.”

B4 (male, 28)

Lastly, participant A5 experienced a similar story but via e-mail. The company Northlander that organizes ski-trips send out e-mails, which has led to irritation from the participant, found in appendix 3. The statement describes the weekly personal letter from the CEO as annoying and therefore the participant engage in service brand avoidance.

5 Analysis

The following chapter analyses and shows how the empirical findings can be interpreted to the already existing literature but also new findings applying to the service industry. All of the five categories are presented with several sub-themes to show the reader how the results are relevant for both existing literature and new material.

The interpretation of the data collected revealed that all consumers avoided several types of service brands, even though they were not always conscious about the avoidance in the first place. Sometimes it was difficult for the consumers to identify the actual driver of brand avoidance, and some participants were not aware of the reason for the excluded consumption. They even wanted to avoid a specific brand but due to difficulties, such as monopolies, the avoidance could be problematic to accomplish.

When examining the drivers of service brand avoidance, the difficulty for the consumers to identify the avoidance of services was obvious, and thus easier recognized on products (B1; B7). This could be closely connected to the undesired self, and the rejection in consumption (Hogg & Banister, 2001). A service is intangible in its nature (Wilson et al., 2012), while a product is tangible. A service cannot be seen, felt, tasted, or touched (Wilson et al., 2012) and the attributes from it might be more difficult to connect to the self-identity, hence the rejection of a product brand could easier be recognized in the consumer's mind. However, the avoidance of service brands is still apparent to the same extent after conducting semi-structured interviews, which after discussion and some help for the participants, revealed that all the consumers consciously avoided one or more service brands. Moreover, in some occasions, the consumers could not identify a specific brand to avoid, however, the drivers to brand avoidance were obvious (B5; B6; A5; A7).

Furthermore, Olivia et al. (1992) offer the idea that the anti-thesis to brand avoidance is brand loyalty. The loyalty to a brand might lead to avoidance of another brand, even though they are perfectly congruent to the consumers' wants and needs (A4). Another example of H&M from participant A3 showed that the loyalty might also be an influencing factor whether scandals from great brands will lead to avoidance or not, and the consumer could give the loyal brand more than one reason to lack in good qualities. Consequently, brand avoidance is not always a solely factor given when consumers deliberately avoid brands, as brand loyalty was proven to be an influencer when favouring certain brands and in the decision of which brands to avoid. Earlier findings support this behaviour by stating that brand loyalty consists of both acceptance and rejection of brands (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973). However, when studying brand avoidance, the literature of that specific phenomenon is lacking due to few viewpoints of rejection, and therefore requires a more comprehensive approach.

The findings revealed that service brands could be avoided due to many

different drivers. From the interviews the authors were able to connect the findings with previous literature, but also some new conclusions regarding the service industry. The sub-themes on each category mentioned in the empirical findings should therefore be explained in more depth.

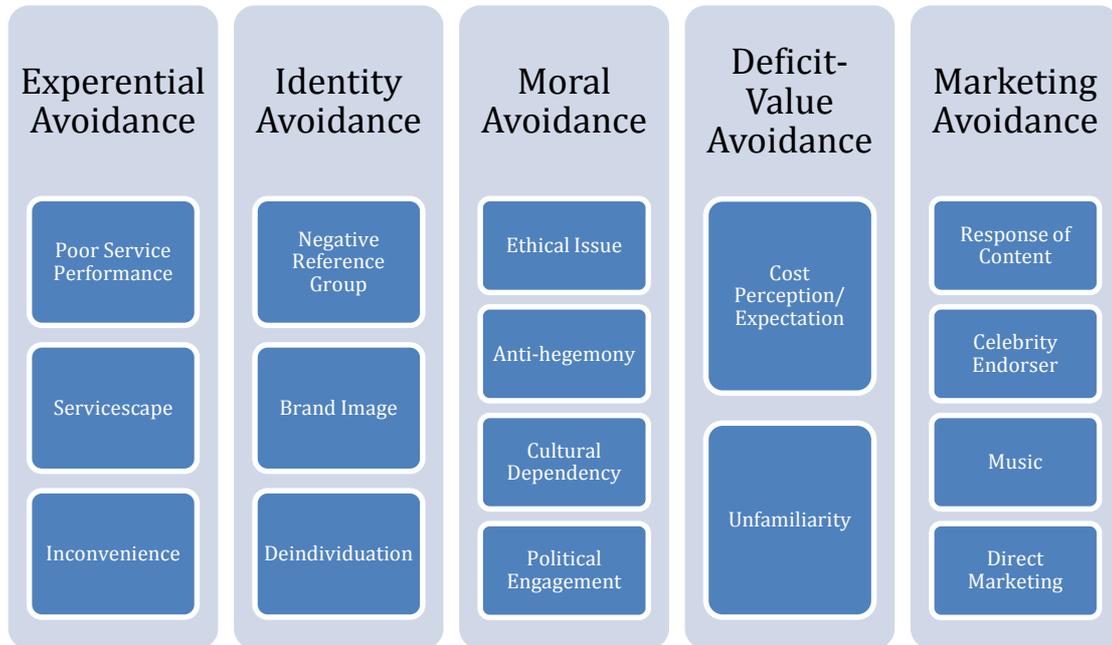


Figure 5.1 Service Brand Avoidance Framework
Source: Developed by the authors

5.1 Experiential Avoidance

Findings from the interviews evidently proved that a personally experienced event could be critical as the occurrence is the main reference point in relation to expectations when evaluating the service quality (Wilson et al., 2012). Since a service is produced at the same time it is consumed, the consumers showed that the direct experience highly affects the expectations versus actual performance. Hence, the definite quality from the service is a result of the experience, and may therefore be crucial for the success where negative experiences lead to avoidance (Wilson et al., 2012).

Experiential avoidance was identified by Lee et al. (2009b) as one of the main categories for brand avoidance. In line with previous literature, the authors recognized experiential avoidance as one of the main categories in service brand avoidance as well. The findings clearly show that experience-based scenarios are the most common of all drivers to deliberately avoid a service brand. The sub-themes identified in the findings were *poor service performance*, *servicescape*, and *inconvenience*, meaning that all of them relates back to the framework of Lee et al. (2009b), with some minor changes more suitable for services.

5.1.1 Poor Service Performance

The findings clearly show that poor service performance can lead to service brand avoidance. Unmet expectations for the customer may cause negative experiences, which in turn leads to avoidance. Numerous participants mentioned that they had other expectations than the actual delivery of the service, leading to a greater disappointment and due to unmet beliefs, service brand avoidance. For instance, participant B2 experienced unmet expectations when renting an apartment for vacation in Italy. The built up expectations were based on pictures provided by SEMBO, and when B2 arrived to the apartment it did not meet the expectations. This phenomenon can be found in existing literature, regarding a service that does not fill the requirement for the adequate service expected, and consequently results in service failure where the customer leaves the company and never return (Wilson et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2009a; Kelley et al., 1993). This obviously proves that a brand has to fulfil expectations, however, these are personal and sometimes difficult to anticipate. The results from the interviews demonstrates that poor performance as a driver was one of the most common reasons for brand avoidance, thus firms have to be careful with how they are anticipated. If the pictures from SEMBO would have been closer to reality, the customers would have known what to expect, thus a failure of the service could have been circumvented.

Furthermore, an example where general expectations played its role and led to service brand avoidance was shared from participant A3, found in appendix 3. A visit at the fast food chain Pizza Hut made her wait for two hours, which through the general perception is considered longer than expected since it is a fast food chain. First hand experiences that are negative can result in avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a), and in this case, the reliability of being served on time led to poor service performance. This is a rather exaggerated example, where any customer would have been disappointed of the service failure. However, it still illustrates that poor performance leads to service brand avoidance when the service of the firm is greatly lacking, and a reasoned driver to deliberately avoid the service.

Moreover, participant A4 spoke about a restaurant where an app has replaced several of the personnel's duties and the dissatisfaction of the restaurant was rooted in the lack of service. Since the personnel interact with the customers, they are creators of the service, but if the main service originators are removed, the service may have a difficulty in realising its purposes. Poor service performance can therefore also derive from the lack of service, since the personnel have a leading role in the service industry as they have a large effect on the brand and how it is perceived (De Chernatony et al., 2004). As the literature declares, expertise provided by personnel increase the credibility of the service as well as an adequate relationship between customer and personnel heighten the quality (Wilson et al., 2012). By a stronger relationship between these two, a service can be perceived as more dependable. Participant A3's dissatisfaction of SJ proves that a lacking reliability of the company is the main driver to brand avoidance. The firm must therefore increase the credibility and improve the service in terms of reliability in order for the customers to gain back trust. This type of avoidance might be difficult to

manage, since a service with deficient performance is useless and exchangeable.

5.1.2 Servicescape

The servicescape is a critical factor for a service, and an insufficient environment has been proven a driver for service brand avoidance. The servicescape refers to tangibles in relation to the facility where the service is carried out. These tangibles are often used for the customer to evaluate the service making the servicescape a highly important factor when delivering services (Wilson et al., 2012). The findings clearly show the impact of the servicescape on the service experience. As seen in appendix 3, participant B1, B3, B4, and B8 all described issues regarding the servicescape of Ryanair and how it impacted their negative attitude towards the brand. This relates back to previous literature by Bitner (2012) who state that negative emotions connected to the servicescape could create negative emotions towards the brand. The negative emotions towards the brand might later result in service brand avoidance.

Participant A1 further highlights the issue of an unhygienic atmosphere, which has led to avoidance of Scandic. The evaluation of the service clearly depends on the servicescape as the satisfaction is not fulfilled, and the production of the service is visible in a displeased manner. Another clear example is from participant A2, found in appendix 3, regarding a gym where the servicescape is experienced too small and lacks of important equipment. The unmet expectations of the layout of the gym create negative emotions and consequently service brand avoidance, hence it proves that the servicescape generates in either positive knowledge of the brand or as a driver to avoid it.

5.1.3 Inconvenience

Inconvenience has been identified as a reason for brand avoidance both in the findings from interviews and in previous literature. Keaveney (1995) discovered several components along with inconvenience that may cause brand switching. However, Lee et al. (2009a) argue that the same components may cause brand avoidance, and hence inconvenience may cause brand avoidance. Participant B6 described the inconvenient relationship to Apple, and the reason for avoiding the brand was based on the factor that Apple's software was controlled and added redundant complications. The hassled factor carried was the fundamental driver for the consumer to avoid the brand; therefore an easier applicability of the service would possibly prevent the avoidance.

Inconvenience does not only involve limited usage depending on choices. Participant B8, found in appendix 3 shared an example where the inconvenience of his insurance company was amplified due to contrast from a friend who went through a simpler procedure with another insurance company regarding the same issue. The expectations were unmet since B8 had perceived the promise from Dina Försäkringar through various channels as the simple company. Grönroos (2006) anchors the idea in previous literature where a promise consequently leads to the expectation of the service. As

mentioned, when the expectations are unmet by reality, service failure may occur (Wilson et al., 2012). Consequently, participant B8's perceived value of the service also decreased because of a comparison of the two insurance companies, and the dissatisfaction might have been experienced differently if the competing brand was worse in its performance.

5.2 Identity Avoidance

A customer's identity can be contradictory to a brand's value and therefore incongruent to the self-concept (Lee et al., 2009a). The findings showed that others perception, as well as the contrasting self-image to a brand's or the customer's identity, are drivers for an avoidance. The interviews discovered different drivers for identity avoidance, and have therefore been divided into following sub-themes: *negative reference group*, *brand image*, and *deindividuation*. Two of these underlying categories could be found in previous studies by Lee et al. (2009b), but brand image is added to the revised model.

5.2.1 Negative Reference Group

In the first out of three sub-categories of identity avoidance, the participants stated that their self-identity differentiated from other customers. This could be supported by earlier studies showing that brands are to be avoided when consumers want to protect their identity (Lee et al., 2009a). In the example of the brand Barbershop, participant A5 distanced the self-image from the already existing customers. The avoidance was associated with a negative reference group due to the fact that the service was symbolically opposing to the individual's sense of self (Lee et al., 2009a). The reason for the avoidance might not be very precise since A5 had a more generalised image of the brand user, and felt a need of avoidance because of distinct features (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Lee et al., 2009a). However, the stereotypical image of the brand users was an adequate driver leading to service brand avoidance. Even though the participant clarified that the deliberately avoidance was due to unknown reasons, the underlying reason for the prevention was clearly because of the negative reference group of the brand.

Furthermore, participant A3's statement concerning KappAhl and the deliberate avoidance towards the brand, is an example of a symbolically unappealing promise because of the negative reference group. The quality of a service does not have to be a determining factor, and the brand itself could not influence the consumers' perception of the current consumers to the same extent. It is rather how the values of the brand and specifically how the customers are incongruent with the self-concept (Lee et al., 2009a). Hogg and Banister (2001) state that the undesired self could lead to a rejection of services. However, the main reason for the avoidance of participant A3 is not as precise as when avoiding due to the undesired self, since the negative image of the brand user is not very concrete. Also the fact that the self-image opposed the overall and generalised image of the current customers supports the interpretation of the main driver to be negative reference group.

5.2.2 Brand Image

The second cause leading to identity avoidance could be connected to the fact that the participants found it difficult to identify themselves with the image of the brand, but also a generally bad image, or due to a failure in conveying the core service through the brand image. The distinction between negative reference group and brand image is that brand image is closer connected to the anticipation of the brand itself, while a negative reference group contains the users of the brand to a greater extent.

It is important for a company to expose the right vision and the image of their service. An issue that might occur is a gap between what the firm wants to convey and how the consumer interpret the brand (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Pervan, 2015). According to participant B7 as seen in appendix 3, Schenker has failed in carrying the right perception and message of the actual service. B7 realised the difficulty to identify with the brand but also what service the firm actually delivered, and hence a misunderstanding arose. The firm's actual image was incongruent with the interpreted image of the participant. This shows that a consumer can construct causal inferences about a brand and the functional qualities with no basis in reality (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015). Participant B7's avoidance proves that the service functionality conveyed has failed and the brand image is consequently a driver for the consumer to intentionally avoid Schenker.

Participant A7 connected the brand Ryanair with negative associations due to the bad brand image. A favourable brand image has positive effects on consumer behaviour towards the brand and will consequently increase loyalty and generate in word-of-mouth (Lee, Lee & Wu, 2011). However, it could also have the opposite influence leading to brand avoidance, in this case Ryanair that according to the participant has a bad image on the market. It does not have to be personal experiences creating the image of the brand, but a construction of negative inferences. Furthermore, the mobile operator 3 was perceived with a bad brand identity of participant A4 with a lack of trust, because of bad word-of-mouth and the own perception of the brand image. The participant did not have personal experiences of the brand, but had only construct an own causal interpretation that led to service brand avoidance. The findings show that a company could obviously constantly attempt to improve the brand image, but the perception of the brand lies in the hands of the customers, and could be due to other factors than the actual quality features.

5.2.3 Deindividuation

The last findings in the third sub-category identified that participants were cynical to brands representative to mainstream characteristics. This could also be connected to the self-identity perspective, and the fact that consumers abstain from a mainstream brand in order to uphold the identity. Consumers want to create personal characteristics and the negative features of consumption of certain brands may carry a bad symbolic meaning for the identity (Lee et al., 2009a). In the findings, B8 avoided Snapchat, which was considered a mainstream brand, and could therefore damage individuality for the participant. This finding, as well as the two earlier mentioned drivers, does

not have any connection to the function of the service, meaning that the driver might be hard for a brand to circumvent since it is personal reasons and not the brand itself.

5.3 Moral Avoidance

Moral avoidance is, contrary to all other type of avoidances, driven by the immediate impact of well being of the consumer (Lee et al., 2009a). Participants from the interviews stated and proved the reflection upon the firm's role in the society rather than personal reasons to avoid a brand. The drive to avoid brands was motivated by socially decreasing brand promises, and as identified in previous literature, moral brand avoidance occurs when the brand's values are incongruent with the personal ideological beliefs (Lee et al., 2009b). In relation to the discovered sub-categories of Lee et al. (2009b), the category *anti-hegemony* is persistent, country effects has been revised to *cultural dependency*, and two additional sub-categories have been identified: *ethical issues* and *political engagement*. The dimension in the revised model by the authors is rather extensive, as moral avoidance has been found to have a greater scope of drivers.

5.3.1 Anti-hegemony

What consumers personally might perceive as unethical activities could strongly affect the reason to participate in service brand avoidance. This was supported by participant B6, found in appendix 3, who believed that the service Tidal was wrongly executed since the owners wanted to "earn money again". The fact that the company was initially created by people with large companies was seen as a driver to prevent a support of continuous growth. B6 considered the owners to be multimillionaires with no need to earn more money, and therefore avoided the brand, neither could the participant see an ethical trade-off where the already wealthy artists wanted to make more money, hence a rejection of the brand. Previous literature by Holt (2002) describes the phenomenon as against domination, where consumers may avoid leading brands to prevent the growth of monopolies or large corporations. The effect of the brands may affect the wider society and moral aspects could come in play since it is built on ideological foundations of the consumer (Lee et al., 2009b).

5.3.2 Ethical Issues

In contrast to anti-hegemony, ethical issues was found to be more related to unethical occurrences that might affect the society in a wider perspective with more deep-rooted rights and wrong of humanity. This newly found sub-theme was crucial as the interviews proved that ethical issues themselves were a wider problem identified in service brand avoidance. In the study of Strandvik, Rindell and Wilén (2013) it can be found that consumers that are strongly value-based may reject brands, thus engage in brand avoidance. In the context of this paper, ethical issues concern business ethics and the values, principles, and standards they are perceived to be incongruent with in the business world (Ferrell, Fraedrich & Ferrell, 2011). How socially related events in the business world can be connected to brand avoidance was shown

by participant A4 who commented upon Telia Sonera and the involvement of scandals in Gibraltar and Azerbaijan. The great scandals of the company had changed A4's perception of the brand, and also generated in lost of trust. The company is blamed for unethical actions by the participant and the negative publicity of the brand is a driver to brand avoidance.

Some participants from the interviews did not care enough about moral issues in order to consciously avoid brands, mainly because the problems were not closely connected to personal relations, the difficulty to embrace the issues supplied far from the consumer, and the fact that more affordable options were time-consuming to find. The ones more aware of the ethical issues of the society truly avoided a brand fundamentally because of trust issues from the scandals. However, in the end, the avoidance due to ethical issues was not based on empathy for those exposed, but founded in the fear of being the victim of dishonesties themselves.

Moreover, participant B7 brought up another example of ethical concerns towards the wider society. B7 believed that grading in high schools in Sweden were done inconsequently by comparing private high schools and communal high schools. The participant showed that the easily acquired grades at the private schools became an issue for other students and ethically incorrect since it was at an expense of others when applying for university or college. The participant perceived the occurrence to be ethically wrong which subsequently affected the society as a whole.

5.3.3 Cultural Dependency

The third sub-theme cultural dependency is similar to country effects in the framework of Lee et al. (2009b). Previous literature states that negative feelings towards a country could cause brands that originate from that country to be avoided. Consumers may also refuse to contribute to the economical growth of that country. However, services are inseparable from its provider neither can it be stored (Wilson et al., 2012). This complicates the idea of refusing a service from another country since it is often provided in the country the service is used. Findings show that cultural dependencies may occur in similar ways as in the model of Lee et al. (2009b), but the limitation and avoidance is based on what is perceived as culturally accepted.

Participant B5 revealed an avoidance of a cleaning service if the firm used child labour in Sweden, and the fact that the participant accepted child labour to another extent in other countries, evidently shows that culture dependency is the foundation to the service brand avoidance. Moreover, B6 also described how avoidance of cleaning services in Sweden might appear since it becomes an ethical dilemma, but in another poorer country where people might "deserve" the rights to use this type of help, the ethical dilemma is not evident. Subsequently, the fundamental driver of this avoidance was proven to have its basis in the country of origin, as the sub-category of Lee et al. (2009b). However, the main issue in the latest findings is not based in the origin country of the brand, but from where the consumer derives in terms of culture.

5.3.4 Political Engagement

Previous literature in brand avoidance has been focusing solely on political aspects as the only driver for brand avoidance (Sandıkçı & Ekici, 2009), but later studies have proven several other categories as drivers of brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009b). However, the political aspect is still apparent when a brand is strongly related to a political opinion. Participant A2's statement regarding the avoidance of the union is a clear example of political engagement as a driver for brand avoidance, since it depends on the fact that the firm is politically involved when it should not. Political engagement avoidance may also occur if the brand's political beliefs are not in line with the individual's beliefs (Sandıkçı & Ekici, 2009). As politics is somewhat sensitive as a topic for some individuals, brands have to carefully decide the involvement of politics in the strategy of the business. Moral avoidance has been well recognized as a driver of service brand avoidance, and the political engagement of the brand is not an exception. In the case of A2, the brand should not have been politically involved to any extent, but brand avoidance due to political drivers has also been found to contain political beliefs of a company incongruent with the consumers principles. Furthermore, the political standpoint of a brand's spokesperson as a driver of brand avoidance is also discussed in the category marketing avoidance.

5.4 Deficit-value Avoidance

The unacceptable relationship between price and quality was a given factor from the participants in the interviews. The category deficit-value avoidance was initially identified by Lee et al. (2009b) with the same name, and the latest findings specify that the price is an indicator of the quality of the product. The findings from the interviews are formed by three sub-themes: *cost perception*, *quality caution*, and *unfamiliarity*. All of the sub-themes can be found in the studies of Lee et al. (2009b), but with renamed titles.

5.4.1 Cost Perception

The price-quality relationship was mentioned several times during the interviews. Numerous examples were given when the price was low and therefore the quality of the service was perceived as inferior. Lee et al. (2009b) show that consumers avoid budget brands they believe are of low quality, and they also argue that price is an influencer of how the quality is interpreted. This could be linked to the examples with the hairdressers where both consumers perceived the brands to be inadequate in service if the price was too low (A5; A7). The participants believed that the brands decreased in trustworthiness and quality, mainly based on the price perception. This could be further supported by the studies of Kardes, Cronley, Kellaris and Posavac (2004), showing that consumers persistently rely on price as a quality cue even when the characteristics of the service can be found. Therefore, the findings further prove that the price range of services, as well as products, is a fundamental strategy for businesses, indicating that a low price does not necessarily attract customers. The brand must therefore evaluate whether the service provided could use a low price or if it requires a higher price in order for it to be perceived as good quality. Moreover, participant B7 who actively avoided the mobile operators Hallon and Halebop, was also cautious about

the quality of the service, giving the expression “better safe than sorry”, which could also be linked to the category deficit-value avoidance developed by Lee et al. (2009b). He argued that the higher price of another service was a more acceptable trade-off than paying a lower price and consequently had to be unaware of the actual quality of the service received. This is an interesting finding since the participant believes that the low-price brands are adequate in quality, but choose the more expensive brands regardless. It is probably an inconsistent pattern of behaviour, and therefore difficult to prevent, but still a thought-provoking discovery of the research.

In contrast, some participants argued that a higher price does not necessarily indicate a more adequate quality. Consumers avoided premium brands because of the insufficient value it created, and it only added extra profit to the company, hence the brand was identified as being deficit in value (Lee et al., 2009b). The deliberate avoidance of Hilton hotel due to inadequate value the high price gives, showed that consumers does not always connect premium brands with better quality, or at least not the acceptable relationship between price and quality that they require (A4). Opposing to the expression “better safe than sorry”, the consumer believed the brand to offer the same quality of service, and consequently purchased the cheaper alternative. Service brands with a higher price that want to be perceived as premium quality must therefore provide the consumers with something extra, otherwise there is a great risk of being replaced. Contrasting to products, service brands does not have a product connected to a logo in the same way, which can increase the value of the brand for some people, and must therefore provide the customer with additional value in the quality of the service.

5.4.2 Unfamiliarity

The unfamiliarity with brands was a further driver for avoidance. Participant B5 felt that the experience of shopping at ICA was a reason to avoid Coop since the comparison of the two services made Coop appear inferior. This phenomenon can arise when consumers compare unfamiliar brands with brands that are more recognizable, and consequently believe those brands to be lower in quality and higher in risk (Richardson et al., 1996). The avoidance did not only occurred because of the loyalty of ICA, but due to unfamiliarity with a brand that created an unawareness of the value they deliver. This type of avoidance, as mentioned, occurred partly because of brand loyalty of another brand, and the unfamiliarity is therefore not the only driver to service brand avoidance and could once again prove that in many cases there are several factors leading to an avoidance. In this example, the consumer does not necessarily have bad experiences from Coop, but avoid the brand since the risk is perceived as high because the familiarity of ICA is more comfortable.

5.5 Marketing Avoidance

According to Knittel et al. (2016) a fifth category was identified as a compliment to the original model developed by Lee et al. (2009b), namely advertising. However, the findings show that not only advertising may cause service brand avoidance but other marketing phenomenon as well. Subsequently a fifth category has been revised from the model of Knittel et al.

(2016). The revised category has three similar sub-categories: *content*, *celebrity endorsement*, and *music*, but an additional category named *direct marketing* has also been added.

5.6 Response of Content

A significant part of marketing is the content of the advertising. Knittel et al. (2016) identified two different categories regarding content and response, but the findings from the interviews concerning service brand avoidance, coupled these two categories into one.

The content can be divided into several components where mainly the story and the message are important (Knittel et al., 2016). Participant B3 revealed that one of the fundamental factors to convey and receive the right message for the consumer was to feel congruent with the content of the advertisement. The example of B3, regarding an online shoe retailer, broadcasted a commercial that was perceived as disturbing which led to brand avoidance. This phenomenon has been established in previous literature by Knittel et al. (2016) where the content of an advertisement is described as an influencer for the consumer to dislike a specific advertisement and consequently leading to brand avoidance (Knittel et al., 2016). In the example of B3, the use of stereotypical characteristics could be seen as provocative and one of the main reasons for the consumer to avoid the brand. The consumer received the message in the wrong way and had negative influences on the buying intentions (Sabri & Obermiller, 2012).

Moreover, a similar example where the story and the content were disturbing can be seen in the example of participant B8 in appendix 3. Flygresor.se was avoided due to annoying content and was seen as non-serious, hence the strategy of marketing for that brand was inappropriate for the consumer. According to participant B8, the use of cats could not be linked to a serious firm, thus another example of failure when conveying a message to the receiver. Both of these examples show that the content in an advertisement could lead to service brand avoidance because of the message that the receiver believe is incongruent with his or her image of what is convincing or not. The message is dependent on the receiver, and could therefore be interpreted differently (Kotler et al., 2009). The explanation of the commercial as being “annoying” is a quite vague example of details described for the avoidance (Knittel et al., 2016), however it is still a convincing reason enough to not use the service supported by both previous studies and new findings.

5.6.1 Celebrity Endorser

In order for marketers to convey advertising effectively, the use of celebrities may be valuable to access consumers. Consumers can create emotions to a brand as an extension of their perception of a celebrity used in the advertising (Walker et al., 1992; Apéria & Back, 2004). The findings showed that when a consumer cannot associate with the celebrity used, brand avoidance might occur. Participant A5 could not relate to the musician Justin Bieber, and would therefore avoid purchases of brands using the artist as an endorser. If a consumer dislikes a celebrity, it can lead to a disapproval of the advertised

brand as well, and consequently affect brand avoidance (Knittel et al., 2016). The participant does not have to have any relations to the brand, but because of the fact that the perceived image of the celebrity may be associated with a brand when celebrity endorsement is used, the emotions of the celebrity might be transferred to the brand (Apéria & Back, 2004). In order for brands to prevent brand avoidance, firms have to carefully consider if an endorsement of a celebrity is suitable for their approach and the consumers. In the case of Justin Bieber, the participant would not even consider to make any purchases from brands connected to the musician, even though the brand itself is relevant for the consumer. As other drivers previously mentioned, sometimes the brand provides the right service, but other external factors have a greater influence on the consumers purchasing decisions, making businesses main objectives meaningless.

Moreover, participant B7, as seen in appendix 3, provided another example of avoidance due to celebrity endorsement. It was not that the consumer could not identify with the celebrity, but rather that the celebrity used was unsuitable for the campaign he participated in. This also reveals that a brand has to be careful when using celebrity endorsement, in order to prevent service brand avoidance. Earlier studies illustrate that the consumer does not emphasize on how the advertisement itself is perceived, but to the fact that the he or she focuses on the endorser of the service (Walker et al., 1992; Apéria & Back, 2004). Using celebrity endorsement could definitely strengthen the credibility and likability of the advertisement, but the findings and earlier studies certainly show that the opposite may occur if it is used wrongly, or at least in the perception of the consumers.

5.6.2 Music

The music is one of the most commonly used creative tools in advertising (Lantos & Craton, 2013; Shimp & Andrews, 2013) but findings from the interviews revealed that the music could negatively affect the perception of the brand. As seen in appendix 3, flygresor.se was a target for avoidance by participant A4 due to the annoying music used. The consumer found the music incredible irritating and consequently avoided the service brand. Music as a driver of brand avoidance can be found in previous literature established by Knittel et al. (2016) and it can stimulate customers when making purchase decisions (Lantos & Craton, 2013; Shimp & Andrews, 2013). The annoying music of Flygresor.se according to A4 did not have anything to do with the perception of the firm, but the music itself affected the attitude and purchase behaviour, and consequently led to service brand avoidance. This is another example proving that external factors outside the actual service of the brand is just as important in order to attract customers and to prevent brand avoidance. The music of an advertisement might not be fundamentally crucial for the brand to attract or repel consumers as other drivers, such as concrete experiences, but could still lead to brand avoidance and is therefore an important part of a firm's strategy.

5.6.3 Direct Marketing

The last category of marketing avoidance that has been found is direct marketing, complementing to existing literature and well recognized in the findings. Direct marketing can be defined as a tool to establish direct communication to customer in order to create response. It includes all types of communication that is directly targeted towards a consumer, for instance telemarketing, direct mail, and door-to-door selling (Reynolds & Lancaster, 2007).

According to findings, consumers experienced direct marketing through e-mail as nagging or “too pushy”. Participant A5, found in appendix 3, actively avoided the firm Northlander due to their advertising since the direct marketing towards the customers was seen as annoying. The participant revealed that the brand had raised a type of awareness, however, the aggressive advertisement was the main reason for him to engage in service brand avoidance. E-mails as a marketing strategy could create personal interactions and subsequently generate awareness of the brand, but a repeated involuntary contact has been found as a driver for brand avoidance. Also the fact that the messages look similar made the participant press delete before it was read, as he considered himself to know the content. In occurrences as these, a brand has failed since the message of the advertisement was not even received, and the awareness created was solely negative interpretations of the firm.

Another finding showed that a brand engaging in telemarketing was a reason for avoiding the brand represented, due to the weekly telephone conversations. Participant B4 stated that he would never consume Din El because of their direct marketing tools. Giving the answers from the participants, this sub-theme of marketing avoidance has been found to be an important component of the category. Just as the content of an advertisement could be seen as annoying and lead to brand avoidance, the complete image of the brand can be seen as inferior if the company uses an aggressive marketing strategy. This type of approach is not only risky in that particular moment, but could be suffering continuously in the future since the notion of the brand is destroyed, and will consequently lead to a deliberate avoidance of a brand.

6 Conclusion and Discussion

The last chapter concludes the paper with findings answering the general purpose of the thesis as well as the research questions. It also discusses contribution of the study, limitations and suggestions for further research.

6.1 Conclusion

Service brand avoidance is a phenomenon, which has never been exclusively investigated before. Existing literature of brand avoidance focuses on both products and services, thus no theories restricted to only services, although the general model of brand avoidance developed by Lee et al. (2009b) has worked as a foundation in order to research solely services. The purpose of this thesis was to identify drivers of service brand avoidance and how they can be related to previous literature of Lee et al. (2009b) and Knittel et al. (2016). Through qualitative research methods, deep insights of the phenomenon have been found, and have therefore generated a slightly revised model, which represent drivers of service brand avoidance.

1. *What are the drivers of brand avoidance in the service industry?*

When conducting semi-structured interviews, five categories with subcategories have been identified as drivers for service brand avoidance: experiential avoidance, identity avoidance, deficit-value avoidance, moral avoidance, and marketing avoidance. Experiential avoidance refers to experiences of services where expectations are unmet or where the experiences are inconvenient. Identity avoidance appears when the self-image is incongruent with the brand's or other consumers' image. The fourth category deficit-value avoidance can be described as the relationship between price and quality, or how unfamiliar brands are to be avoided. Moral avoidance can be traced to ethics and how consumers avoid brands depending on their cultural or political beliefs. Lastly, marketing avoidance refers to the content of advertising, brand connotations, and negative impact of direct marketing.

2. *How can the drivers identified connect to previous research, primarily done by Lee et al. (2009b) and later revised by Knittel et al. (2016)?*

Most of the drivers identified by Lee et al. (2009b) were consistent in the service industry, although some of the sub-categories have been either removed or revised, as well as additional sub-categories have been added. The experiential avoidance category was relatively similar to what Lee et al. (2009b) discovered. Certain sub-categories have been changed to titles more suitable for the service industry, for instance, Lee et al. (2009b) used *store environment* where *servicescape* was a more suitable approach in the service industry. *Poor performance* was altered into *poor service performance*, and the sub-category *inconvenience* can be found in the literature of Lee et al.

(2009b). Moreover, the empirical findings clearly showed that experiential avoidance was the most common reason for avoiding service brands.

The second main category of drivers for service brand avoidance, identity avoidance, can mainly be traced back to existing literature. Two of the found sub-categories *negative reference group* as well as *deindividuation* exist in Lee et al. (2009b). However, the third identified sub-category, *brand image*, has replaced *inauthenticity*, as it was shown to not be suitable in the study of services, and the authors subsequently developed the new sub-theme.

Moral avoidance, according to Lee et al. (2009b), consists of two sub-categories with another level of sub-themes. One of these two, *anti-hegemony*, has been identified in the findings. *Country-effect* has further been changed into *cultural dependency* since the exact same criteria as country-effect was not met. Furthermore, the following two sub-categories, *ethical issues* and *political engagement*, are both new discoveries in terms of sub-themes. However, political engagement has been established as a driver for brand avoidance in previous studies, but not as a separate sub-category.

Regarding deficit-value avoidance, changes have been made compared to the existing literature. *Unfamiliarity* was identified in the study, which also can be found in the work of Lee et al. (2009b). However, the findings show another category, namely *cost perception*, which is not apparent in the model of Lee et al. (2009b) or Knittel et al. (2016), yet consists of some components from already existing literature.

The last category of brand avoidance identified was marketing avoidance, a new main category identified by Knittel et al. (2016), although it was called advertising avoidance. The findings showed that an extended version had to be made since not only advertising may cause brand avoidance but also other marketing phenomenon, namely *direct marketing*. Fundamentally, all sub-categories from the advertising category developed by Knittel et al. (2016) were identified: *content*, *celebrity endorser*, *music*, and, *response*. However, content and response now compose one category: *response of content*.

Figure 5 below demonstrates all categories of service brand avoidance represented. The blue colour represents what is supported from the model of Lee et al. (2009b). The yellow colour indicates the categories supported from Knittel et al. (2016). The red colour represent a new category identified for service brand avoidance, and at last the dotted line means that the category is taken from either Lee et al. (2009b) or Knittel et al. (2016) but is revised with a new name or similar meanings of the category.

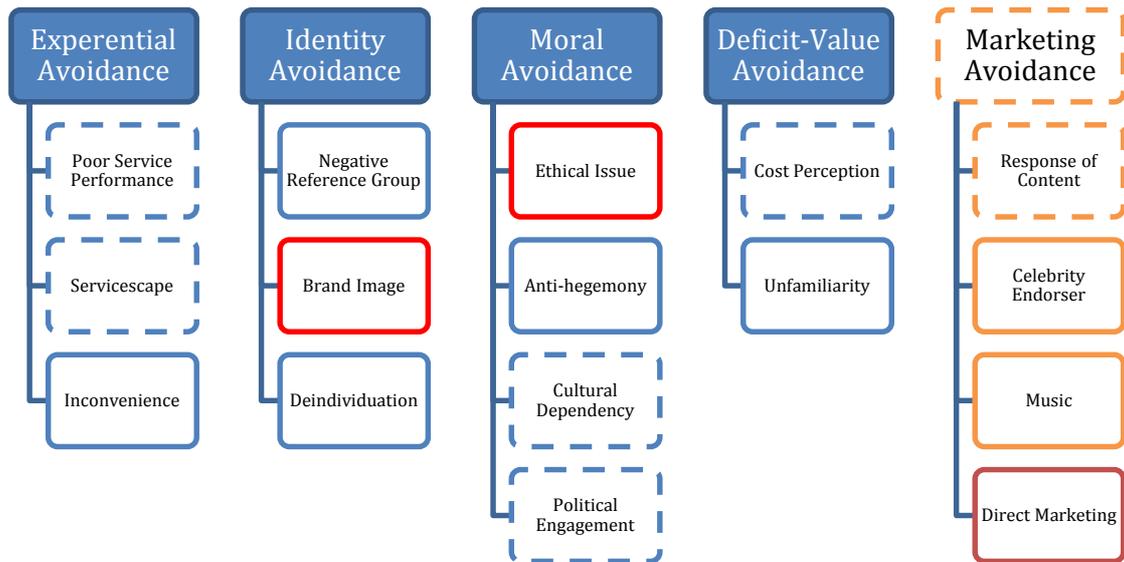


Figure 6.1 Adapted Framework for Drivers of Service Brand Avoidance
 Source: Developed by the authors (revised from the model of Knittel et al., 2016)

3. Is it possible to draw conclusions regarding all services?

The sub-question was developed as a general question where the answer depends on the different industries shared by the participants in their experiences. The findings involved a broad spread of industries mentioned, which increased the chance of the findings to be general for all service industries. However, since the field of study was rather unexplored additional studies may be required in order to draw conclusions regarding the whole service sector. Although, one may argue that the spread of service brands in the findings justifies that the developed model regards all services. It must also be mentioned that there could be unique occasions where the model might not apply due to the lack of research of the field.

Lastly, it is not proposed for brands to modify their strategy in order to satisfy all consumers, as brands are not built to please all segments. However, this research helps to identify drivers for the conscious avoidance of brands for consumers within the anticipated target group, and to develop a strategy to avoid causes leading to service brand avoidance.

6.2 Discussion

6.2.1 Contribution

This research contributes to both academic purposes as well as marketing objectives such as brand management. It can be argued that a wider perspective of the phenomena brand avoidance, exclusively in the service industry, has been developed and will consequently lead to contribution in more than one aspect. As the topic brand avoidance has become more

significant to scholars and managers (Lee et al., 2009b) this research is a great support for both existing literature and future research. The authors believe the knowledge and understanding of brand avoidance to be fundamental when examining consumer behaviour.

It is of high importance to understand why consumers have negative attitudes towards brands, and a contribution to marketing managers could further be argued by the fact that services have relied upon the assumption of having the same ideas as traditional product brand management (De Chernatony et al., 2004). This research shows the negative influences consumers may perceive as a contributor to service brand avoidance, and could help marketers to find an approach managing to circumvent the deliberate avoidance of services to a greater extent in the future. The study evidently illustrates the drivers of service brand avoidance and the various contributing factors, compared with products only. The interpretation of the new findings and the revised model are therefore useful in brand management.

In addition, the findings will contribute for scholars in the use of the model revised exclusively for the service sector. A deeper understanding of solely service brands has been examined compared to the framework developed by Lee et al. (2009b), later revised by Knittel et al. (2016), and should therefore be used in further studies of the subject concerning service brands.

6.2.2 Limitations of the research

The limitations of this study are fundamentally based on the sample used for the interviews. Table 1 shows the different ages of the participants, where only a few differentiate from the age span of 22-28 years old. In the same table it is noticeable that almost every participant is a student, and can therefore be seen as a limitation as it is not representative for the full population. Furthermore, the deliberate decision of only interviewing Swedes may be considered another issue of not being a motivating research sampling to represent the full population. However, this study would not have been feasible if these measures had not been taken due to both financial shortage and time limits. Another issue that occurred was the fact that participants of the interviews had a difficulty in recalling brand avoidance experiences or stories related to services. However, this might be a subject for future research to solve in order to continue the examination of service brand avoidance.

6.2.3 Future research

In connection to the issue of recalling actual stories or experiences regarding services, a suggestion for future research would be to extend the research by building on the same idea of identifying drivers of service brand avoidance. In order to continue this field of research, a repetitive study and to cross-reference the result is an endorsed method considered by the authors of this paper. A further argued approach of research is to incorporate focus groups together with interviews to develop the most generalised results. This method might eliminate the difficulties for participants to recall stories related to services and receive stimulus from other contributors during the focus groups.

Since the field of service brand avoidance is relatively unexplored there are many ways to encounter the issues of service brand avoidance. An important aspect would be to conduct quantitative studies in order to secure a general image of the full population. It can be done with this study as support or as a reference point when developing a measurement scale of service brand avoidance needed for testing hypotheses regarding the topic.

Lastly, as this thesis focus solely on investigating services in general, a suggestion for future research would be to focus on one trade or branch of industry. This would generate important insights both for the branch itself but also for this research, whether it can be confirmed or not.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interview Guidelines

Interviews

Datum:

Intervjukod:

Ålder:

Kön:

Intervjun börjar med att definiera vad ett varumärke, en tjänst/service och undvikande av varumärke är.

Vet **Du** vad ett varumärke är?

Ett **varumärke** är ett namn, en symbol eller ett tecken, som används för att identifiera produkter eller tjänster. Det kan till exempel vara ett ord, en logotyp eller ett koncept som är unikt.

En **service/tjänst** är immateriella produkter såsom banker, städning, rådgivning, utbildning, försäkring, medicinsk behandling, eller transport.

Kontrollera så att intervjuobjektet förstår definitionen.

Vilka **varumärken** inom **tjänster** använder du vanligtvis?

Vilka varumärken inom servicebranschen gillar du?

Vet du vad **undvikande av varumärke** är?

[Klargör vad undvikande av ett varumärke är och vad det inte är].

Undvikande av ett varumärke är när en konsument med avsikt väljer att undvika ett varumärke trots att varumärket är tillgängligt OCH konsumenten har de finansiella resurser som krävs för att köpa varumärket.

Undvikande av ett varumärke är alltså **INTE** när ett varumärke är otillgängligt, oandvändbart eller för dyrt.

Fråga1

Finns det några varumärken du medvetet undviker inom servicesektorn?

- Vilka varumärken skulle du aldrig köpa?
- Du nämnde tjänster du vanligtvis tillhandahåller tidigare, finns det några varumärken inom de kategorier du undviker?

Berätta om tidigare upplevelser.

- När var första gången du kom i kontakt med detta varumärke?
- Vad är orsaken till att du undviker varumärket? (Till exempel, av egen erfarenhet, media, andra personers åsikter etc.)
- Hur avgör du vilka varumärken som du gillar och vilka du ska undvika?
- Hur länge har du undvikit den här tjänsten?
- Vad skulle krävas av varumärke X för att du skulle vara villig att ge det en ny chans och ett nytt köp?

Fråga 2

Tänk dig att du har finansiella resurser som gör det möjligt att köpa vad som helst samtidigt som alla varumärken finns tillgängliga för dig. Finns det fortfarande varumärken du skulle undvika?

- Vilka varumärken eller typer av tjänster?
- Varför skulle du undvika dessa varumärken?

Fråga 3

Diskutera de 5 olika kategorierna och ställ frågor som ger intervjuobjektet möjlighet att bekräfta eller dementera huruvida det är en anledning att medvetet undvika ett varumärke.

- **Experiential avoidance:** Tänk dig att du anlitar en städfirma till hemmet, men när du sedan kommer hem så inser du att det fortfarande är smutsigt på vissa ställen och arbetet är dåligt utfört. Skulle det vara en anledning att undvika den städfirman/varumärket?
- **Identity avoidance:** Tänk dig att en person eller grupp av personer som du inte tycker om eller sympatiserar med visar att de går till samma frisör
- **Deficit-value avoidance:** Föreställ dig att du besöker en omtalad restaurang där du anser att priserna är betydligt högre än vad du vanligtvis betalar på restaurang. Om då inte upplevelsen på restaurangbesöket lever upp till dina förväntningar och du anser att du betalar ett högre pris för upplevelsen än vad den enligt dina mått inte är värd, är det en tillräcklig anledning för att i fortsättningen undvika denna restaurang?
- **Moral avoidance:** Om ett flygbolag du vanligtvis väljer använder sig av oetiska villkor för de anställda, tex. för långa arbetspass för flyvärdinnor. Skulle det vara en anledning till att undvika det flygbolaget?
- **Advertising avoidance:** Om en mobiloperatör använder sig av en kändis i sina reklamannonser som du ogillar av vissa anledningar, hade det kunnat påverka dig i dina beslut om att fortsättningsvis undvika att köpa detta varumärke?

När vi nu har diskuterat några olika situationer i vardagen, finns det några andra anledningar eller situationer som du tror skulle kunna leda till att Du undviker varumärken inom servicebranschen.

- Tror du att det finns andra anledningar som inte berör dig men andra människor skulle kunna ha för att medvetet undvika varumärken?
- Vilken tror du är den största anledningen till att människor undviker service varumärken?

Appendix 2 – Logos used for Interviews



Appendix 3 – Transcript Translation

A1 (female, 56)

”På den kedjan har vi bott flera gånger innan, men det stället var ju inte bra... Till exempel i restaurangen stolarna var ofräscha, det var smutsigt, det kändes inte fräscht. Städningen fungerande inte på allmänna utrymmen.”

“We have stayed at that chain several times before, but this place was not good... For instance, the chairs in the restaurant were not fresh, it was dirty, it did not feel fresh. The cleaning did not work in public area.”

A2 (male, 22)

”Nordic Wellness är ju inte så bra. Jag undviker dem av egen erfarenhet, också för att andra pratar illa om dem, både och. Jag har mest format min egen uppfattning. Dem skulle kunna bygga ut, det är för trångt [...] Det är väl miljön och tillgängligheten av olika verktyg eller redskap och liknande...”

“Nordic Wellness is not that good. I avoid them from own experiences, but also because others talk bad about them. I have mainly created my own perception. They could consider to make an additional building extension [...] It is the environment and the accessibility of different tools and the equipment and so on...”

”Jag stödjer inte facket, de är för politiskt inriktade när de inte borde vara det överhuvudtaget.”

“I do not support the union, they are too political oriented when they should not be that at all.”

A3 (female, 25)

”Alltså SJ undviker man ju så mycket man kan, och det är ju just för att de inte håller tider och är opålitliga.”

“I avoid SJ as much as I can, and it is just because of the fact that they are not punctual nor reliable.”

”Vi var på Pizzahut en gång, då tog det typ 2 timmar att få maten, så om det finns andra alternativ så hade jag inte valt de på grund av det.”

“We were at Pizza Hut once, it took almost two hours to get the food, so if there are other alternatives I would never choose Pizza Hut because of that.”

”Det har ju också betydelse om jag redan är kund eller om jag inte är det. Säg att jag är kunde hos H&M då till exempel och de kommer fram att de har barnarbete, då kanske jag fortsätter att handla där för att jag är nöjd med H&M. Men om jag aldrig har handlat där och får höra att de använder barnarbete, då kanske jag inte hade gått dit och testat H&M.”

“It matter if I am an existing customer or not. If I am a customer at H&M for instance, and it is revealed that they are using child labour, then I may continue shopping there because I am happy with H&M. But if I have never been shopping there before and hear that they are using child labour, then I might not have been testing H&M.”

”Typ KappAhl skulle jag aldrig gå in på. Där kan det nog ändå vara att man inte identifierar sig med deras kunder. Det är inte så att man går in där och tänker att de kanske har något fint, alltså jag går inte ens in där. Men jag har aldrig handlat där och det är inte så att jag har hört något dåligt om dem, det är bara det att jag inte identifierar mig med deras image. Det lär man ju ha byggt på typ reklam och kanske skyltfönster och sånt när man ser vad de har för varor och modeller. Jag är nog deras målgrupp, men det tilltalar inte mig.”

“Like KappAhl would I never enter. It can probably be that one do not identify oneself with their customers. It is not like you go in there and think that they might have something nice, I do not even go in there. But I have never shopped there, and it is not like I have heard something bad about them, It is just that I do not identify myself with their image. That is probably built up from their commercials and perhaps storefronts and when you see what kind of goods and models they have. I am probably their target group but it does no attract me.”

A4 (male, 24)

”Om vi tar Pinchos till exempel och man har snackat med andra om vart man ska gå ut och käka och så, och de flesta föreslår Pinchos har jag ju sagt mer såhär nej [...] Jag tycker att det var lite överreklamerat och de fick det att framstå som lite bättre än vad det var ansåg jag. Märket i sig kanske det inte är fel på, eftersom det finns på olika ställen, men just de här att jag har, eller jag är lite negativt inställd. Av den anledningen hade jag varit mer mån att prova, om vi ska äta tapas då, att prova på något jag inte känner till. Brist på service har dem, inte den servicen som man förväntar sig på en restaurang. Just för att de kör ju mycket på den här appen då.”

“If we take Pinchos for example, and when you have talked to other people where to go out eating, most people suggest Pinchos, but I have said no [...] I think it is a little overestimated and made it look better than it was, I believe. Maybe it is not anything wrong with the brand itself, but I have a negative attitude against it. For that reason, I would rather try, if we are eating tapas, another restaurant that I do not know of. They have a lack of service, and not the service that you expect from a restaurant. Mostly because they are using this app.”

”Västtrafik, när jag ser det, då tänker jag ju genast ”Västtragik”. Just det här när de skulle satsa på nya banor och sen levererar dem inte, tvärtom det blev sämre. Det kändes som ett sånt företag som utnyttjar sitt monopol lite. De är mest negativa erfarenheter.”

“Västtrafik, when I see it, I instantly think “Västtragik” (wordplay in Swedish by replacing the word traffic with tragic). Right when they were focusing on new connections, they did not deliver, at the opposite it became worse. It felt like such a company who take advantage of their monopoly a bit. It is mostly negative experiences.”

”3 skulle jag undvika också, och det har jag inte upplevt själv men det är ju kanske den här bilden man fått av andra just att dem säger att 3 är kasst. Det känns lite lömskt, lite lurendrejeri. Då blir det också så att om man har hört att dem har lovat någonting, så ringer man till kundservice, så får man någon höftad ursäkt om varför dem inte ska ta ansvar, det är den bilden man har. Dem står inte för sina misstag eller tar inte sitt ansvar. När jag ser 3 loggan så tänker jag att det spelar ingen roll vad dem erbjuder, jag hade nog inte litat på dem ändå. Just för att varumärket representerar någonting som inte tilltalar mig. Det är nog att märket inte är förknippat med kvalitet. Jag identifierar mig inte med vad det märket representerar.”

“3 would I avoid as well, and it is not something I have experienced myself, but it is perhaps the picture one has received from others who say that 3 is lousy. It feels a little sneaky, little like a scam. Then it also becomes like if one has been promised something and calls support, one get an estimated excuse about why they should not take responsibility, it is the picture one has. They do not stand for their mistakes or take their responsibility. When I see the 3 logo I think that it does not matter what they offer, I would never trust them anyway. They brand represent something that does not attract me. It is probably that the brand is not associated with quality. I do not identify myself with what the brand represent.”

”Det är ju också som till exempel om man tittar på Telia Sonera, de hade man ju inte heller förtroende för efter dem här skandalerna i Azerbajdzjan och Gibraltar [...] Det är lite dem här oetiska sakerna och det känns som att dem i och med det blir opålitliga. Har ett företag gjort så, då vet man inte vad dem mer skulle kunna ljuga om. Kan de ljuga för flera miljoner-miljard bedrägerier, vad ska dem då inte kunna ljuga om för en stackars studentkund.”

“When looking at Telia Sonera, one did not trust them after the scandals in Azerbaijan and Gibraltar [...] It is those unethical things and it feels like they get more unreliable because of that. If a company did something like that, you do not know what they can lie about. If they can lie about frauds worth millions and billions, what else can they lie about...”

”Om vi snackar flygtjänster då, Flygresor.se kommer jag aldrig i mitt liv använda. Det är bara för musiken. Man blir ju irriterad på sig själv, den är så 'catchig' att den fastnar. Det kan hända att det säkert är jättebra. Det är ju hur varumärket har presenterat sig självt som har resulterat i att jag aktivt säger nej.”

“If we talk about flight services, I will never use Flygresor.se will I never in my life. It is only for the music. One get annoyed at oneself, it is catchy, it get

stuck. I might be that the music is really good. It is how the company has presented themselves which has resulted in my active no."

"Jag vill inte gynna deras konkurrenter oavsett om det inte är inom samma sektor så vill jag inte vara där. Om Fello hade valt att göra ett internetabonnemang så hade jag kanske också fått en lite mer hostal inställning mot konkurrenter just för att man känner lojalitet mot det andra varumärket. Så jag hade kunnat undvika ett varumärke om jag håller ett annat kärt, eller lojalt eller har bra uppfattning om osv."

"I do not want to support the competitors even if it is not the same sector, I do not want to be there. If Fello had chosen to start doing internet subscription, maybe I had been more hostile towards the competitors, just because I feel a loyalty against the other brand. I could avoid a brand if I am loyal, or a brand that I have a good perception of."

"Det är säkert finare än Elite hotell men säg att det hade varit dubbelt så dyrt, så tror jag inte att det hade varit dubbelt så bra i kvalité eller upplevelse och så."

"It is probably more nice than Elite Hotel, but let us say that it is twice as expensive. I do not think it is twice as good in quality and experience."

A5 (male, 24)

"Netbuss har ju gjort det så bra att dem erbjuder ju en lyxvariant som inte kostar mer [...] Man har alltid valet att kunna resa oerhört bekvämt, medan Swebus bara har vanliga avgångar. De har inget alternativ så man kan unna sig lite extra, utan man får alltid samma trånga, obehagliga känsla."

"Netbus offer a comfort alternative that does not have a higher price [...] You always have the choice to travel more comfortable, while Swebus only have regular departures. They do not have any alternative where you can treat yourself, instead you always get the same crowdy, uncomfortable feeling."

"Till exempel Barbershop, den är ju väldigt maskulin, det är mycket skägg. Men den ser ju jävligt trevligt ut och det var inte så dyrt där heller så jag var ju absolut sugen på att klippa mig. Min första känsla var att 'där vill inte jag gå in och klippa mig, jag känner inte att jag passar in här eller det känns inte som min typ av människor'. Det är utanför komfortzonen, jag vet inte varför men man hade bara känt sig obekväma."

"For instance Barbershop, it is very masculine, there is much beard. But it looks very nice and it is not very expensive either and I was absolutely eager to cut my hair. My first feeling was 'I do not want to go in there and cut my hair, I do not feel that I fit in there or this do not seem like my type of people'. It is outside the comfort zone, I do not know why but I had only felt uncomfortable."

”Jag försöker ju såklart klippa mig så billigt som möjligt, men det finns en undre gräns precis som det finns en övre gräns [...] Jag har sett så många skräckexempel. Det är en utav de tydligaste man hade kunnat undvika.”

“I try to cut my hair as cheap as possible, but there is a bottom limit just as there is an upper limit [...] I have seen so many bad examples. That is one of the most obvious things one would avoid.”

”Northlander har väldigt billiga skidresor och man signar upp för att kunna vinna skidresor. Alltså jag kommer aldrig åka med dem. Jag får mail flera gånger i veckan. Nu har jag ju visserligen inte tagit steget att trycka unsubscribe men jag blir ju trött på det här jäkla företaget och det här halvpersonifierade mailet som man får varje gång från deras VD, Toke eller vad han heter. Det är ju en sådan grej, jag kan bara tröttna på det. De skapar väl säkert någon typ av awareness, för jag kommer ju ihåg vad dem hette. Jag vet precis vad det innehåller, jag missar ingenting när jag trycker delete. Jag skulle nog påstå att det är en grej man tröttnar på, för 'pushande' reklam.”

“Northlander has very cheap ski-trips if one signs up to win ski-trips. I will never travel with them. I get mail several times a week. I have not taken the step to press unsubscribe but I get tired on that damn company and their half personal letter from their CEO Toke or what his name is. It is such a thing, I get tired of it. They are probably creating some kind of awareness because I remember their name. I know exactly what it contains, I miss nothing when I press delete. I would suggest that it is a thing one get tired of, too 'pushy' advertising.”

”Typ Justin Bieber, det känns väldigt flickigt och nej det hade jag inte alls tilltalats av. Det finns väl många liknande... Det hade absolut fått mig att aktivt inte välja det varumärket om det ska vara deras spokesperson. En sän som Justin Bieber, han är ju inte vettig person.”

“Like Justin Bieber, it feels very girly and no, that would never appeal to me. There are probably many similar things. [...] It would absolutely make me to deliberately avoid that brand if he was to be their spokesperson. Someone like Justin Bieber, he is not a sane person.”

A6 (male, 27)

”3 undviker jag för att jag hade täckning på typ två ställen i hela Sverige kändes det som så jag kunde gå mitt i Göteborg utan att kunna ringa [...] 3 kommer aldrig få bättre täckning än Telia eller Telenor hur dem än gör. Inte ens om jag får en mobil gratis liksom och betalar hundra spänn i månaden så kommer jag inte ta dem. Jag tycker verkligen inte om dem.”

“I avoid 3 because I had service on my cell phone on, what it felt like, two places in Sweden. I could walk in the middle of Gothenburg without being able to talk [...] 3 will never have better service than Telia or Telenor whatever they do. Not even if I will get a phone for free and have to pay 100 SEK a month, I will not take them. I really do not like them.”

A7 (male, 24)

”Det hade absolut kunnat vara en anledning att undvika. Om det finns en frisörsalong som kostar 100 kr, då känner jag kanske att det är något som inte stämmer. Det kanske tar en kvart kortare och så kör dem hälften med rakapparaten. Då betalar man hellre lite mer.”

“If there is a hairdresser that only costs 100 SEK, then I feel that there is something wrong. Maybe it will take 15 minutes less and they use a shaver half of the time. Then I rather pay a little bit extra.”

”Det är nog lite identitet också. Sen så är det ju deras image, de har inte så bra image på marknaden.”

“[...] It is probably identity as well. Also their image, they do not have a good image on the market [...].”

B1 (male, 46)

”När jag flög med SAS till Kinsa senaste, dem hade väl en lågprisvariant, just planet var gammalt och dåligt, och det ingick ingen dricka eller någonting, då hade man en förväntan om vad som är praxis för långflygningar och dem levererade inte enligt den förväntanivå, sen var det antagligen efter den prisklassen bokad, så står det säkert någonstans att det inte ingår, även om man kan köpa till så levde dem inte upp till förväntansnivå på varken service eller udnerhållning då.”

“When I flew with SAS to China last time, they had some sort of low price version. The plane was old and bad, and no beverage or anything was included. Then you had an expectation of what is common practice for long flights and they did not deliver giving the expectation. It was probably because of the price class, it certainly says somewhere that it is not included, even if you can add that they did not live up to the expectation level, neither on service or entertainment.”

”Det är nog lättare inom produkter, att man kanske undviker vissa produktmärken, tjänsterna är nog lite svårare tycker jag.”

“It is probably easier with products, that one may avoid certain product brands, services are probably a little more difficult in my opinion.”

B2 (female, 52)

”SEMBO, dem undviker jag, eller vi. Det var när vi hyrde en lägenhet i Italien och vi kom dit och det var helt fruktansvärt, det var ju inte alls som vi sett på bilder eller trodde utan jättejätte dåligt. Sen när vi kom fram fick ju istället för att mysa och bada, lägga en dag för att hitta ett nytt boende, vilket vi inte fick för det fanns inte på hela den orten, sen fick vi när vi kom tillbaka kanske 500 kr. Sen efter det undviker vi SEMBO.”

“SEMBO, I avoid them. It was when we rented an apartment in Italy and when we arrived it was horrible. It was nothing like the picture we had seen but just really, really bad. When we arrived, instead of cuddling and sunbathing, we had to search for new accommodation, which we could not find since the whole town was out of housing. When we got back, we got maybe 500 SEK. After that we avoid SEMBO.”

”Jag kan känna att även om man hade haft alla pengar i världen så hade man väl inte flugit med Ryan Air även om det inte spelar mig någon roll idag att man ska skynda sig och vara ”boskap”, men om jag hade haft alla pengar hade jag väl valt bort det för att få den servicen man innerst inne vill ha.”

“I can feel that even though I had all the money in the world I would avoid Ryanair even though it does not matter for me today that you have to hurry and be treated like ‘cattle’, but if I had all the money in the world I would avoid it in order to get the service I want deep inside.”

B3 (female 25)

”Då hade jag inte åkt med Ryan Air, för dem är otrevliga och det är jobbigt att man inte vet vart man ska sitta, eller om man får sitta bredvid varandra och dem har massa tilläggstjänster hela tiden.”

“They are not very nice and it is annoying that you don’t know where to sit, if you get to sit next to each other and they have a lot of additional services all the time.”

”Zalando.se, Dem har jag undvikit väldigt länge på grund av deras jobbiga reklam, jag hatar den, den är så töntig, dem skriker, jag klarar inte av den.”

”Det är liksom utförandet av reklamen, det känns jobbigt, skrikigt. När dem på reklamen, skjuter ut massa grejer ur brunnar, så sitter en tjej, väldigt stereotypiskt med att det är en tjej som sitter och shoppar skor och så kommer det massa skor ur brunnarna.”

“I have avoided Zalando.se for a very long time because of their annoying commercial, I hate it, it is so lame, they scream, I cannot handle it. [...] It is the execution of the commercial, it feels awkward, screaming. When those on the commercial shoots out stuff from the wells, there is a girl, very stereotypical that it is a girl who sits and shops shoes and a lot of shoes are coming out of the wells.”

B4 (male, 28)

”Jag undviker att flyga med ryan air medvetet för jag litar inte på deras tjänster pga uttalanden dem har gjort angående säkerhet osv. Jag har flugit med dem och den gången blev jag strandsatt i skottland och dem ville inte hjälpa mig överhuvudtaget egentligen så att jag skulle kunna ta mig hem sen, jag fick boka ett eget flyg till London, och därifrån kunde dem hjälpa mig efter lite tjat. ”

"I avoid flying with Ryan Air consciously since I do not trust their services because of announcements they have made regarding security etc. I have flown with them and that time I was stranded in Scotland and they did not want to help me at all to get home. I had to book my own flight to London, and from there they could help me after some nagging."

"Jag hade ju inte flugit med bolag som Ryan Air eller vissa bolag i Asien som man vet inte är så jättesäkra utan hade valt ett dyrare alternativ som man litar på mer."

"I would not fly with companies like Ryan Air or certain firms in Asia that you know is not very safe instead choose a more expensive alternative that you trust more."

"I media har man ju läst bla att VD:n har gått ut med att han vill ta bort sittplatser osv. för att det ska få plats mer folk. Man har hört att dem flyger med bränsle så att dem precis kommer fram till sina destinationer och ibland får nödlanda, och att piloter ofta är för trötta för att flyga egentligen."

"In media one have read that the CEO have said that he wants to remove seats etc. to fit more people. One have heard that they are flying with fuel so that they just arrive to their destinations and sometimes have to emergency landing, and that pilots are often too tired to fly."

"Jag har blivit uppringd om upphandling av el väldigt många gånger av DINEL i Göteborg eller någonting, dem ringe ju mig varje vecka o tjatade, till slut sa jag att nu får ni inte ringa mer, jag kommer inte handla el av er"

"I have been called by a company regarding procurement of electricity many times by Din El in Gothenburg. They called me every week and kept nagging, finally I said that you cannot call me more, I will not purchase electricity from you."

B5 (male, 22)

"Jag försöker undvika COOP i rätt så stor utsträckning, för jag anser att dem har högre priser än ICA, deras konkurrent, sen har jag också jobbat på ica, så därför försöker jag alltid undvika coop i så stor utsträckning som möjligt. Jag undviker coop och willys flr jag känner mig mer familjär med ICA."

"I am trying to avoid Coop, I believe that they have higher prices than ICA, their competitor. I have also been working at ICA, so I try to avoid Coop as much as I can. I avoid Coop and Willys because I am more familiar with ICA."

"Om en städfirma använder sig av barn hade gjort att jag inte anställer den städfirman, för i så fall är det något som pågår här i Sverige med barnarbetet."

"If a cleaning service uses child labour I would not hire that company, in that case it is something that is going on with child labour here in Sweden."

B6 (male, 25)

”En del i varför jag undviker Apple är ju deras tjänster. Det är väldigt nedstängt och kontrollerat, alla deras tjänster är väldigt udda i mina ögon. Det är väldigt mycket om du väljer deras produkt måste du välja deras tjänster. Den kopplingen talar ju inte till mig alls, jag vill ju använda det programmet och den tjänsten jag vill.”

“A part of the reason why I avoid Apple is their services. It is very closed and controlled, all of their services are very odd in my opinion. It is a lot about that if you choose their product, you have to choose their services. That connection is not attractive to me at all. I want to use which programme and which service I want.”

”När allting började så var det en grej att alla musiksnubbar tjänade massa pengar igen. Då kände jag direct, tjänar inte de redan tillräckligt? [...] Det hade varit okej om det var en tjänst som satsade på att ta fram mindre kända artister som inte har en ordentlig inkomst och har svårt att överleva på sin musik, istället för att ta Nicki Minaj och alla dem som redan är multi miljonärer på sin musik, då hade det varit en mer intressant tjänst i mina ögon.”

“When everything started it was a thing that the music dudes earned a lot of money again. I immediately felt, do they not earn enough money already? [...] It would have been okay if it was a service with focus on smaller artists, instead of taking Nicki Minaj and all of the people that already are multimillionaires on their music, then it would have been a more interesting service in my opinion.”

”Men det blir ett I-lands tänk, om du bor i ett land där folk inte har pengar från början, så blir det att ‘ja jag förtjänar det här’ medans i Sverige blir det att ‘oj, ska jag verkligen göra sånt’.”

“It will be a first world issue. If you live in a country where people do not have money from the start, it will be like ‘okay I deserve this’, while in Sweden it is more ‘wow, should I really do something like this’.”

B7 (male 25)

”Jag har haft dåliga erfarenheter av halebop, för jag vet att jag hade det en gång och deras kundservice och hur dem, det kändes som om dem hade dragit ner på det enda man behövde, dem hade inte riktigt förstått kundvärdet torr jag, för oftast har man inte så mycket kontakt med sina mobilleverantörer utan man bara använder dem dagligen så får det funka, men när det inte funkar vill man ha snabb och bra hjälp.”

“I have had negative experiences with Halebop, I know that I had Halebop once. Their customer service, it felt like they had cut down on the only essential, they had not realised the customer value I think. Most of the time you do not have a lot of contact with your your mobile operator, but you use

it daily. However, when it does not work, you want quick and good help, so I would never get Halebop actually."

"När jag vill göra saker privat så tittar jag på tjänster där jag vet att de är bra på att behandla privatkunder. Det känns so matt när jag ser DHL eller Schenker väljer jag aldrig dem för att det känns som att det är riktigt till företag. Jag skulle vilja säga att jag undviker schenker pga att jag har lite svårt att associera mig med schenker pga att enda sedan man var liten har man haft posten, posten är ju en stor del av ens liv, det är dem som leverar breven och det är dem som leverar paketen, dem kan jag associera mig med. Samtidigt som Schenker kan jag varken associera mig med som någon som bidragit till mig eler som jag är en kund hos egentligen."

"When I want to do things privately then I look for companies of services where I know that they are good at treating private customers. It feels like when I see DHL or Schenker I never chose them because it feels like that is towards companies. [...] I would like to say that I avoid Schenker because I have a hard time associating myself with Schenker. Because ever since I was a child I have used Posten, Posten is big part of my life, it is they who deliver the letters and it is them who deliver the packages, I can associate myself with them. At the same time cannot associate myself with Schenker as company who has contributed to me nor someone I am a customer to actually."

"Jag skulle ju även fast dem här lågpris mobiloperatörerna är tillgängliga och dem är med i beräkningarna när man ska köpa telefoner så väljer jag dem aldrig, till exempel Hallon, Halebop. De undviker jag aktivt även fast dem förmodligen hade varit lika bra och gett mig bättre pris."

"Even though the low price mobile operators are available, and those are included in the calculations when buying a new phone, I never choose them. For instance, Hallon and Halebop. I actively avoid them even though they probably would have been just as good but for a better price."

"Ett annat exempel för mig är skolor när det började bli så otroligt många privat skolor ute i sverige och hur jag vet och hörde av mina vänner hur det är på privat skolorna, hur betygen skjöt i höjden. Får jag gå om gymnasiet och även om det skulle generera mig bättre betyg så hade inte jag valt, THOREN BUSINESS SCHOOL eller JOHN BAUER, utan jag hade undvikit dem. För jag tycker inte att det sättet som det bedrivs, det är ju verkligen på bekostnad av andra, det märker man ju hr det ser ut nu, alla har ju skyhöga betyg när dem söker och jag är ju övertygad om att folk är inte mer intelligenta nu än för 10 år sedan."

"An example for me is education, when it started to become so many private schools in Sweden and I heard from my friends how the grades soared. Even if it would generate better grades, I would not have chosen Thoren Business School or John Bauer, I avoid them. The way the schools are conducted, it is really at the expense of others. You can tell that when you see how it is today, people have really high grades when they apply for universities, and I am convinced that people are not smarter now than 10 years ago."

”Det är lättare på produkter.”

“It is easier on products.”

”Socialdemokraterna använde sig av Henrik Schyffert tror jag det var, vilket som för mig framstod som otroligt oseriös och o businessminded. Vilket också för mig jag associerar med socialdemokraterna, inte bara att det var en komiker utan också att han äger en takvåning i centrala Stockholm.”

“Socialdemokraterna used Henrik Schyffert, I believe it was, which to me appeared as incredible non-serious and business minded. Which I now associate Socialdemokraterna with, not only that he was a comedian, but also that he owns a penthouse in central Stockholm.”

B8 (male 24)

”Ryan Air, två eller tre orsaker, ett för att jag har åkt med dem, otroligt dåligt benutrymme, det kändes otrevligt. Hemsidan, upplägget med att det ser väldigt billigt ut och sedan kommer extrakostnaderna. Också rykterna och det man har läst om dem, både medias bild och kompisar, jag tänker på en kompis då vars far är flygkapten på SAS.”

“I would avoid Ryan Air for two or three causes. Firstly, because I have travelled with them, incredibly bad legroom, it did not feel nice. The website, the arrangement that it look really cheap and then the additional costs. Also the rumours and the things you have read about them, both medias picture and friends, I am thinking about a friend whose father is an airline captain at SAS.”

”Jag var på resa, blev rånad, kom hem och hade det försäkringsbolaget [...] Jag fick kliva ner på det lokala kontoret vilket är bra att dem har, men jag skull ha med mig pass och visa att jag hade varit i dem här länderna, var otroligt mycket krångel, skulle försöka bevisa att jag hade dem här cashen och kvitto på mobilen. Det var en otrolig bevis börda för mig. Jämför då med hur det gick för min kompis som kunde glassa runt o vara kung på krogen med dem här oengarna så fick jag slita otroligt mycket mer. Den upplevelsen gjorde att jag fick byta bolag.”

“I was on a vacation, got robbed, got home and used that insurance company [...] I had to go to the local office, which was good that they had, but I had to bring my passport and show that I had been in those countries. It was a lot of hassle. I had to prove how much money I had and receipts on my cell phone. It was an incredible burden to me. My friend with another insurance company could cruise around, while I had to make so much more effort. That experience made me change company.”

”Plus att jag kände att jag tyckte att tjänsten även om alla har den och jag har hört säkert ett tiotal personer säga ”säg du det här på snapchat”, ”jag skicka den till dig på snapchat”. Så har jag ingen motivation att använda det ändå, det knns roligare att uppleva saker tillsammans istället och kanske är roligare

att ringa ett samtal än att olla på 50 snapchats. Att man inte lever sitt eget liv utan kollar vad alla andra gör hela tiden.”

“I felt that the service, even if everyone uses it and I have heard about ten people say ‘did you see this on Snapchat?’ and ‘I send it to you on Snapchat’, I do not have a motivation to use it anyway, it feels more fun to experience things together instead [...] You do not live your own life but look for what others do all the time.”

”Om man står mellan två olika alternativ när man ska boka flyg så tycker man att den är så otroligt töntig, den där flyg, flyg flygresor.se och några jävla katter som hoppar runt, då kanske man känner att den är oseriös. Då kanske man väljer en annat företag. Jag tycker att flygresors reklam är töntigt, jag har betällt ett gäng flygresoroch då har jag aldrig använt föygresor.se. Dem känns lite oseriösa, det är katter som hoppar runt på ett bord, nu blir jag fan förbannad.”

“If one has to choose between two different alternatives when booking a flight, and you think that it is incredible dorky, that one, Flyg, Flyg, Flygresor.se and some damn cats jumping around, then one might experience it as non-serious. Then you might choose another company. I think that Flygresor.se’s commercial is dorky. I have ordered a bunch of flights and I have never used Flygresor.se. They feel non-serious and there are cats jumping around on a table, now I get pissed off.

Appendix 4 – Interview Audiofiles

Audiofiles from interviews available on request.