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1 Introduction

In this section the authors begin by outlining the background of the concept of advertising components driving brand avoidance. The topic is to be tested on the sportswear market within Sweden. Problem, purpose, and key definitions are explained in order for the reader to understand the concept discussed later on.

1.1 Problem Discussion

Spending one hour at our local gym. Watching 142 Nike pants walk by. 54 out of these pants are accompanied by shoes from the same brand, whereas the rest of their owners have matched their tights with shoes and tops from Adidas, Under Armour and some unlabelled pieces. The question we ask ourselves is, why do people buy these brands? Our next question, which is even more interesting, why do people choose to not buy certain brands?

Authors' own observations

Until today, much research has been conducted into the many positive aspects of branding and brand equity (Lee, Conroy & Motion, 2009a). It has been researched why consumers choose certain brands and how companies can increase brand loyalty. People express themselves and build their identities through brands and products they use (Aaker, 1999; Hogg, Cox & Keeling, 2000). However, what is becoming more interesting and has not yet been researched properly is the topic of anti-consumption (Cherrier, 2009) and in particular brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a). Lee et al. (2009a) imply that some people avoid certain brands and products because of negative associations and that it is of equal importance to study this as of studying the positive associations. Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, once said:

“Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.”

(Forbes, 2014)

Lee et al. (2009a) argue that negative brand promise is a powerful aspect. Further, Lee et al. (2009a) introduce a framework called Four Types of Brand Avoidance built upon four categories; *experiential*, *identity*, *moral*, and *deficit-value avoidance*. The outcome of each of these categories is undelivered, unappealing, detrimental and inadequate promises. Knittel et al. (2016) expanded this framework with an additional category of brand avoidance, namely, advertising. Until today, brand avoidance has solely been investigated on a general level (Lee, Conroy, & Motion, 2009b), and one can clearly identify a gap to further explore brand categories and/or industries (Knittel et al., 2016). Knittel et al. (2016) propose future research within product categories together with further narrow research of advertising within brand avoidance. This is a gap that should be comprehended due to marketing managers' opportunity to successfully pursue advertising campaigns with knowledge of which advertising actions are beneficial and those that are not.

In the article *Anti-consumption and Brand Avoidance* (Lee et al., 2009b), the authors describe the lack of research conducted on the reversed notion consumers feel when they purchase and use specific brands. Since the topic of this reversed notion is largely overlooked and not studied properly, there are several gaps in the current knowledge (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Lee et al., 2009b; Knittel et al., 2016). Hence, this enlarges the possibilities of different subject to focus on within this thesis.

Particularly, brand avoidance and advertising in relation to the sportswear industry is yet not researched. However, it is an interesting market due to its strong connection and usage of advertisement. In the fiscal year of 2014, Nike Inc. spent \$3.031 billion on what they chose to call “Demand Creation”. This was an increase with 10% from the year before (Nike Inc., 2014). Adidas Group, the second largest actor on the market (Sportfack, 2015), states in their annual report of 2014 that their so-called “Marketing working budget” ended at €1,548 billion, increasing last years number with 6% (Adidas Group, 2014). Nike Inc. makes it rather hard to compare these numbers with other companies, since the definition of the expenses are somewhat undefined. However, the essence of these facts shows that in this industry the amount and effort spent on advertising is important. According to Jackson and Andrews (2005, p.5), originally the concept of virtual advertising was basically designed for the sport industry. Further the authors argue that the sport climate today has an enormous and unique appeal to the advertising industry (Jackson & Andrew, 2005, p.8).

Today’s literature on the topic of brand avoidance is vague and is yet not reviewed and tested on a specific market or industry. As mentioned, brand avoidance recent appearance in literature considers a general perspective of the phenomenon. The main components of existing literature discuss brand avoidance due to previous product experiences, identity incongruent, moral conflicts, and deficit-value avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a). Moreover, narrow research on the topic brand avoidance highlights the individual parts of the conceptual framework presented by Lee et al. (2009a). Advertising is the last and fifth component driving brand avoidance presented by Knittel et al. (2016). Further investigation on advertising is supported by Knittel et al. (2016). With advertising being a constantly developing phenomenon and the sportswear industry spending a tremendous amount on this phenomenon every year, the authors believe that this research can contribute to existing theories on the topic of brand avoidance.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate and gain deeper understanding of which components of advertising that affect brand avoidance within the sportswear industry.

1.3 Definitions

Brand - “A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of a seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (Fill, 2013, p.326-327).

Branding - Branding is the process where attitudes are to be established and maintained in a consistent way related to a product or service (Fill, 2013, p.116).

Brand Avoidance - Brand avoidance is the “phenomenon whereby consumers deliberately choose to keep away from or reject a brand” (Lee et al., 2009a, p.422).

Advertising - Advertising is a form of promotion, which in its’ turn is a part of the marketing mix. The term “promotion” consists of four marketing communication tools; advertising, personal selling, sales promotions and public relations (Smith, 2008, p.172).

Sportswear - In this study the focus is on sportswear, namely sports clothing, sports shoes and sports accessories. Sports equipment is not included in this research.

1.4 Delimitations

This thesis is delimited to the Swedish market, due to availability of respondents for interviews and sampling of focus groups. When creating focus groups, people under 18 years old have been excluded, since they may not hold individual financial control. This research examines the sportswear market, thus the results cannot be generalizable on other industries.

1.5 Contribution

This thesis’ main focus is to contribute to the field of brand avoidance. It strengthens and adds to existing theory and will help future researchers get a broader view and knowledge of the topic. Additionally, studies on the topic of advertising and marketing communication will be greatly advantaged by this research, mostly due to its’ relevance to the sports industry’s dependence of marketing and money spent on advertising activities (Nike Inc., 2014; Adidas Group, 2014; Jackson & Andrew, 2005, p.9).

2 Literature Review

This section is looking into a broader view of anti-consumption and does not limit the literature review to solely brand avoidance. This is for the reader to get a broader understanding of brand avoidance and how it connects to previous research. Further, relevant features of advertising and marketing communication are presented.



Figure 1. Construction of Literature Review

2.1 Brand Avoidance

Brand avoidance is the “phenomenon whereby consumers deliberately choose to keep away from or reject a brand” (Lee et al., 2009a). When financial means are not the dilemma, availability exists, and conscious actions are comprehended, these are existing circumstances when consumers still tend to avoid certain brands (Knittel et al., 2016).

2.1.1 Brand and Branding

Traditionally, a *brand* is viewed as something that visualizes what the company offers. According to a study of Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley (1998) a brand is much more than that. They describe a brand as a multidimensional construct, where managers extend a product with values to match the needs of a consumer. *Branding* is the action one comprehends by promoting the actual brand (Fill, 2013, p.116). There are many definitions of what a brand is, however, there are various themes used in describing a brand and its functions; value system, personality, image, logo and risk reducer. Even if all of these definitions do not consider both the firm and the consumers, every definition takes the view of either stakeholder in determining the antecedents and the consequences of the brand. Hence, the activities of the company and the perceptions of the consumers are the two main aspects of the brand construct. The company positions the brand through the marketing mix, which establish a brand identity and personality. The consumers, based on their own self-images and functional

and emotional needs, then perceive the brand identity and personality (Chernatony & Riley, 1998).

2.1.2 Anti-consumption

Peneloza and Price (2003) define anti-consumption as “A resistance against a culture of consumption and the marketing of mass- produced meanings” (p.123). Cherrier (2009) allures anti- consumption as both an attitude, when one declines material growth, and an activity, when refusal of consumption appears. According to Cherrier (2009), anti-consumption is related to resistance and it is both an activity and an attitude. Anti-consumption is an aim to withstand a specific brand or product, its marketing activities or the marketplace as a whole. Anti-consumption is associated with words such as resistance, distaste and resentment of consumption in general. It can also be referred to as the confrontation against a culture of consumption and the marketing of mass-produced meanings. There are various reasons and ways to explain and view the topic of anti-consumption. Dissatisfaction, undesired self and self–concept incongruity, organizational disidentification, boycotting, and consumer resistance are some key topics that can help to explain brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009b). Brand avoidance is a particular form of anti-consumption and in order to understand anti-consumption deeper it is helpful to explore brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a).

In 2008 Sandikci and Ekici introduced the concept of politically motivated brand rejection (PMBR) as an extended and stronger form of anti-consumption. It is the act of a consumer, which permanently refuses to buy a brand because of its’ political ideology (Sandikci & Ekici, 2008). In the mentioned authors’ paper, they state that there are three major areas that are researched and answers to why consumers resist a product: political consumerism, undesired self and image congruence, and organisational disidentification.

Political consumerism is when a consumer bases decisions on attitudes regarding values and justice in the society. The act can be displayed both in a positive manner through increased consumption (buycott) and as a negative act whilst consumption decreases (boycott) (Sandikci & Ekici, 2008). Boycotting is a term that is greatly connected with brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009b). However, the most obvious difference between the two is that boycotting is often caused by opinions of how a brand is dealing with political decisions. Hence, the duration of the resistance is also a difference, whereas boycotting does normally not proceed as long as buycotting. An example is the “Do not buy anything Day”, which was a one day boycotting event demonstrating against the American industry, which people believed was too dependent of the consumers (Friedman, 1985).

Undesired self and image congruence (Sandikci & Ekici, 2008) or undesired self and self-concept incongruity (Lee et al., 2009b), is when consumers choose to not consume depending on the connection they believe a certain brand or product category has with a lifestyle they avoid to be associated with.

Organizational disidentification suggests that people withdraw themselves from companies and boycott their products and services, which they feel are unrelated to their own values. Since a brand is a constellation of values, if a person does not agree with those values, he or she will feel motivated to avoid that brand (Lee et al., 2009b). Sandikci and Ekici (2008), define organizational disidentification as a self-perception based on a cognitive separation between one's identity and one's perception of the identity of an organization and a negative relational categorization of oneself and the organization. In conclusion, literature specifies that consumers may refrain from using a specific product or brand in order to impact on business practices and promote what is good for the society, or as part of their need to avoid social groups, roles and identities that represent the negative self (Sandikci & Ekici, 2008).

A more recent study introduces two concepts, consumer-brand identification (CBI) and consumer brand disidentification (CBD), as symbolic drivers for brand identification. CBD is especially interesting since it can be useful in order to understand consumers' brand relationship (Wolter, Brach, Cronin & Bonn, 2015).

In the research conducted by Sandikci and Ekici (2008) the concept of brand dislike was not included. The same as with brand avoidance, brand dislike is largely overlooked in today's research since the application of the information is not positively stated for the companies (Demirbag-Kaplan, Yildirim, Gulden & Aktan, 2015). According to Romani, Grappi and Dalli (2012) the two most endearing negative emotions towards brands are dislike and anger. Demirbag-Kaplan et al. (2015) also mean that negative feelings towards brands in situations where the consumers have made a deliberate choice not to consume, has also helped draw attention to the topic as it can be a potential factor for brand avoidance.

2.1.3 Four Types of Brand Avoidance

Brand avoidance can evolve due to diverse reasons. Experiential, identity and moral brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009b) together with deficit-value avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a) and advertising (Knittel et al., 2016) are the identified contributing factors of the existing conceptual frameworks based on why consumers choose to avoid certain brands.

Experiential brand avoidance

Dissatisfaction most often occurs as the experience of a product or a service is lower than what they were expected to be. If expectations are not confirmed, they can either be better or worse than expected. However, the negative disconfirmation is what in some cases can be connected to brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009b). Oliver (1980), argues that one's level of expectations are influenced of the product itself, prior experiences of the brand or product, brand connotations and symbolic elements to name a few.

Experiential brand avoidance is based on previous first hand experiences with a certain branded product or service, resulting in a negative perception of the brand (Lee et al., 2009b). The negative impression of the brand emerges from unmet expectations (Oliver, 1980) which resolves from poor performance of the product (Folke, 1984), inconvenience of the product

such as price or service resulting in customer- switching behaviour, or an unpleasant store experience due to its environment (Bitner, 1992; Knittel et al., 2016).

When product performance is not coherent with the consumer's expectations, brand avoidance may occur (Lee et al., 2009a; Folke, 1984), which can further evolve into a negative attitude and behaviour towards the brand. This event can affect sales and profit in non-beneficial ways due to consumers recognizing the retail- and product brand in future purchasing situations, leaving them to constantly avoid that brand (Lee et al., 2009b). Brand avoidance due to inconvenience of a service or product is the notion whereas e.g. pricing, core expectations of service, and/or ethical manners fail to satisfy the consumer, usually leading to customer switching behaviour (Knittel et al., 2016) - a phenomenon supported to be identified with brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a). Several authors suggest that a well-designed and appealing store environment tend to increase the probability of purchase, implying the opposite to be a factor for brand avoidance (Kotler, 1973; Bitner, 1992; Knittel et al., 2016).

Identity brand avoidance

This phenomenon evolves from an appearing conflict between a brand image and the individual's identity (Lee et al., 2009b), disallowing brands fulfilment of consumer's identity requirements (Hogg & Banister, 2001; Knittel et al., 2016). From the consumer's perspective, unfavourable symbolic viewpoints of a brand are further connected to affect brand avoidance. Consumers tend to reject brands that are not consistent with one's relation to their reference groups or symbolically compatible with one's self-concept (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002; Knittel et al., 2016). The following statement supports the idea of identity brand avoidance:

"We always laugh about it, but we would never buy cheap toilet paper, because that just says something, you just think if you walk into a bathroom and there's cheap toilet paper... it says something about you, how you portray yourself... I guess it's important because that's how you see yourself. I'm not cheap and nasty (...)."

(Lee et al., 2009b)

Moral brand avoidance

Whilst ethical consumption increases, so does brand avoidance due to moral concerns. Moral brand avoidance develops from inconsistency amongst the consumer's individual and ideological beliefs, and the characteristics of a brand (Rindell, Strandvik & Wilén, 2014). Moral brand avoidance concerns the purchasing decisions one take with thoughts beyond the self, having societal aspects in mind, and therefore avoiding brands accordingly (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Lee et al., 2009b). Two factors of this concept are *country issues* and *anti hegemony*. Country issues related to moral brand avoidance is the perception a consumer has towards the product's country of origin (COO). Consumers tend to evaluate and consider the product's quality depending on the COO (Bloemer, Brijs & Kasper, 2009; Knittel et al., 2016). Anti hegemony brand avoidance can be explained as not wanting to support monopolies and large multi-national companies or brands because they act irresponsibly, and actively chooses to avoid their products (Rindell et al., 2014). The consumer may also

consider the company's actions in relation to socio-economic and political standards and because of these issues avoids the brand (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Lee et al., 2009b).

Deficit-value brand avoidance

This issue appears when consumers avoid certain brands due to their costs which one perceives as inconsistent with the level of value and quality of the product (Lee et al., 2009a). Price and quality are the main factors affecting purchasing decisions and brand avoidance. The notion behind this type of brand avoidance happens due to unfamiliarity (Richardson, Jain & Dick, 1996), thus the consumer does not view the product adequate offering low value (Knittel et al., 2016).

Aesthetic insufficiency is further a component of deficit-value avoidance, a phenomenon in this topic where one's glimpse of a product leads to judgements of its' functional value. Moreover, food favouritism is identified as a part of deficit-value brand avoidance because food is a sensitive product in purchasing decisions. People tend to avoid food products from diverse deficit-value brands (Green, Draper & Dowler, 2003). However, one does not neglect other products from the same brand (Lee et al., 2009a). Deficit-value brand avoidance and experiential brand avoidance can easily be confounded as the same phenomenon. However, deficit-value brand avoidance does not demand previous first hand experience with a product to make brand avoidance decisions (Knittel et al., 2016).

Experiential, identity, moral, and deficit-value brand avoidance are the first four drivers of brand avoidance identified and developed in a conceptual framework by Lee et al. (2009a) (see framework: *Four Types of Brand Avoidance* below). Further research in the area of brand avoidance has been investigated by several authors with various foci, directions and alignments (Knittel et al., 2016; Rindell et al., 2014; Sandikci & Ekici, 2008).

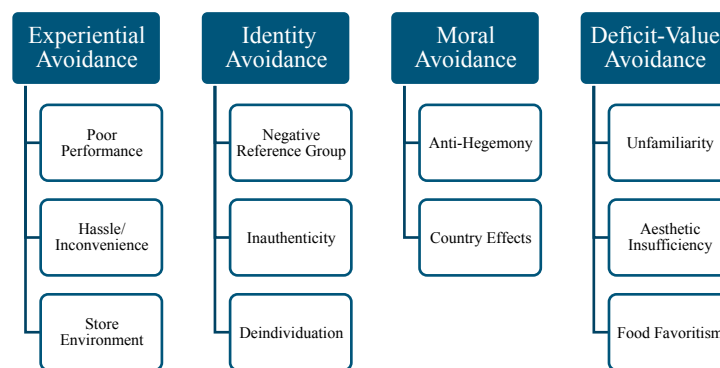


Figure 2. The Original Theoretical Framework - Four Types of Brand Avoidance (Knittel et al., 2016, p.29)

2.1.4 Advertising as a form of Brand Avoidance

Advertising has recently been added to the framework of drivers of brand avoidance. Research shows that consumers are affected by advertising while pursuing active purchasing decisions, and that brand avoidance is strongly connected to the *content* of advertising,

celebrity endorsers and music. This results in various *responses* that increasingly affect active brand avoidance decisions (Knittel et al., 2016).

I used to drink that beer in my country, but then they had this advertising, which I really don't like and then I stopped to drink it at all. It is actually a good beer, so it is not a matter of quality, it is not bad quality but just the advertising like the person in this ad is so bad and now I avoid it. So I continued then to drink another beer.

(Knittel et al., 2016, p.35)

Knittel et al. (2016) updated the already existing framework developed in 2009 by Lee et al. Advertising is in the revised framework added as a fifth driver of brand avoidance.

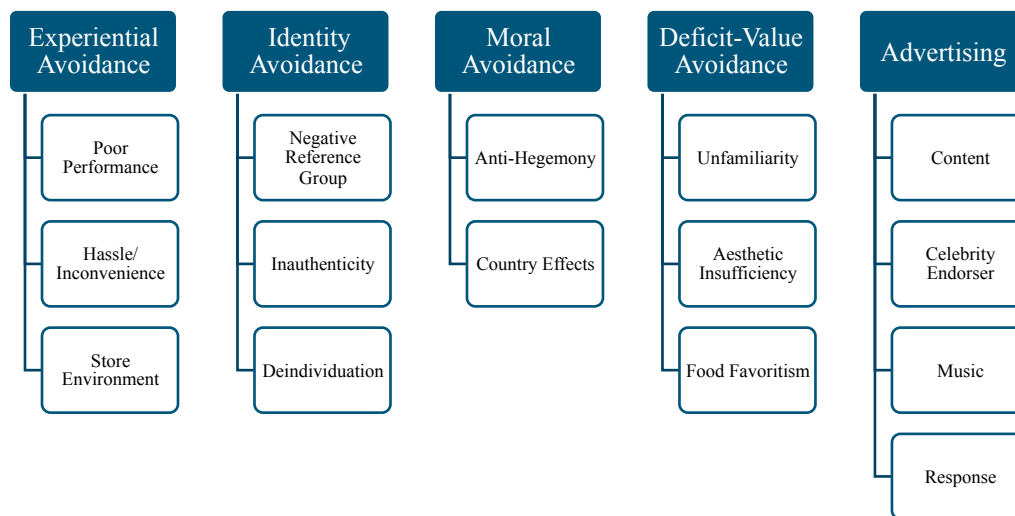


Figure 3. Expanded Framework of Brand Avoidance (Knittel et al., 2016, p.37)

Content

Content refers to as what is being said in the communication process (Fill, 2013, p.159). Within advertising, content can have several purposes (Knittel et al., 2016) such as engaging and informing recipients with a clear message (McLaughlin, 2015). The content is significant for the advertiser due to how one should convey a message successfully towards the audience. Knittel et al. (2016) identify content as a crucial part of brand avoidance influenced by advertising because of how it can irritate and provoke the audience.

Celebrity Endorser

Celebrity endorsement is the concept where advertisers aim to establish desire of a product creating associations and attitudes by using a celebrity representing it (Dimed & Joulyana, 2005). However, there are risks whenever celebrity endorsements are used. One needs to be aware of the risk to be associated with a possible negative perception of the endorser (Till & Schimp, 1998). The image of a celebrity must be considered in relation to the product, the credibility, and acceptance from the audience. Further, there is a risk of the endorser moving attention away from the actual product (Fill, 2013, p. 119). Knittel et al. (2016) investigated this phenomenon with the results of consumers avoiding brands due to endorsers in

advertisements. Celebrity endorsement has shown to negatively influence purchasing decisions, in turn leading to brand avoidance.

Music

With an emerging use of advertising, which seek to evolve the audience's emotions, music is highly accurate to advertisements. The way jingles and melodies can create recognition and memories to advertisements and products, music affects awareness and attention (Fill, 2013, p.779). However, music in advertisements, such as commercials, has also proven to be a source to brand avoidance. Music can be used with successful results, however can at some times annoy the audience and make advertisements noisy. Melodies and jingles can influence purchasing decisions and preferences, but also push actions against a product causing brand avoidance (Knittel et al., 2016).

Response

When the message of an advertisement reaches the receiver one automatically analyses and interprets the message. This is referred to as response (Fill, 2013, p. 46; Kotler, Armstrong & Parment, 2011). The response of an advertisement is dependent upon the receiver due to individual preferences, leading diverse advertisements to get various attention and emotional reactions. Depending on these individual preferences, response may cause brand avoidance behaviour when advertisements are negatively perceived. Since response is the last part of the communication process, it appears as an important aspect of advertisements (Knittel et al., 2016).

2.2 Advertising

The historical start of basic advertising took off in the mid 19th century and is constantly updated with an interesting and unknown future of evolvement (Tungate, 2013). Smith (2008, p.172) defines advertising as a one-way communication form from marketers to consumers, of which the company pays someone else to create their brand, organisation or product identified and known of. The advertiser's role is usually to create content that reaches the maximum amount of individuals possible. This is something that is done by frequency optimization and message exposure via various channels (Heath, 2013). Advertisers usually aim towards efficiency and continuous exposure of their message. However, these issues can result in an annoyed audience depending on the balance of exposure (Heath, 2013). The term advertising can be divided into various subcategories. Advertising components in this research are the following ones, chosen because of their accuracy to the sportswear industry.

Online advertising has the purpose to create brand awareness for positive image perception, and provoke the receiver to behave accordingly in the future. Online advertising should be able to deliver content, enable transactions, shape attitudes, solicit response, and improve retention (Fill, 2013, p.637, 687; Kotler et al., 2011).

Broadcast advertising is the use of television and/or radio to reach a relatively large audience for a, most of the time, low cost per target reached. One can use broadcast advertising for

visuals and sounds, to tell stories, and appeal consumers with emotions (Heath, 2013; Fill, 2013, p.605, 606, Swayne & Dodds, 2011, p. 12-13).

Out of home advertising (OOH) is found in the form of billboards, posters, transport ads and terminal buildings. These are located “away from home”. The purposes with OOH are to support content from other advertising messages. The factors that shape the interaction between the receiver and the ads are: 1, the length of the ad’s exposure, 2, the ad’s intrusiveness on the surrounding environment, and 3, the likely mindset of the consumers who will encounter the ad (Fill, 2013, p.608; Kotler et al., 2011).

Product placement advertising can also be called subliminal advertising. This is a phenomenon where advertisements are unconsciously interpreted and acknowledged by an audience (Doucette, 2013; Oxford Reference, 2016). A product is promoted in various medias such as movies, radio, TV or music songs and videos. Product placement is commonly used as a strategy in the sports industry today (Swayne & Dodds, 2011).

Cell phone- and mobile-advertising is content delivered through mobile devices, which enhance the term ubiquity, whereas content is accessed at any time, on any location. New technology eases the process of keeping communication on-going, creates personalization and creates the beneficial matter of convenience (Fill, 2013, p.636, Swayne & Dodds, 2011, p. 12-13). As a significant part of this advertising method, Bosomworth (2014) suggests that mobile apps will gain attention for marketers as advertising channels in the future.

Print advertising is media, which is very efficient in delivering a message to the audience in purpose. Print advertising is in the form of newspapers and magazines, means that lately is competing with information sharing through the Internet (Fill, 2013, p.601-603; Kotler et al., 2011, Swayne & Dodds, 2011, p. 12-13).

Consumer generated advertising occurs when consumers choose to develop and further share information of value related to the product. This can be done by the user because of preferences to the product, or with an actual purpose to influence others (Fill, 2013, p.435).

2.2.1 Marketing Communication

Marketing communication consists of different marketing actions, called the “promotional mix”. Traditionally the promotional mix consists of: advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling, and public relation (Hallahan, 2013). The difference between advertising activities and other promotional tools can be somewhat hard to draw the line in between, especially since the integration between them are of increasing importance. On the topic of promotional campaigns and its communication, three elements are found to be crucial for its success (Hallahan, 2013).

1. The right tools and media that are needed to achieve a specific task or need
2. The timing of the campaign
3. The message consistency, and/or continuity

In how to optimize *timing* of advertisements there are a number of factors influencing such as consumers' ability to recall ad messages, nature of the product, seasonality of product consumption, intensity of competitive advertising, and the purchasing cycle (Balakrishnan & Hall, 1995).

Sponsorship is a tool used within marketing communication. This phenomenon involves for companies to find the right person to initiate a sponsorship with (Swayne & Dodds, 2011, p. 12-13; Smith, 2008, p. 192). Further, this person should be an individual the target audience can associate to and affiliate with. Typically, sponsors provide resources that include money, people, equipment or expertise in order to get direct association with an event, activity or cause in order to reach their marketing goals (Ciletti, 2016). Sponsorship is especially big within the sports industry (Swayne & Dodds, 2011, p. 12-13). Only in North America, companies spend more than 11 billion dollars on sport sponsorships (Ciletti, 2016).

As for *co-branding* and *celebrity endorsement* a good fit between a brand and a celebrity is when the endorser's most relevant attributes and the brand's most relevant attributes make a good match (Misra & Beatty, 1990). A celebrity provides the consumer with relevant brand information by showing their own characteristics, as well as if they specifically mentions information about the brand to consumers in a direct way (Ilicic & Webster, 2013).

An important marketing communication tool is *social media* and *social networking*. Research shows that social media marketing will grow at a rate of 34 % annually. Companies participate in online communities such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube and LinkedIn, creating fan pages and groups, and placing advertising. By engaging online customers to take initiatives through social media, it will be more valuable (Ciletti, 2016).

Public relations are often actions created by a brand to strengthen the media interest, and one way of doing this is by hosting *events* (Ciletti, 2016). It is a way of letting consumers try and experience one single brand in a designated area or location. There are three types of events; product-, corporate- and community events. Product events are generally focused on increasing sales while corporate events aim to generate media coverage, which will lead to awareness, goodwill, and interest (Ciletti, 2016). Community events want to contribute to the life of the local community to create goodwill and awareness of the community (Fill, 2013, p.581-582).

The *credibility and trustworthiness* of the message can be dependent of how the message is told to the audience, and it is of importance to understand the need of not awakening thought of mistrust if the message does not correspond to the marketer. There is a balance where publicity does not sound like advertising, however still carries out the message to the audience (Hallahan, 2013). A study conducted on advertisements' credibility revealed several factors influencing the trustworthiness of advertisements (Prendergast, Liu, & Poon, 2009). Firstly, findings showed that when advertising products that from the beginning are perceived as less trustworthy, by providing evidence that they actually work, will help the audience to perceive the advertisements as more credible. If such resources do not exist, the use of an

endorser could help to enhance the trustworthiness of the advert. Secondly, the findings also showed a difference in credibility depending on the channel used. In the study, Internet and direct mail were shown to be connected to low credibility. Lastly, Prendergast et al. (2009) emphasize the importance in consider the consumer self-esteem amongst the target audience. They imply that target audience with a higher self-esteem would be generally more likely to criticize what the advertisement claims.

2.2.2 Advertising Avoidance

In 2010 an article was published as a result of a study based on teenagers and their behaviour of avoiding advertisement when they are online. The authors, Kelly, Kerr and Drennan (2010) researched the reasons behind avoidance of certain advertising, such as perceived goal impediment, perceived ad clutter and prior negative experiences. Kelly et al. (2010) use the definition of advertising avoidance conducted by Speck and Elliott (1997), which define it as “all actions by media users that differentially reduce their exposure to ad content”.

The authors came to the conclusion that four main reasons build a foundation for why teenagers avoid online ads. These are due to *expectations of negative experiences* either caused by word of mouth or by own negative experiment. *Perception of relevance of advertising message*, which included the perceiver not finding any interest in the ad. *Scepticism of advertising message claims*, including if the receiver does not believe the claims are appropriate to that specific media. And last, *Scepticism of online social networking sites as a credible advertising medium*, when the audience perceive the social network to lack a certain level of credibility (Kelly et al., 2010). Important to notice is that this study solely researched the reasons behind avoiding the advertisement, and not the product or service in the advertisements (see appendix 9.4).

2.2.3 High versus Low Involvement in Purchasing Decisions

Purchasing decisions are constantly made with various factors influencing the consumer's decision. The level of involvement is a contributing factor to brand choice decisions of products and purchasing processes (Fill, 2013, p.95-96). Rossiter et al. (1991) describes involvement as the degree to which the consumer's personal perception of relevance and risk are, when taking action in purchasing decisions. These issues can be of financial means. However, one will also take social risk and brand aspects into consideration when making purchasing decisions. Depending on risk and relevance, consumers devote diverse amounts of time when choosing between brands (Fill, 2013, p.95-96).

When the consumer has the perception of a product or service to be of high relevance, and high risk for oneself, *high involvement* in purchasing decision develops. High involvement decision-making is usually processed rational and logical. Consumers tend to gather a lot of information before making a final decision. Consumers' *low involvement* in decision-making processes is low-perceived threats. One does generally not research the product for information nor support, and the consumer is relatively passive (Fill, 2013, p.95-96).

3 Method & Data

The third chapter of this study introduces the methodological background of this thesis. One will first get an introduction of the research design and research approach followed by the qualitative data collection methods. Furthermore, the two-step data collection, interviews leading to the construction of focus groups, is presented. Lastly, an analytical section of the methodology is presented followed by a section indicating the trustworthiness and credibility of the method and data collection.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge. This is the first step when initiating research, to develop knowledge within a specific topic. There are four different research philosophies: positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Positivism and realism are both objective research philosophies and are based on observable phenomena, which will provide data (Collis & Hussey, 2014). For positivism the researcher is independent of the data and maintains objective. It is a method based on testing scientific hypotheses empirically. As for realism the researcher is biased by cultural experiences and background, which will impact the research (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Collis & Hussey, 2014).

Interpretivism and pragmatism are on the other hand two subjective philosophies, which allow the authors to change and add theory in a non-chronological order during the research process (McLaughlin, 2007). Interpretivism is based on learning about people's lived experiences, the details in their social lives with regards to one's values and emotions (McLaughlin, 2007). This research philosophy requires qualitative research methods such as in-depth investigations and small samples (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007), and has evolved from identified insufficiencies within positivism (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Pragmatism can be based on both observable and social phenomena and integrates different perspectives to understand data from different views (Saunders et al., 2007). As for interpretivism, the researcher is part of what is being researched and is therefore subjective. For pragmatism the researcher is adopting both objective and subjective points of view and both quantitative and qualitative techniques are used (Saunders et al., 2007).

The philosophy that applies best on this research is interpretivism due to its subjectiveness and use of qualitative data collection. The interpretivism philosophy further allows the authors to develop theory throughout the research (Taylor, Wilkie & Baser, 2006), something that is accurate for this thesis writing.

3.1.2 Research Approach

When using a deductive approach one focuses on quantitative data rather than qualitative data (Saunders et al., 2007). The deductive approach is very structured and relies more on data than theory with a necessity in selecting a lot of samples in order to reach conclusions. For this research approach a theory and hypothesis are developed together with a research strategy to test the hypothesis (Saunders et al., 2007). The inductive approach is in contrary a model that uses qualitative data, which is more flexible in structure and focuses on understanding rather than a scientific principle (Saunders et al., 2007; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012).

By combining the deductive and inductive approach, a third research approach is created, namely abduction. This approach is built upon hypotheses from empirical data, which then are tested on new empirical objects (Patel & Davidson, 2003). The research approach that best describes the authors' study is the abductive. The authors have learnt theory from their theoretical research, this has then been developed by learning more theory from their empirical study, which is an abductive way of researching. The additional information was gained from interviews with experts in the sportswear industry. These findings lead to an extended frame of reference. The gathered knowledge from literature review and interviews worked as the basis of construction of focus groups. Coding processes of empirical data collection resulted in Knittel et al. (2016) model being revised. An abductive approach collects data to explore a certain phenomenon and recognizes themes to explain patterns to either develop a new theory or modify existing ones (Saunders et al., 2012). This way of researching also proves that the authors are using an abductive approach.

3.1.3 Empirical Data Collection

When using quantitative data collection one uses any data collection technique or data analysis procedure that will generate numerical data (Saunders et al., 2007). These could be such as a questionnaire or graphs. On the contrary, qualitative data collection is used in order to generate non-numerical data (Saunders et al., 2007). Qualitative research includes data collection methods such as: observational methods, in-depth interviewing, group discussions, narratives and the analysis of documentary evidence. The goal with qualitative research is to provide an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The authors collected their empirical data through interviews and focus groups, hence qualitative research applies best on their data collection and is the most suitable method when answering questions to "what" and "how" (Yin, 2009).

3.2 Method

The research of this thesis is of an exploratory character. It seeks to find out “what is happening, to seek new insights, to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light” (Saunders et al., 2007, p.170). When researching in exploratory manner, the researcher must be willing to change direction as a result of new data that may appear. The focus is initially broad but becomes narrower as the research progresses (Saunders et al., 2007). According to Saunders et al. (2007) there are three principal ways of conducting an exploratory research; search of literature, interviewing experts in the subject and conducting focus groups.

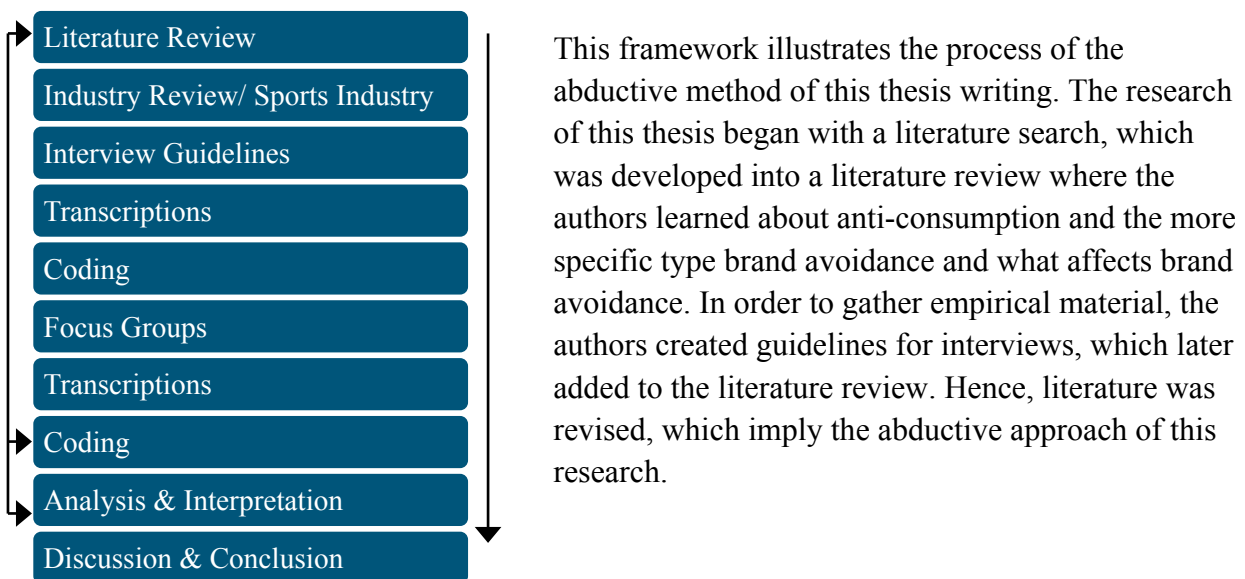


Figure 4. Authors Own Model of the Chosen Methodology

The latest research on brand avoidance conducted by Knittel et al. (2016), introduce advertising as a contribution to brand avoidance on the framework previously created by Lee et al. (2009a). The framework of Knittel et al. (2016) weighs of high importance to this thesis, in order to investigate and to gain deeper understanding of whether the components of advertising driving brand avoidance are applicable on the sportswear industry.

3.2.1 Data Collection

Data has been collected both physically from the university library of Jönköping, as well as through electronic sources such as peer-reviewed databases. As brand avoidance has not yet been researched thoroughly, this has led to a greater range of databases being used: Scopus, Google Scholar, Web of Knowledge, Primo and SAGE Publications. Additionally, academic journals and company reports have been used in order to gain knowledge on the subject and to formulate interviews and focus groups. Brand avoidance was the starting point of this research. After having researched the topic, the authors discovered the relationship between anti-consumption and brand avoidance, which felt interesting and important enough to include in the literature review.

Literature Review	
Databases	Scopus, Web of Knowledge, Google Scholar, Primo
Main Theoretical Fields	Brand Avoidance & Advertising
Search Words	Advert* + Anti-consumption, Brand Avoidance, Consumer Resistance, Brand Rejection, Brand Dislike
Literature Views	Academic Articles and Books
Criteria to include an article	Search words had to match the article title and/ or the abstract and keywords

Table 1. A Visual Overview of the Data Collection Process

Data was collected through two different ways; brief searching and pearl citation growing. Rowley and Slack (2004) describes brief searching as collecting a few documents in a fast manner, a good way of starting the collection of data. Pearl citation growing is a search strategy where one starts from a low number of documents and identify key terms of those documents, to later find them in other documents as well (Rowley & Slack, 2004).

3.2.2 Interviews

Interviews are especially common when conducting qualitative studies, however not exclusively used for that type of method (Clarke & Dawson, 1999). It is a data collection method where selected participants are asked questions with the purpose of understanding actions, thoughts and feelings. When interviews are used under interpretivism, they are conducted to understand attitudes and feelings that people have in common (Collis & Hussey, 2014). According to Saunders et al. (2007), structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews are the most common ones when researching.

A structured interview relies on either a questionnaire or predetermined questions as the data-collecting instrument. The questions are asked in a specific order by each interviewer, and the purpose is that all interviewees are to be exposed to the same stimulus during the interview. This type of interview is only used when it is clear what the relevant questions are (Clarke & Dawson, 1999). The unstructured interview is the most informal one. This type of interview is only used when the purpose is to conduct qualitative studies and where additional questions can be generated during the interview (Clarke & Dawson, 1999). The semi-structured interview is a mix between the structured and the unstructured, where both standardized and open-ended questions are asked (Bryman, 2008; Clarke & Dawson, 1999).

The authors chose to interview marketing experts in the field of sportswear, in order to gather information for focus groups and gain a more thorough understanding of the market. Structured interviews with predetermined questions were held via e-mail to collect data regarding advertising activities presented in Sweden for sportswear. This was conducted with the purpose to acquire marketers' viewpoints of the topic in question, to further plan,

coordinate and develop accurate content to the focus groups. The questions for the interviews can be found in appendix 9.1.

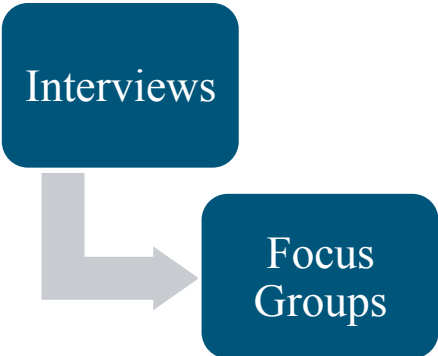


Figure 5. Multi-Stage and Multi-Method Data Collection Process

The sampling process for the interviews was a mix between convenience sampling and maximum variation sampling. The interviews are an example of convenience sampling because the companies who responded to our request were the ones used for this research (Lavrakas, 2008). Maximum variation sampling is when a wide range of interests is represented between the correspondents (A World Health Organization Resource, 2016). For this study, it was important to gather information from various brands with diverse focuses in order to get a valid overview of the Swedish sportswear industry. One brand targets a large audience and focus mainly on producing running shoes. Another brand has a younger target group and is one of the leading brands within the sportswear industry. The third brand represents a niched sport, with a main focus towards a younger target audience.

	Company A	Company B	Company C
Date of Response	03/03/16	01/03/16	24/02/16
Position*	Nordic Manager	Nordic Sport Marketing Manager	Managing Director Sweden

Table 2. Interview respondents. Length is not relevant due to interviews being held via e-mail
 * Position of respondent

The table above illustrates an overview of the experts being interviewed and their position at each company.

3.2.3 Focus Groups

According to Powell and Single (1996, p.499), a focus group can be defined as “a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research”. During a focus group, researchers encourage group interaction, meaning the participants discuss with each other and answer each other’s questions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Researchers are therefore not

primarily interested in collecting individual opinions on a subject. A focus group researcher focuses on how people talk about a topic, not only what they say about it, but also analyses emotions, tensions, interruptions, conflicts and body language. Sometimes it is just as important to explore what is not being said as what is being said (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Key characteristics of a focus group are that it consists of six to ten participants, a facilitator and a topic that will be discussed (Powell & Single, 1996).

The authors conducted four focus groups with people of different ages, occupation and relation to sportswear and advertisements. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) suggest that in order to decrease the risk of major difficulties to arise within a focus group, one should gather people with certain characteristics, for example occupation or social activity, in common. Hence, the design of each focus group was based on participants with the same background. According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) the optimal time for conducting a focus group is approximately two hours. Since the authors had to respect a certain timeframe for one of the focus groups, all focus groups were limited to 60-90 minutes in order to make the discussions comparable.

The sampling of focus groups can be done according to various techniques (A World Health Organization Resource, 2016). The authors had several qualifications of the participants in order to create relevant focus groups for the study. This is an example of a theoretical sampling, when sampling is based upon the researcher's own judgement of which participants that will be the most useful (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Firstly, the authors wanted to sample participants based on the target audience of the companies that were interviewed. The target audience in the focus groups conducted had an age span from 21 to 48 years old. Secondly, the authors believed that the importance of having your own financial responsibility was important in order to be able to actively pursue brand avoidance behaviour. The authors chose to exclude the age group below 18, since these people most often do not have their own income and can make their own buying decisions. Thirdly, the authors believed that the importance of having purchased sportswear at least once during the previous year and continuously being exposed to advertisements were crucial for making the study accurate to present time.

Convenience sampling is another way of sampling participants, where the authors simply choose participants because of the fact that they are convenient (Lavrakas, 2008). Two out of four focus groups consisted of students, and two out of four focus groups were set up with employed people the authors have previous connections with. Therefore the sampling of the focus groups can be seen as a combination of theoretical sampling and convenience sampling. However, the authors do not believe that the convenience aspect necessarily affects the results, since all participants fulfilled the above-mentioned qualifications in order to take part in the focus groups of this study. Proper sampling is extremely important since it otherwise can lead to bias in the final results (Hordon, Hodgkin & Fresle, 2004). Although, it should be recognized that the primary idea was to gather focus groups one, two and three. After the research gathered from those sessions, the authors identified lack of material from participants

matching company C's target group. Therefore, focus group four was designed, which an abductive process of method allows for.

	Focus Group1	Focus Group2	Focus Group3	Focus Group 4
Date	10/03/16	15/03/16	16/03/16	31/03/16
Duration*	00:57:10	01:09:37	01:25:53	01:21:37
Place**	Gothenburg	Jönköping	Jönköping	Norrköping
Participants	6	7	8	8

Table 3. Focus Groups

*00:00:00 Describes hours, minutes and seconds of which the interview lasted

** Describes location of focus group

The downsides of conducting focus groups have been widely discussed. According to Harrell and Bradley (2009), material from focus groups can never be generalizable outside the groups conducted. Therefore, the diversity of focus groups was crucial, something the authors took great consideration of when recruiting participants of different age, occupation and geographical inheritance. Other concerns regarding focus groups are that dominant people might draw the attention away from other participants (Harrell & Bradley, 2009), or that individuals would influence other participant's inputs (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). However, the authors kept these risks in mind during the time of data being collected. One way to decrease these negative aspects were to have a moderator who was the leader of the discussion and could be in control over who spoke, and possible give the word to someone who did not get enough space in the discussion. In addition, two note-takers interpreted and analysed people's emotions, gestures, statements, and how they engaged to other participants' inputs. By using note-takers in focus groups, the risk of people being influenced by other participants decreases (Harrell & Bradley, 2009), which is one of this study's biggest strengths. Focus groups are often used to study consumer behaviours and consumer attitudes (Holbrook & Jackson, 1996; Edmunds, 2000), which are the main reasons for the usage of focus groups in this study. Focus groups are also especially useful when existing theory is limited and therefore becomes an exploratory research (Stewart, 2007).

The content of the focus groups was based on existing theories and data gathered from interviews. Participants were introduced to the topic of brand avoidance in general, anti-consumption, and specifically brand avoidance caused by advertising. The authors carefully explained the importance of excluding all other influences of brand avoidance and financial issues, to specifically focus on marketing activities in relation to the questions asked. During the focus groups, the participants were shown ten different examples of marketing activities made by sportswear brands. These consisted of a combination of viral advertisements, commercials on television, print, event and out of home advertisements. Each activity included several different components, which the authors aimed to start a discussion about. These components were gathered from existing theories and interviews. In order to easier guide the members of the focus group through the session, everyone filled out a questionnaire. The questionnaire was based upon components the authors found as general and most

applicable on the examples, which could be perceived as positive or negative. Although, the questionnaire was solely a small contributing part of the session, the main emphasis was put into discussions related to marketing activities shown. A description of each marketing activity can be found in appendix 9.4 and will be further be referred to as example 1 to 10.

Construction of focus groups

Focus Group 1

The first focus group was conducted with personnel from a medium sized company in Gothenburg. The company itself in its daily activities does not have any connections to sports activities or sport clothes. In this focus group, the six participants were of an age span from 23 to 31 years old. For this group the timeframe of the focus group meeting was especially important, since the authors got the chance to come and have this group discussion during their work-time, and the time for the discussion was limited to one hour.

Focus Group 2

The second focus group was conducted with seven athletes who continuously practice some kind of sport on a professional level. In this study it was irrelevant of their age and their occupational habits, since this group was conducted to see if they think or act differently towards a brand's marketing compared to the weekly exerciser. However, all participants were students and the age in this group had a sweet spot of 25.

Focus Group 3

The next group consisted of students from Jönköping University, and the eight participants ranged between 21 and 24 years of age. The authors believed that this group of consumers could still be relevant to this type of study since the area of brand avoidance and advertisement of sportswear does not solely serve high-end customers. This focus group was conducted during school time and in the university's facilities, a place where the group normally meets, which reduces the risk of positive or negative associations with the interview site (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Focus Group 4

The fourth focus group was conducted in Norrköping with eight participants, regularly working out, in the age span of 31 to 48 years old. They are accurate participants because they match the target group of company C, as well as have a stable economic income. However, since financial aids are not acknowledged in this research, they are also relevant respondents due to their often exposure for sports advertisements. Finally, this focus group was conducted in a home, with a setting the respondents felt comfortable in, decreasing risks of impressions affecting their discussion and feedback.

3.3 Method of Analysis

According to Yin (2009) one of the most critical and challenging parts of writings is the data analysis section. Authors of academic writings such as this one, often fail to overlook analytical approaches of their study already in the beginning of their research. This section includes strategies in *what* one analyses and *why* it is analysed that way (Williamson, 2002). A major challenge for qualitative researchers is to reduce data, identify categories and connections, develop themes, and offer well-reasoned, reflective conclusions (Suter, 2012). To successfully analyse the findings from interviews and focus groups, one must transcribe recordings into writing (Saunders et al., 2007). This analytical activity is done by the authors, who have listened to the four focus group sessions of *what* has been said, and further acknowledged *how* it has been said, in order to provide truthful material for findings. To ease the process of transcribing focus group recordings, two of the authors collected quotations and discussions from participants during the focus group sessions, whilst the third one acted as moderator during the focus groups. These quotations were further translated from Swedish to English and placed in the empirical data section. This was a rather time consuming activity, but manageable since collecting quotations from start was a very time efficient method.

Next, the process of coding was initiated. Qualitative data analysis focuses on *generalization of ideas* due to their applicability onto various contexts (Suter, 2012). The coding technique used in this data analysis was derived from Williamson (2002), based on: (1) Reduce and simplify existing data, (2) display the data to find links and draw conclusions, and (3) verify the data, and build a logical chain of the collected evidence. After conducting focus groups, the authors structured quotations and other information that was shared during these sessions. Then, the authors discussed and summarized keynotes from focus groups. Moreover, with a selective mind, the authors chose certain quotations and information that was revealed during focus group sessions supporting existing theories, or aspects adding value to common themes pinned out in the study.

Previous knowledge in the field of brand avoidance and accurate information given from experts via interviews made the data easier to analyse. In the process of discussing existing literature, and findings from coding, the authors identified accurate information that supports the purpose of this study, and can further add value to creation of new theories and models. This whole process of identifying new material and connecting that to existing theory further implies the abductive approach of this research. As a result, the authors later developed a new model for brand avoidance caused by marketing communication, by modifying the framework presented by Knittel et al. (2016).

3.4 Trustworthiness

Since this study is solely focusing on advertising and not the other categories of brand avoidance, findings related to these were foreseen. The authors are aware of previous brand avoidance categories such as previous experiences, moral issues, lack of identification and deficit-value in addition to advertising. However, the authors are not aware of the power *between* these diverse avoidance categories and have further not measured the power *between* certain advertising tools in correlation to each other. This study solely puts emphasis on how the findings connect to brand avoidance due to advertising, however, not to which extent.

Moreover, there is tremendous literature in how to measure the quality of qualitative studies. Transparency and systematicity are two key terms one should acknowledge to assure the quality in a qualitative study. Transparency is based on e.g. objectivity and sampling for research, whilst systematicity recognizes e.g. triangulation and coding processes (Meyrick, 2006). To assure transparency for this academic writing, the authors have focused on guiding the reader through every step in the process, to clearly present previous literature, findings and analysis. In addition, transparency is clearly outlined by sampling of interview participants and construction of focus groups. Systematicity was also incorporated in this research to increase credibility.

Triangulation is based on providing multiple sources for evidence (Suter, 2012), something that has been adapted onto this study by examine existing theory, interviews with experts working with advertising in the sportswear industry and various focus groups. Equally important was the process of coding, whereas the authors ensured validity by elaboration of themes and common mentioned information, with regards to previous theories and statements by experts. Basically, quality of this research was ensured by presenting the research process clearly, selecting accurate sampling units, systematic coding processes from first-hand data collection, and from establishments of relationships between purpose, theories, and findings.

4 Empirical Data

This section presents the empirical findings from the interviews and the focus groups. The interview respondents are anonymous as well as which company they represent. The participants in the focus groups are also anonymous and have been given nicknames. This provides a clear connection between linking quotes and opinions. All questions, examples, guidelines and handouts for interviews and focus groups can be found in appendices.

4.1 Interviews

Interviews were held with the purpose to gather information for focus groups and gain thorough understanding of the sportswear market. Respondents answered to structured questions via e-mail, by revealing their target audience and what advertising components they find most crucial.

4.1.1 Target Audience

The three companies were asked which audience they target in Sweden. Each representative expressed their target audience in age span and how they pursue an active lifestyle.

Sweet spot of age, 25 years old (20-35). They train at least 3-4 times a week and different kind of activities. Running one day, yoga and then crossfit for instance.

Nordic Manager, Company A

We have mainly two target groups, 1) the young female 16-25 years who trains minimum 2 times a week, 2) the “next generation footballer”, young football players 14-19 years old.

Nordic Sport Marketing Manager, Company B

Our general target age is 25-49 years, but for 2016 we also target 18-25 years.

Managing Director Sweden, Company C

Based upon the answers, the authors designed focus groups consisting of people from the age of 21-48 years old. Since the age span of 20-35 is somewhat included in all companies' target audience, the majority of focus group participants were among these ages.

4.1.2 Advertising Components

In the interviews with the experts from the sportswear industry, the question of which channels they find most important and most often used, was asked.

Events, digital marketing, PR.

Nordic Manager, Company A

I rank them after how we spend our money: 1) Digital platforms/ social media, 2) On pitch (events), 3) In store.

Nordic Sport Marketing Manager, Company B

Online, TV, OOH, Print (sorry, but 4 - if needed then take out print)

Managing Director Sweden, Company C

Online and digital tools were mentioned by all three companies, and were therefore shown several times during the focus groups. However print, OOH, event and in-store were not mentioned to the same extent as digital and online advertisements, since these are more frequently used advertisement channels within the sportswear industry.

The experts agreed with the Knittel et al. (2016) model where content, celebrity endorsement, music and response are advertisement drivers leading to brand avoidance behaviour. When they were asked which components they find most crucial, Company A and B agreed on content being most critical. Company C found the combination of celebrity endorsement and music being the most crucial ones. None of the experts mentioned response as one of the most important components. When the experts were asked if there are any other critical components within advertising, Company B brought up frequency being one of them.

I think with today's focus on digital and the need to stand out among all thousands of impressions the consumers get every day, there might be a risk that brands bore out people- which could lead to brand avoidance.

Nordic Sport Marketing Manager, Company B

This statement allowed for further components such as social media, timing and frequency to be incorporated in the focus group sessions.

4.2 Focus Groups

The focus groups conducted for this qualitative research, revealed and indicated numerous insights and reflections of brand avoidance caused by advertising. The authors identified responses that indicated previous research to be partly valid. The major contribution from participants in the focus groups has been in the identification of new material for brand avoidance caused by advertising.

The introduction of the focus groups left participants aware of the concept brand avoidance as a whole, including anti-consumption. This provided them with knowledge of experiential, moral, identity, and deficit-value brand avoidance. Also, one made it clear that financial issues are not to be considered in the discussions. Further, the main focus of advertising and brand avoidance was introduced to clearly show what the focus groups should include and exclude in the discussions. Moreover, participants were given a questionnaire where they were asked to fill out positive and negative perceptions of advertising components of each advertisement (see appendix 9.3). The purpose of the questionnaire was to guide the participants through the session. However, the discussion evolving from advertisements shown were the main focus of the focus groups. The findings indicated various individual positive and negative perceptions, identifying content, celebrity endorsement, music, response, trustworthiness, and frequency as the most important advertising drivers to brand

avoidance. A table of all participants and their given nickname, age, gender and if they are active on social media or not, is provided in appendix 9.5.

Every member of all focus groups had stories and examples to share in the discussions. They are all consumers of sportswear, but more importantly, they are constantly exposed to advertisements by brands. Moreover, the participants pointed out the concept of high and low involvement in purchasing decisions, indicating that brand awareness occurs towards e.g. Nike when buying running shoes, whilst this is not an action taken when purchasing Nike t-shirts (Participant 2E). Therefore, depending on function of product, brand avoidance occurs differently related to product categories in sportswear.

4.2.1 Components of Advertising driving Brand Avoidance

This section reveals findings from focus groups based on quotes supporting components of advertising driving brand avoidance; *content, celebrity endorsement, music, response, channel, frequency, trustworthiness* and *other*. Every example that was shown in the focus groups and which further will be referred to in findings, analysis, discussion and conclusion, can be found in appendix 9.4. Additional components driving brand avoidance, which by the authors were not applicable on all cases and therefore not included in the questionnaire (see appendix 9.3), are presented under the heading called Other.

Content

The first component the authors decided to test was the content's impact on the perception of each advertisement. Findings show that focus group 2 did not recognize content as important as the other focus groups. Example 6 and 7 were especially used to discuss the difference between an informative and an emotional advertisement. The emotional is humoristic and more entertaining than the informative. Many from a content perspective criticized example 6 (the informative one). They did not find this advertisement interesting. Other participants implied the importance of a clear content in order to understand the message. However, the general appearance was that such advertisement would be remembered afterwards anyways.

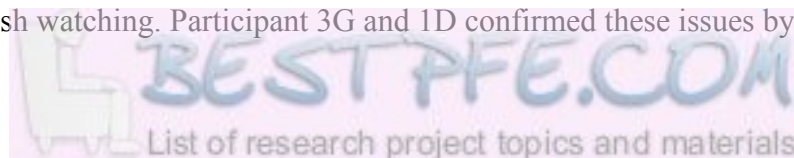
It is totally worthless. The effects are cool and I still like the brand, but no positive impressions at all.

3H, Example 6

What do they even show? Is it a car or a shoe?

3D, Example 6

These statements indicate the importance of clear content. If the audience cannot understand the message, and not even the product being promoted, the impression will thus not be positive. Furthermore, the way of catching a viewer's interest early on in an advertisement was also discussed in the focus groups. Continuously, the length of an advertisement was deliberated on in relation to content. Some of the videos that were shown, participants found to be too long to finish watching. Participant 3G and 1D confirmed these issues by stating the following:



I thought the beginning of the video was super boring so I would never have watched the whole.

3G, Example 3

It's too long. I don't have the patience to finish watching it.

1D, Example 3

Lastly, one participant highlighted the fact that content can be irritating and provoking. This was further agreed upon by several other participants nodding assent. However, this issue was only brought up to discussion in focus group 2 and 3, with participants in a younger age span.

I like the ad in the beginning when the woman is shown as very strong and tough. However, I find it provoking that they change the content into the woman being cute. Why can't girls be tough!? It irritates me that today's society put women into a specific section with the perceptions of women only power walking and not crossfitting for example.

2B, Example 1

Celebrity Endorsement

The second component in the model of Knittel et al. (2016) is celebrity endorsement. Overall, in all focus groups celebrity endorsement was mentioned more times as a positive aspect than as a negative. However, people in focus group 4 (31-48 years old) responded the opposite. Even though celebrity endorsement was most often mentioned as a positive thing, many participants had negative comments regarding celebrities in advertisements. Participants expressed the importance of being able to relate to the celebrity and his or her values.

Silly, cannot relate to the person at all!

1A, Example 1

Additionally, participants mentioned that in order for celebrity endorsement to be trustworthy, one must be able to see the connection between the celebrity and the brand. This was especially discussed regarding example 3 for Reebok with Janni Delér.

It is not trustworthy that Janni Delér represents Reebok. I don't see her as a role model within training, and Reebok focuses on Crossfit, which I absolutely can't connect her with.

2C, Example 3

She ruins the video and I don't want to buy Reebok, she is not known for anything.

3E, Example 3

Reebok stands for crossfit; it's super weird that she advertises that.

3A, Example 3

Quite silly, feels fake right from the beginning. Super sponsored. (...) Feels like they are trying to promote beyond their target group.

2E, Example 3

However, in focus group 1 and 4, participants had positive comments on this advertisement, even though they were not as familiar with Janni Delér. These participants rather discussed other aspects of example 3, such as content, music and length. Thus, focus on the celebrity was neglected. Moreover, negative perceptions regarding the Nike advertisement with Kevin Hart was debated upon. Several participants from all focus groups expressed their feelings about Kevin Hart being “too much” and annoying. One participant could not relate him and his humour with sport. On the contrary, other participants thought he could be a good motivator for the everyday exerciser.

It was childish; he’s not appropriate for sports commercials.

3D, Example 7

I don’t like him as a comedian, but I like the way he motivates people to work out in a nonprofessional way. It doesn’t need to be so complicated!

2E, Example 7

Overall, celebrity endorsement was one of the components that got most attention during the focus group sessions. Celebrity endorsement was found to be largely connected to trustworthiness and how well the endorser fits the brand.

Music

Music, the third component in Knittel et al. (2016) model, was one of the topics participants had less negative comments on, however still thought was of great importance to the overall review of the advertisement. Many agreed that music is something that helps attract attention and that advertisements without music can easily be ignored and are not interesting to watch.

To put on music in-store attracts people to come in.

1F, Example 9

The music annoys me.

4C, Example 7

I hate when a song gets stuck on my mind. Even worse when it’s a jingle.

4F, general comment

Further findings within music as a component prompting brand avoidance are expressed below. These participants stated that in order for music to be a brand avoidance factor, it needs to be combined with other negatively perceived components. Although, people expected music to exist in advertisements.

I think music is important for an advert. However, I don’t think it changes my brand associations leading to brand avoidance. It’s more like I dislike the overall impression when I dislike the music, especially if I don’t really like the content either.

2C, Example 2

If I watch a virtual advert, like a clip, I expect good music to be a part of it. It’s so boring without it, like only visuals.

4E, Example 4

Response

Response is the fourth and last component in Knittel et al. (2016) model in advertising as a driver to brand avoidance. Response was however the only component which did not get specific comments. Response was issued in the questionnaire due to its previous mentions in research by Knittel et al. (2016). Many participants did not understand its purpose as part of components to brand avoidance caused by advertisements. When explained by the moderator as the instant perception one gets by being exposed to an advert, participants agreed with each other that this is a component later occurring due to perceptions of other components. The negative perceptions expressed about response were indicated by all focus groups as an overall impression. However, every time this was confirmed in the questionnaire, the participants specifically mentioned other components of the advertisements that they disliked. Findings show that several advertising components perceived negatively result in a bad response of the advert. Participants did not perceive response as one of the components, but rather as an overall consequential component after analysing the other advertising drivers to brand avoidance.

Channel

Many positive comments were made as an overall review in how the brands were using appropriate channels for different types of advertisements. The mix and variety of different channels were things people from all four focus groups thought were of importance in order to not bore the audience, and to reach out to different people at different times. However, there were also negative comments, especially regarding example 2. This advertisement is a movie usually shown on Instagram, a medium which allows pictures and 60 second clips. Although, when this study was conducted, Instagram only allowed 15 second videos.

Wrong social channel. Few people would finish watch the whole film.

3H, Example 2

Moreover, several comments were made on printed media, especially handouts. Participants expressed their behavior of not paying attention to handouts and may even throw them away. Additionally, members of focus groups 1, 2 and 3 were not as interested in discussing printed media handouts.

I almost never take time to look at handouts, if I'm not interesting in buying shoes and they are displaying shoes.

2F, Example 10

I throw away prints/handouts immediately!

2G, Example 10

The only time I look through printed material dumped in the mailbox is when I go home to see my parents. They always save these types of papers and adverts for some reason. If there is a paper from XXL on the kitchen table, I find myself looking through it.

3G, Example 10

Equally important are findings related to the difference in age of respondents regarding the comments on handouts and prints. Hence, the first and the last group had a more positive approach to the use of such medium. In all focus groups, many participants agreed that prints and handouts are more effective if the idea of a future purchase already exists. If the audience did not have a previous need or want to purchase the product advertised, participants believed that the idea of promoting a product *category*, rather than a *specific* product, was more powerful on their purchasing behaviour.

Print creates an idea of the fact that I need new shoes in general, rather than specifically those shoes.

3D, Example 10

From the interviews, company C especially mentioned printed media and OOH advertisement as channels. This is also the company with a generally older target audience. In focus group 4, four out of eight participants answered that they neither have, nor use social media. Findings show that the idea of print advertisement is an important tool to reach an older generation.

Since I don't have Instagram or Facebook I'm mostly influenced of what is displayed in the stores, on billboards and from handouts.

4D, Example 10

Findings suggest that it is not only the older generation that consciously or unconsciously neglect adverts online or on TV. Several participants use tools that blocks advertisements on the Internet. Moreover, participants tend to swap channel or walk away from the TV whenever commercials are shown. This proves the importance of a variety of channels when promoting goods for a broad target audience, which the sportswear industry does.

I've started to move away from television, I don't watch TV, hence no advertisements. On the computer, I've installed block programs, so I don't watch advertisements on the Internet either.

2D, Example 1

Further, the focus groups discussed event as a channel for promoting sportswear. Participants generally had a positive approach towards events. Several participants implied that event is an effective channel, and is seen as something positive as long as it is kept exclusive and not used too often as a marketing activity. Moreover, an appropriate fit between the brand and the event is of big importance. Participants argued that some brands are more suitable to host events than other.

I feel that it's exclusive, that it soon will disappear. This is something I would take a picture of and upload online, because it's super cool.

1A, Example 8

I would not have entered if it was an Umbro box.

2G, Example 8

Frequency

According to the experts and existing theory, frequency is one component that needs to be used properly in order to not lose interest from the target audience. From three focus groups, high frequency was mentioned more times as negative than positive. Focus group 2 was the only group that mentioned high frequency as positive more times than negative. Frequency was mostly discussed from a social media perspective, where participants expressed their feelings regarding brands updating too often online.

It's annoying if there are too many updates and commercials.

3G, Example 5

Participants had different opinions on whether content or frequency is most important when using social media. Some participants meant that content must be relevant for all updates, whereas others meant that it is more important to post often no matter content.

Several times a week I think is good, as long as the content is relevant.

1B, Example 5

I am myself controlling an Instagram account for a sport event and we need to post often to make sure people know the event is still on!

2E, Example 5

I believe that it's better to post good things more seldom, than to just push out posts every single day without any good content. It's their job to come up with good content for the people who follow them.

4A, Example 5

Many participants meant that advertisements could get a negative impression if one is exposed to them too often. A television commercial can be perceived as annoying if it is shown repetitively. Low frequency of an advert or social media content can lead to negative feelings as well. Low frequency was shown to be largely connected to a decrease in trustworthiness.

If I go in and check an account and they have not posted anything in a long time, it feels weird; I expect them to post often.

2C, Example 5

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was one of the components that was mentioned the most during the focus group sessions. Trustworthiness in relation to celebrity endorsement and content was shown to be of big importance for an advertisement. The trustworthiness of example 3 was perceived to be low, and participants felt that it was fake and that focus was too much on the celebrity and not the brand itself.

It doesn't feel real. It's obvious that she got a lot of money and got the opportunity to travel far just to do this. (...) If the shoes were actually any good, they would have shown it.

1A, Example 3

When discussing example 7, opinions were different between the participants. Some participants could not relate the celebrity to the brand, and found the advertisement to be less trustworthy. These people implied that the advert expressed a less serious message, which is not aligned with their perception of the brand. Others thought the celebrity fit well to the advertisement and gave it a trustworthy impression.

Join the movement, everyday workout, and Kevin Hart is a good person to deliver this message, since he's not an athlete himself and because of that the brand becomes more trustworthy.

2B, Example 7

Discussions regarding social media and response often resulted in trustworthiness issues. Many implied that a brand becomes more trustworthy the more it updates its social media accounts. Additionally, trustworthiness was said to be influenced on the response a post gets. The form of response can be seen in likes and comments, which work as an indicator of trustworthiness.

Of course I scroll through the feed, more activity makes it much more trustworthy. (...) If a post has two likes, I definitely wonder what is wrong.

1A, Example 5

Other

Co-branding & Sponsorship

The focus groups validated additional advertising drivers of brand avoidance. These findings were mentioned by several people in all focus groups, leading them to be of high importance and contribution to this thesis. These aspects are co-branding and sponsorship, further presented.

Example 9 was used to show a co-branding between a fashion brand and a sports brand. One of the marketing strategies in the launch of this collaboration was to host an in-store event. Several participants had a positive attitude towards the idea of this example, and thought it would gain brand awareness for both companies. However, participants did not think that this necessarily would lead to increased purchase of products.

For me it matters what type of product I'm planning to buy. If it's a t-shirt to use at the gym, I could have bought something from this co-branding. However, what I always think of is, what have they been forced to compromise to get the goods soon and for a special price?

2E, Example 9

In addition to co-branding actions the sportswear industry is to a great extent using sponsorship as a marketing tool. Example 2 showed a commercial of Messi, one of the world's most famous football players. Sponsorships such as this one with Messi, can create both positive and negative impressions.

I would never buy Adidas soccer shoes, just because they sponsor Messi.

3A, Example 2

If I can see myself wear the brand, I like the brand. Very big difference from when I was younger when my idols and famous sport people influenced me of what I wanted to wear. I then played soccer and what my biggest idols wore on the field were the things I looked for at Stadium. However, nowadays I don't care that much.

2F, Example 2

All in all, findings show that within the sportswear industry, co-branding and sponsorship are two powerful communication tools. However, these factors may also influence brand avoidance behaviour.

Timing

Timing was also mentioned as an important component of advertising, and more specifically with regards to social media. Many participants expressed that they are not equally responsive to posts at all times throughout the day. Also, weather and season was found to be influencing factors of *when* a post is uploaded.

If I'm lying in bed and I'm a bit tired, I get the motivation to do something tomorrow.

3F, Example 5

Let's say it's Friday night and I want to eat crisps and dip, I don't really get motivated if I scroll through my Instagram feed and see a lot of sports brands updates.

2A, Example 5

I wouldn't have been pumped now, but maybe when it's warmer outside. (...) It absolutely matters when I see it.

2G, Example 4

These statements may not point directly towards brand avoidance, but the way they were strongly expressed indicate the effect timing has on negative brand perceptions.

Additional comments

Several focus group participants implied that if brand loyalty and brand awareness are big enough, a bad advertisement does not have the power to influence brand avoidance behaviour.

Nike and Adidas are such established brands that it doesn't matter if they make a bad commercial. They are stuck in people's minds anyways.

3D, general comment

In conclusion, findings from this qualitative research show that in comparison to Knittel et al. (2016) model, additional components of communication activities may prompt brand avoidance behaviour. These issues will further be analysed in the next chapter with regards to existing literature.

5 Analysis

In this chapter, one will get analytical insights and interpretations previously presented in chapters from this research. Therefore, chapter five issues empirical findings from coding processes in relation to existing literature, to outline and prove the base for a revised model originally presented by Knittel et al (2016).

Brand avoidance is a fairly new phenomenon that has not yet received a lot of attention in history (Knittel et al., 2016). Because members of the focus groups lacked knowledge within brand avoidance, the introduction to the topic was crucial. One must underline the importance but difficulty in realistically relate to brand avoidance. Hence, focus group members tended to constantly reflect upon aspects not considered in this research, leading the moderator to remind the participants of emphasizing thoughts towards advertising.

Equally important is the concept of brand loyalty, which is confirmed by participant 2B expressing Nike and Adidas as established brands leaving them unaffected by negative advert perceptions because they are "...already stuck in people's mind". Given this, one can assume ignored brand avoidance actions, because of brand loyalty. One must acknowledge that brand avoidance does *not* act in isolation, meaning e.g. brand loyalty may influence participants to be less likely to engage in brand avoidance behavior.

Lastly, as the purpose of this thesis is to investigate which components of advertising affect brand avoidance behavior in the sportswear industry, chapter five will continuously provide the reader with an analysis of empirical findings backing up existing literature, and providing new arguments confirming the purpose of this study.

5.1 Components of Marketing Communication driving Brand Avoidance

After gathering knowledge of brand avoidance from existing literature, and coding empirical findings, the authors have chosen to rename the *advertising* category prompting brand avoidance to *marketing communications*. Marketing communications is traditionally built up by a marketing communications mix, existing of advertising as well as sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling and public relations (Smith, 2008). Though, empirical findings do not cover all aspects of the marketing communications mix. Findings suggest seven drivers to brand avoidance. These are outlined as *content, collaborations, music, channels, trustworthiness, frequency* and *timing*. All components are further displayed and presented in a revised model.

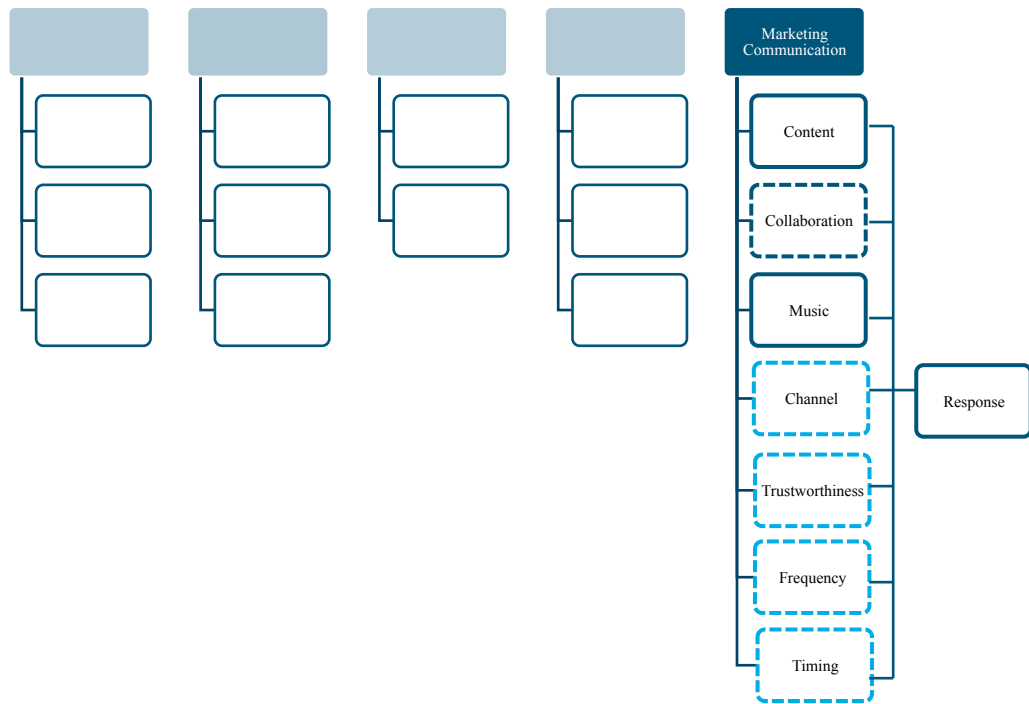


Figure 6. Framework of Components of Marketing Communication driving Brand Avoidance
 Source: Developed by the Authors, based on Knittel et al. (2016)

- Components existing in Knittel et al. (2016) model
- - - Component existing in Knittel et al. (2016) model, however revised in this framework
- - - Components not existing in Knittel et al. (2016) model

Three of these components, content, celebrity endorsement and music have already been identified by Knittel et al. (2016). These were also confirmed to prompt brand avoidance behaviour in this qualitative research. Response was also identified in the model of Knittel et al. (2016). However, this component is now positioned as the final impression of how one perceives the other marketing communication components driving brand avoidance. Further, celebrity endorsement is now located under collaborations, accompanied by sponsorship and co-branding. Sponsorship, co-branding, channel, trustworthiness, frequency and timing are entirely new components, which have been identified and analysed from existing theory, interviews and focus groups.

5.1.1 Content

Content includes several features such as message, storyline and the actors used in it. This is an important part of advertising as it represents the message and idea the brand wants to communicate to its audience. The content of an advertisement can lead to dislike of the brand, which furthermore may lead to brand avoidance of that brand (Beebe, 2015; Knittel et al., 2016). Findings show that content play an important part of an advertisement and if it is not conveyed right to the viewers one may find it misleading. Content of an advertisement can further be perceived to be provoking and irritating (Knittel et al., 2016). Participant 2B revealed that example 1 for Fabletics annoyed her because the woman was portrayed as cute

and girly rather than strong and tough. This is an on-going debate in today's society as women often are given this image. Fabletics might not aim to send out this message, but the fact that the viewer perceives the advertisement this way leads to dislike which can further lead to brand avoidance. Another important aspect of content is the length of the advertisement. The participants revealed that if an advertisement is too long, he or she will not want to finish watching. Further, the content of an advertisement is affected by its introduction. If the beginning does not catch the viewer's interest, one will not continue watching. The viewer will consciously avoid the advertisement, thus avoid the brand's advertisement action. Equally important is to notify that the viewer may not avoid the brand in other situations, or even when exposed to other marketing communication actions from the same brand.

Many participants revealed the importance of content being clear and easy to understand, which is also proven in previous literature (Knittel et al., 2016). Participants 3D and 3H were confused about the content in example 6. 3D was even unsure of whether the product was a shoe or a car, which shows that content is unclear. The same participant stated that some brands could afford to make advertisement mistakes because they are already established, and their customers already have opinions and attitudes towards the brand. Even though the participant was confused by the content and disliked the advertisement, she would still purchase products from that brand because it had already established a strong positive perception in her mind. Whether a consumer likes or dislikes an advertisement depends on the attitude one has towards the brand. Hence, one cannot assume that all consumers react the same way to an advertisement, it is not a straightforward cause-effect relationship. Additionally, the mood of the viewer will have an influence on how the advert is perceived (Percy & Elliot, 2009). On the opposite, if a consumer watches an advertisement with no previous opinions of the brand, and dislikes it, this indicates that the content is reason enough to lead to brand avoidance.

5.1.2 Collaborations

This section corresponds to Knittel et al. (2016) sub-motive celebrity endorser in their expanded framework of Brand Avoidance. For this thesis, the authors have chosen to give it a more general heading, namely collaborations. Participants in the focus groups revealed several forms of collaborations as influencing components to brand avoidance, celebrity endorsement being one out of three, and sponsorship and co-branding being the other two. These three collaborations all have in common that they consist of actions or relationships where a brand aligns with either another brand or a person, to strengthen one another. This can either be done by sponsoring a known person with money, equipment or equivalent in exchange of his or her fame, using a famous person's own brand as a motivator for increased interest of the brand or cooperate with another company and create new goods or services to sell. What they all have in common is that they strengthen one another in various ways.

Celebrity Endorsement

As one of Knittel et al. (2016) drivers of brand avoidance within advertising, this research suggests and gives further evidence to celebrity endorsement being an important factor. According to Dimed and Joulyana (2005), celebrity endorsement aims to establish a desire of a product by creating associations with the celebrity. The use of celebrities as tools in advertising has generally been seen as something positive, as long as the pre-existing association of the brand is accurate with the associations one has with the endorser (Dimed & Joulyana, 2005; Till & Schimp, 1998; Fill, 2013, p.119). When showing the third example of Reebok, participant 3A mentioned that Reebok mainly represents the sport crossfit and that Janni Delér is not an appropriate endorser for crossfit. The viewer recognizes this as a misfit between the celebrity and the brand, which shifts the focus away from the advertisement. Previous theory states that this is a potential risk when using celebrity endorsement (Fill, 2013, p.119). This shows that a misfit between an endorser and a brand may create negative associations to the advertisement, the brand and the endorser. Participant 3E revealed that she would not purchase Reebok simply because she does not associate Janni Delér with being famous for anything specific. She finds Janni Delér to be known only because she is dating the successful alpine skier Jon Olsson, rather than actually having done something on her own. However, today Janni has succeeded to establish her own brand as an endorser within sports, something that the viewer was not aware of. If the audience already has associations with the endorser, these are likely to affect the impression of the advertisement. This strengthens Misra & Beatty's (1990) argument on the importance of brand associations and associations of the endorser being alike.

When a brand tries to expand its target audience it may take use of celebrities that previously have not be associated with that brand. This can cause confusion and dislike from the audience. Ilicic and Webster (2013) imply that a celebrity's characteristics present the message the brand wants to send out. Participant 3D revealed that Kevin Hart was too childish and therefore not appropriate to be the endorser for a serious sports brand, in this case Nike. One can assume that Nike wanted to send out a message of the brand being young, fun and entertaining by using Kevin Hart who usually is an appreciated comedian. However, because participants already associated Kevin with a non-serious approach they could not relate him to being sporty. On the contrary, participant 2E expressed Kevin Hart as an exceptional front figure in this situation because the message promotes everyday workout. Interesting enough, the focus group with athletes strongly focused on the message and to which audience it is delivered, whilst focus group 3 acknowledged choice of endorser. To sum up, the usage of celebrity endorsers may not always be acknowledged depending on the target audience and their expectations of the advertisement. Also, brand avoidance can be caused by a misfit between the endorser, its trustworthiness, and the brand values.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is not an advertisement tool, and would rather be categorized as a marketing communication strategy. The notion of sponsorships is that companies sponsor a person representing their brand and who is someone their target audience appreciates as an icon (Ciletti, 2016). Participant 2F mentioned that he does not care about which brands he wears,

however when he was younger he was very influenced by what famous football players wore on TV. The concept of sponsorship gives the audience the right to associate and affiliate themselves to the brand and the sponsored person, which 2F did when he was younger.

Sponsorship is especially used within the sports industry, and since many young people have sports idols this is an important part within marketing for sportswear (Ciletti, 2016). Though, the authors are aware of sponsorship being highly related to identity brand avoidance.

Company B mentioned that one of their target groups is 14-19 year old football players. For this target group, the combination of sponsorship and opinion leaders is an effective method. However, this target group was not included in this thesis due to the inability to choose a brand over another since they do not hold control over their own money. Therefore, this tactic of sponsorship and usage of opinion leaders of these young people can be seen as grey zone unethical.

However, the authors believe sponsorship has a contributing role in the sportswear industry and its advertising, and can therefore not be excluded. To further imply the importance of sponsorships within marketing communications related to brand avoidance actions, participant 3A expressed how he would never purchase Adidas due to the sponsorship between Messi and Adidas, simply because he does not like Messi as a soccer player. As sponsorship is not as an important component to marketing communications as the other ones, it is not given its own category and is simply better included under Collaborations.

Co-branding

The same as for celebrity endorsement goes for co-branding; a good fit is found when the endorser's most relevant qualities and the most relevant qualities of the brand make a good match (Misra & Beatty, 1990). An aspect one needs to be aware of when using co-branding is how people actually perceive co-branding processes. Participant 2E revealed his thoughts of these collaborations being expensive and that the brand must have been forced to compromise regarding design and price to be able to deliver the goods at the right time. He implied that co-branding can easily lower the quality of the products. This shows that for a co-branding to be successful both brands must have the same amount of trust amongst their target audience. If one brand has higher brand loyalty that brand must be able to prove the reliance of the other brand without lowering the perceptions of its own standards.

5.1.3 Music

Music is a subcategory of brand avoidance caused by advertising identified in previous research. Since several participants in the focus groups mentioned the importance of music within marketing communications activities, one can simply draw the conclusion that this is a significant factor contributing to brand avoidance actions. However, music was not as discussed as other components of brand avoidance caused by marketing communications. Even so, music keeps its position as a component of brand avoidance caused by marketing communications because of people's expectations of music's existence in adverts, and its significance for advertising creativity (Allan, 2008).

Advertising seeks to evoke emotions within the target group, and music has been identified as a very effective tool for positive response within advertising (Fill, 2013, p.779). Participant 4E proves music to be a significant advertising tool since one expects sounds to visuals in a virtual video. However, participants also mentioned that several songs in advertisements annoy them. Yet, one cannot directly measure its influence on avoiding behavior. Fill (2013, p.779) argues that jingles and music are effective tools for advertisers in the essence of creating recognition of a brand. However, it may not always have a positive affection. Annoying and irritating music and jingles may influence purchasing decisions and preferences pushing consumers against a brand (Knittel et al., 2016). Participant 4F expressed his dislike towards jingles that are too easy to remember and how they become irritating. This proves that one can perceive music as a factor possibly leading to brand avoidance.

Many participants stated that one should acknowledge music in combination to other brand avoidance aspects. This is probably an issue that is alluring for each factor of brand avoidance caused by marketing communications. In focus group four, participant 4G mentioned music as an important factor for advertisements, but not crucial enough to influence brand avoidance. She further implied that brand avoidance rather occur with music in combination with another factor, e.g. content. This response reveals that one can assume music to evoke brand avoidance to a greater extent in combination with other factors in marketing communications negatively perceived.

5.1.4 Channel

Channel is one component that has not been included in the previous model by Knittel et al. (2016). Various channels have different purposes, such as online advertising traditionally being used to create brand awareness (Fill, 2013, p.637, 687; Kotler et al., 2011). In marketing communication, different channels are often integrated with each other and used simultaneously to be more effective (Ciletti, 2016). Important marketing communication tools are social media and social networking, and these are further researched to grow at a rate of 34% annually (Ciletti, 2016). From interviews, the authors identified digital media as the most important channel for marketing communications in the sportswear industry. For this study it was not interesting to know whether digital media is suitable for the sport industry or not, but more importantly which factors within the choice of channel that can lead to brand avoidance.

The concept of advertising avoidance comes about when the audience is simply avoiding the actual advertisement (Speck & Elliott, 1997). Regarding channel, it can be difficult to distinguish the difference between brand avoidance caused by marketing communications and advertising avoidance. If the audience simply does not like a brand's advertising on Instagram, he or she might "unfollow" the brand's account as a consequence, however the connection to a further avoidance of the brand is hard to determine. Although, when a person actively chooses to unfollow, not because of the advertisement but because of the channel where it is shown, then one can see how the chosen channel itself can cause brand avoidance.

Social Media

All company representatives brought up social media during the interviews. With today's increasing use of the Internet and social media, digital platforms are of importance in the process of branding, especially in the sportswear industry. More and more companies participate in online communities in order to be more visible and create a relationship with their target audience (Ciletti, 2016). Therefore, social media was of high interest and accuracy to be further investigated in relation to brand avoidance.

Participants in the focus groups mentioned the appropriate usage of channel connected to content, which has previously been mentioned by Ciletti (2016) as an important factor to consider in order to engage customers and coordinate a clear message. Participant 2F stated that he would never take time to look at handouts, unless they are not displaying shoes and he is in need of shoes. An appropriate use of channels connected to content would then be to display products related to individual preferences in channels they use/ are exposed to. This can be one example of why digital and social media is so successful, since the usage of cookies can help the brand to display the right products to the right people. Cookies is information that a website puts on the visitor's hard disc in order to remember the visitor's online activities at a later time (Techtarget, 2016). In either case, a variety of different channels is of great importance (Ciletti, 2016). Participants 4B and 2C supported this by their statements of neither using Instagram, Facebook or watching TV, nor being exposed to advertisements on the web. As a consequence, this shows that printed material can be appropriate depending on the target audience.

Consumer generated content allows for consumers to share content and information of value for a brand (Fill, 2013, p.435), something that is highly used on social media. Likes, number of views and followers are examples of how users can either gain or strain a brand's social media actions. Participant 1A mentioned that if a post does not get, according to her, many likes, she instantly wonders what is wrong. This indicates that the response of others in form of comments, likes and views, can have great impact on others. One can draw the conclusion that consumer generated content is of importance for brands using social media as a marketing communication channel.

The length of a commercial can be perceived as an important aspect in order to make people not avoid the brand. Participant 3H revealed that he would not finish watching an entire commercial on Instagram if it is too long. On the contrary, Instagram is a medium that does not encourage the viewer to buy something, but is rather used as a tool to increase brand awareness and brand loyalty. Therefore, it may not matter if the whole advert is shown or not, since the brand might fulfil its purpose of creating awareness anyways. Instagram and its content is unique in its way that the users choose what to be shown in their feed. However, lately Instagram has chosen to work with sponsored content, which users cannot neglect.

To sum up, one can argue that the correlation between appropriate usage, variety, consumer-generated content and length of social media content can be important functions, which can

all drive brand avoidance. These functions should be considered in order to successfully use social media for marketing communication purposes.

Prints and OOH

As previously discussed, the variety of channels used to convey the message towards the audience is of great importance. The message on social media can easily be delimited to a large number of people due to their absence in those channels. Fill (2013, p.601-603, 608) argues that print media is a great tool in order to deliver a message. Three out of eight participants in focus group four responded that they are not active on social media. The general approach towards handouts as well as OOH advertisements was more positive amongst the older generation represented in focus group four. A statement by participant 3D implied that prints and handouts create a need for a product category rather than the product that is advertised. The conclusion one can draw from these thoughts and comments is that there is a great need of prints and OOH and especially if they are accompanying other channels. Prints and handouts should however be partnered with the right message and towards the right audience. These should not be neglected by marketers within this industry, but should neither be used individually.

Event

From interviews, the authors identified events being a marketing communication channel. The overall response of events was positive and participants seemed to like the idea of using new and not established marketing activities. Hosting events is a type of public relation tools and is often used to strengthen media interest (Ciletti, 2016). Participant 1A confirmed this by expressing that an event can enlarge the feeling of exclusiveness if it is not commonly used. She further expressed the possibility that she would share content in form of pictures and comments on social media from such experience. Many participants agreed, however also mentioned that it depends on which brand hosting such event. Participant 2G mentioned that she would not be interested in visiting the Adidas shoebox (example 8) if it was an Umbro shoebox. From this, one can draw the conclusion that events will broaden already existing feelings of the brand, either positive or negative. However, it will probably not change already pre-existing feelings to the opposite.

5.1.5 Frequency

Company B stated that there is a risk of the audience getting bored by a brand, as the brand tries to stand out and be remembered in the midst of abundant amount of impression the consumers are being exposed to every day. This can be seen as an example of frequency, which can be critical to brand avoidance. In line with this statement are three crucial elements for successful campaigns and market communications invented by Hallahan (2013). The third and final step is the message consistency and/or continuity, which also were confirmed in the focus groups. Accordingly to Heath (2013), for advertisers to successfully reach a maximum amount of people, they need to consider frequency optimization. Frequency was the only component that was mentioned more times as negative than as positive. This shows that frequency can have a negative impact on a brand's marketing actions. Participant 3G commented that it is annoying if there are too many social media updates and TV

commercials. This however showed to differ from person to person. Participants in focus group two who practice sport on a professional level were more likely to find frequency as positive. Participant 2E expressed his own experiences of running an Instagram account for a sports event. He stated the importance of posting often in order to inform people that the event was still on. Participant 1B thought that a brand could upload posts several times a week, as long as the content is relevant. The balance between the quality of posts and its frequency showed to be important. Participant 4A stated this clearly when saying that it is better to post less frequent and with higher quality of the posts. Simultaneously, he indicated that he always expects content to be good, and that nothing else is acceptable. On the contrary, participant 2C questioned a brand's trustworthiness if they have not posted on social media in a long time, and that he expects them to post often. Generally, participants meant that companies advertising less frequently would decrease in trustworthiness. Frequency was mostly talked about regarding social media, but due to the discussion being more general, the authors believe this also could be applied on other marketing activities. One can see that different participants had different thoughts on frequency, however it is safe to say that it can have an effect on brand avoidance.

To finalize, these findings connects well to previous research conducted by Balakrishnan and Hall (1995) stating that when frequency of exposure is low, people are likely to forget the advertisement. On the other hand, if people are exposed to the advertisement often, the effective time span of the advertisement will be decreased.

5.1.6 Trustworthiness

Level of trustworthiness was discussed with passion and intensity among the participants in the focus groups. Trustworthiness is based on how credible and reliable a message is in the eyes of the audience, and is therefore dependent on message performance to decrease possibility of mistrust (Hallahan, 2013). Hence, trustworthiness has not been examined within brand avoidance caused by marketing communication previously.

One factor impacting trustworthiness of the advertisement was celebrity endorsement. Participants had strong thoughts and preferences on celebrities in marketing communication activities. Using celebrity endorsement as a communication tool will highlight some aspects of the brand, and will subsequently result in that credibility of the endorser transferring to the brand itself (Spry, Pappu & Cornwell, 2011). This was deliberated on by arguments about whether Kevin Hart is a suitable endorser for Nike or not. Likewise, this argumentation occurred in the process of analysing trustworthiness in Reebok's social media clip presenting the blogger Janni Delér as the endorser. Participants expressed the Reebok YouTube clip (example 3) with Janni Delér as fake, with too much emphasis on the endorser, leaving out focus of the actual brand. These theories and statements imply the significance of creating a trustworthy message in marketing communications activities by using appropriate celebrity endorsers suitable for the brand. Meaning, unfavourable celebrity endorsers creating lack of trustworthiness can be a factor leading to brand avoidance.

Further, one must acknowledge that different focus groups had different perceptions. Depending on if participants were athletes or everyday exercisers, expressions varied in how they analysed trustworthiness in advertisements. The athletes were more focused on how the product actually was portrayed, than e.g. what impact the celebrity had on the brand. This connects to Prendergast et al. (2009) findings on how people with higher self-esteem are more likely to criticise the message of the advertisement. If the product was portrayed poorly, participants from focus group 2 found the advertisement to lack trustworthiness. An unprofessional message could prompt brand avoidance. One could perceive the brand itself as reliable, but by analysing their adverts and perceiving the message with lack of credibility, brand avoidance would occur because of unbalance between brand perception and message reliability. Participants who exercised on a regular basis (focus group 1, 3 and 4) were more interested in reliability of the celebrity endorsers, and did not express thoughts regarding the trustworthiness of the other components. Spry et al. (2011) argue that advertisements cannot save a poor product. This can be one of the reasons for why the participants in focus group 2 did not focus on the trustworthiness of the celebrity in the advertisements as much as the other. Since they already had pre-existing negative preferences of the products in the adverts they found it more difficult to trust the advertisement.

Lastly, reflections regarding social media and trustworthiness developed in all focus groups. Derived from these sessions one cannot ignore that trustworthiness can be reflected upon in amount of followers, likes, views and comments a brand gets through social media posts. Several participants, amongst them participant 1A, expressed the thought of scrolling through feeds and perceiving certain brands as more credible than others due to their activity on social media and response from those actions. This is further an indicator of how social media as a channel may influence brand avoidance, but also how trustworthiness is an important factor to indicate credibility for a brand, whereas lack of credibility prompts brand avoidance actions.

5.1.7 Timing

Frequency and timing could be associated with each other; however, they are not sufficiently alike to be seen as equal or being placed under the same sub-category in the model of brand avoidance. Hallahan (2013) states timing as the second of the three elements crucial for success in marketing communication actions. Timing is referred to as *when* an advertisement is exposed to the audience. Volvo Cars together with Forsman & Bodenfors released several commercials featuring famous Swedish personalities. In these Volvo commercials, timing was explicit and they were therefore released during a break of television when maximum amount of people would be watching television (FB.se, 2016). This is an example of how important timing can be in marketing communication activities. Participant 3F stated that she prefers to see sport adverts on a medium such as Instagram just before she goes to bed, in order to become motivated for the day after. This is further aligned with theory by Balakrishnan and Hall (1995), highlighting consumers' ability to recall ad messages differently depending on timing of the exposure. Participant 2G agreed that it absolutely matters when she sees an advert. As an example she mentioned that she would not be as responsive to a sunny picture if it was raining where she was at that moment, which connects to theory on seasonality of

product consumption (Balakrishnan & Hall, 1995). 2A mentioned that he would not be motivated to work out by being exposed to posts related to sports during a Friday night when he eats crisps and dip. This can be compared to similar situations where timing is crucial in order to get a positive response. One can also draw the conclusion that poor timing of an advert can lead to a negative response, and not make the message reach the audience with its correct purpose. If the same audience were being exposed to the same content at a different time, the outcome may differ. Once again, this can be related to marketing communication avoidance. The relation between brand avoidance caused by timing is to be further investigated. Thus, the relation exists, and one can be sure that timing has some influence on brand avoidance caused by marketing communication.

5.1.8 Response

Response is the fourth component of advertising actions prompting brand avoidance according to Knittel et al. (2016). Findings from focus groups show that response is more suitable in another context than as of equal attention as content, collaborations, music, channels, trustworthiness, frequency, and timing. The low amount of acknowledgement response got from focus groups indicates its minor individual power to drive brand avoidance behaviour. Instead, based on how participants from focus groups perceived response, this component should be issued as a final overall impression of an advertisement based on perceptions from other components of marketing communications driving brand avoidance. This is indicated by how several participants from the focus groups mentioned that a negative response of an advertisement shown repetitively had correlations to various other components perceived negatively. Furthermore, participants confirmed that their response was caused by components they perceived as important factors of marketing communication.

Thereby, response will now have a new position being the consequence of how other components are perceived. If these components are perceived negatively, the response may lead to brand avoidance behaviour. However, response does not get an individual position in the updated model causing brand avoidance via marketing communication actions. It will instead be connected to all components of marketing communications driving brand avoidance as the final feeling and judgement occurring after being exposed to a marketing communication activity.

6 Conclusion

In this section the authors conclude the thesis by presenting their final thoughts.

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate and to gain deeper understanding of which components of advertising affect brand avoidance within the sportswear industry. We successfully fulfilled our purpose, and the outcome is a modification of the framework by Knittel et al. (2016). In more detail, we aimed to identify if the existing framework could be applicable to the sportswear industry in Sweden or if it had to be revised. This was done by conducting three structured interviews with three different representatives of sportswear brands in Sweden. By combining existing research with findings from the interviews, we conducted four focus groups. The design of focus groups corresponded well in relation to the target audiences of the companies we interviewed.

This thesis contributes and adds to existing theory within the field of brand avoidance, and more specifically provides the reader with a deeper understanding of which impact marketing communication activities can have on brand avoidance. From findings, this research gives an indication to which aspects need to be further researched on in the future, and especially within the field of marketing communication and its connection to brand avoidance. From the aspect of contribution to the business world, this thesis helps and guides marketers by providing knowledge of causes driving brand avoidance one should avert, in order to successfully manage marketing communication actions. Specifically the sportswear industry will be greatly advantaged by this research, however we believe these components can somewhat be considered in other industries as well.

Our findings show seven main marketing communication components, which drive brand avoidance behaviour. Whereas content and music have previously been acknowledged as drivers, collaborations, channels, trustworthiness, frequency and timing have been added as a result from this research. Response as a component has also been deliberated upon, and the conclusion is that it rather should be seen as a consequence to negative perceptions of the other components, than a component by its own.

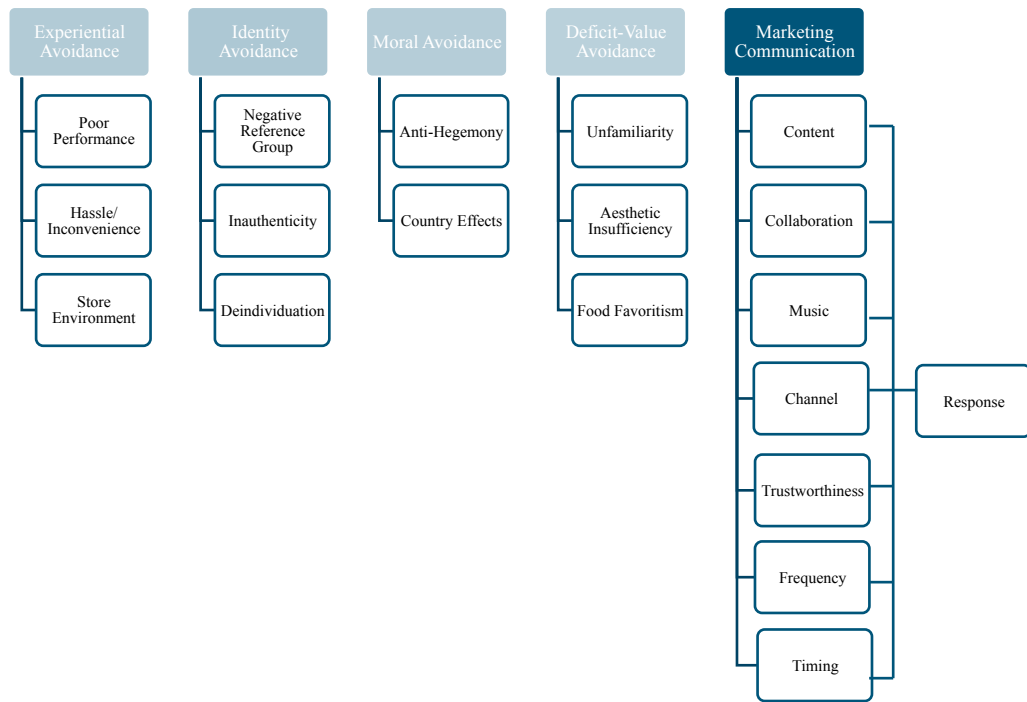


Figure 7. Revised Framework of Marketing Communication Components driving Brand Avoidance
 Source: Developed by the Authors

Moving on, the findings indicate further aspects of each component previously not identified. Content needs to be conveyed correctly to the viewer, in order to not be perceived as provoking and irritating. Collaborations are built up by celebrity endorsement, sponsorship and co-branding. An important aspect when using celebrity endorsement is to find a good fit between the brands associations and associations of the endorser. Sponsorship is widely used within the sports industry as a marketing tool. One can draw the conclusion that sponsored people's beliefs and values are significant for the success of the brand. Sponsorship is connected to identity avoidance, and will therefore be determined by how the audience perceives the person and how well one can identify with him or her. Regarding co-branding it is crucial to make sure that neither one of the partners bring the perception of the other brand down, nor itself.

Music is one component that one can presume to evoke brand avoidance to a greater extent when it is combined with other factors in marketing communications, which are being negatively perceived. The choice of channel is crucial for the success of the marketing communication activity, and the most frequently used channels are digital ones, especially social media. Regarding channels, there are three aspects one can consider to avert brand avoidance. First of all the length of the content and if it fits the channel. Further, the appropriate usage of a certain channel connected to the wanted result, whereas this differs from the target audience and what response one wishes to get. Lastly, a variety of different channels are crucial in order to reach the whole target audience. Under the component of channel one can also find the usage of events. When hosting events one needs to think about what an appropriate event is for the brand. An event is found to increase already existing

perceptions of the brand, however will most likely not change the pre-existing feelings one has.

Trustworthiness is largely connected to other components such as content, collaborations and channel. A bad fit between the brand and these components will definitely lower the trustworthiness of the brand. Frequency is how often the audience is being exposed to the advertisements, and both a low and a high frequency are found to be influencing brand avoidance. Timing is *when* the audience is being exposed to the content. The general findings show that the advertisement, its content, and the audience circumstances, need to be aligned in order for the audience to not neglect the message. Response is the last component, but has been moved within the framework and added as a consequence of the other components instead of being a component by itself.

Our analysis indicates that in the process of planning and executing marketing activities of sportswear one should consider the seven components in the category of marketing communications driving brand avoidance. The outcome of analysing findings provided the authors with sufficient material to successfully revise and modify the framework of brand avoidance, originally created by Knittel et al. (2016). Content, collaborations, music, channels, trustworthiness, frequency, and timing are all updated and new components prompting brand avoidance, further presented in a new framework. These sub- categories of marketing communication have been reviewed and questioned with consideration to theory, what experts from interviews stated and from coding the focus groups.

At last, we are confident that the result of this thesis will be of great importance for the sportswear industry and its marketers. Brand avoidance is a rather new phenomenon but should be acknowledged in all marketing communication situations in order to best succeed.

7 Discussion

In this section the authors discuss how the thesis contribute to existing research, as well as limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

7.1 Contribution

We believe that research regarding components of marketing communications driving brand avoidance behaviour is an interesting topic which marketers benefit from when planning their marketing actions. This study has highlighted issues prompting brand avoidance actions by using marketing communication activities in a non-beneficial manner. Further, it acknowledges the components of marketing communication prompting brand avoidance in new contexts and combinations, leading to the development of a revised model originally created by Knittel et al (2016). As a result, we hope to inspire and motivate people holding responsibility over branding activities within the sportswear industry, to not solely put emphasis on the positive aspects of branding, but also acknowledge the topic of brand avoidance. We believe that knowledge from brand avoidance allows for success in the process of communicating with a market segment.

7.2 Limitations

It is of importance to point out that the sports industry and its marketing communication actions are explicit. Our study is the first of its kind, whereas brand avoidance caused by advertising is tested on a specific industry. This means that the findings cannot be directly applied on another industry. This is one of the limitations when simply investigating one industry in isolation. As of the geographic limitation within Sweden, the analysis resulted in being suitable to the Swedish sportswear industry, since it is based on information from actors in this nation. Also, this research is limited to the age group of 18 years old and above. Further, the use of focus groups in this type of research results in findings not being generalizable outside the focus groups (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Therefore, the findings need to be considered to pre-existing conditions of participants in the focus groups in order to draw conclusions.

Another difficulty we encountered when conducting this research was to identify evidence enough to see a clear correlation between our findings and factual brand avoidance actions. To clarify, there is still limited proof if whether a person's negative brand perceptions *always* lead to brand avoidance or not.

A further limitation is the focus on marketing communication components with no consideration to other factors driving brand avoidance. This research excludes experiential, identity, moral, and deficit- value avoidance, and further does not examine the power *between* these factors and marketing communication driving brand avoidance.

The final limitation to this study is how the research does not indicate any correlation *between* the various marketing communication components prompting brand avoidance behaviour. The only component we present as a consequence of the other(s) is/are response. The other components have not been put in comparison to one another in this research. However, the idea of its importance occurred during analysing the results from focus group discussions. Findings indicate different powers of marketing communication components being less or more influential to brand avoidance behaviour in combination with each other. Though, in the way this study was conducted, the findings did not provide us with proof enough in order to compare the marketing communications components against or together with each other.

7.3 Further research

Considering the topic of research to be fairly unexplored there are several fields, which need to be studied further. Firstly, the action of renaming the category *advertising* to *marketing communications* needs to be tested. This should be investigated mainly since marketing communication was not of recognition in the beginning of the research, but rather an idea that evolved during the process of gathering information via existing theories, in interviews and from focus groups, which was allowed by an abductive research approach. Therefore, there may be a chance that this study does not include sufficient reasons to why further marketing communication actions are not included in the modified framework.

Secondly, this study's proposal to a revised model is not considering any changes of the first four categories of brand avoidance, namely experiential, moral, identity and deficit-value avoidance. Since the purpose was to examine the advertising components driving brand avoidance behaviour within the sportswear industry, it would be of importance to test the other categories prompting brand avoidance on the same industry. Adapting the findings from this research onto a new industry can further test this topic. We therefore encourage future researchers to investigate whether or not, the marketing communications components driving brand avoidance according to us, are relevant for other industries as well.

Lastly, the amount of study within the field of brand avoidance is so far relatively unexplored and can be further evolved. Both qualitative and quantitative as well as general and more specific research to certain industries can be added to existing theory.

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9 Appendix

9.1 Interview Questions

There have been many studies conducted on the topic of brand loyalty and why consumers choose to purchase one brand over another. However, the topic of why people choose to not buy a certain brand over another has been largely overlooked. We are therefore, in our bachelor thesis, investigating on the topic of brand avoidance, and more specifically how advertising is affecting brand avoidance. To make our topic even narrower we have decided to focus on the industry of sportswear.

The only existing study in this field shows that there are four factors that influence brand avoidance due to their advertising, and they are; *content, celebrity endorsement, music and response*.

We are testing this proposed model on the sportswear industry, and this is why we need your help. Our aim is to provide a well-established framework of which you as a company can use when planning your advertisement actions. In order to later create focus groups; we would appreciate some information about your company.

We are happy to answer your questions about this research. We would love for our research to benefit your company. Certainly, we would make our research available to you. We know that this information is confidential and we will therefore not use your companies name in our research, hence you will be given a nickname such as company A.

The questions we would need to know at the moment are:

1. What is your target group on the Swedish market?
 - a. What message are you trying to tell them through your advertisement?
2. What are the most established and used advertisement channels on this market?
 - a. Please list the top 3.
3. Does the fact that most of your goods are sold through retail chains change the way you advertise your goods in Sweden?
4. A previous study shows that *content, celebrity endorsement, music and response* are the main factors for avoiding a brand due to advertisement.
 - a. Do you agree with this?
 - b. If yes, which ones do you think is the most critical one?
 - c. Is there any other factor you believe is crucial?

9.2 Guidelines and Questions to Focus Groups

- Welcome participants and shortly present the topic- brand avoidance
- Ask to shortly introduce themselves and mention one sports brand they would avoid
- Present the topic more in-depth, and explain that focus is on brand avoidance due to advertising, and not on Lee's model of experiential, identity, moral and deficit-value avoidance. Ask participants to think only from an advertising perspective.
- Ask participants to fill out the first page of the questionnaire with gender, age etc.
- Explain that discussions will be based on ten different advertisements and then carefully go through each component on the rest of the questionnaire. Encourage participants to write down if there are any other components they find crucial to brand avoidance.

Questions to advertisement 1

- What are your general thoughts on this advert?
- What feelings do you get from seeing this advert?
 - Do you recognize the celebrity? Can you relate to her? Is she relevant for this advertisement?
 - What do you think of the music?
 - How would you feel about this advert if you would have seen it several times?

Questions to advertisement 2

- What message is Adidas trying to send out with this advertisement?
 - Is the celebrity an important aspect in delivering this message?
 - What do you think of the music?
 - Is this advert appropriate even for non-football players?
 - Is Instagram an appropriate channel for this advert?

Questions to advertisement 3

- What are your general thoughts on this advertisement?
- What feelings do you get from seeing this advert?
- What are your associations to this brand?
- What are your associations to this celebrity?
 - Do you recognize the celebrity? Can you relate to her? Is she relevant for this advertisement?
 - Reebok mainly focuses on the sport crossfit, do you think that the celebrity is relevant for this sport?
 - Do you think that this advert is trustworthy?

Questions to advertisement 4

- What are your general thoughts on this advertisement?
- Would you have recognized this picture if it was placed on bus stop and you drove by?
 - What do you relate Asics to? Do you connect Asics to running? Would you connect Asics to running after having seen this advert?

- Would you notice it more OOH or on the Internet, if it came up in your feed on social media?

Questions to advertisement 5

- Is it positive or negative that a brand has several different accounts on social media?
- Do you put notice into how many likes and comments a post has gotten?
- What positive and negative aspects are there of posting several times a week/several times a day?
- How responsive are you to advertisements in regards to when you see it?
 - Do the amount of likes and comments have an impact on your thoughts and feelings of a brand?

Questions to advertisement 6 and 7

- How are these advertisements different to each other? What is the biggest different between these two adverts?
 - Which of these are you least drawn to? Why?
 - Can both of these advertisements be successful? Why?

Questions to advertisement 8

- What are your general thoughts and feelings of this picture?
- Have you seen something familiar before?
- Would this make you curious as to enter?
 - Does Adidas attract more people with this kind of pop-up store?

Questions to advertisement 9

- What are your general thoughts on co-branding?
- Do your feelings of Adidas change with a collaboration like this? How?
 - What are your associations with the brand?
 - What are your associations with the designer?
 - Does the designer uplift your associations with the brand, or vice versa?
 - Is this an event you would want to attend?

Questions to advertisement 10

- What do you think of prints/handouts?
- Are you responsive to prints/handouts?
- Do you think of this as an advertisement for the store or the brands?
 - Does the store's promotion of a brand affect your impressions of that brand?

Additional Questions

- Do you want to add anything that could have value for our study?
- Thanking for participating in the focus group

9.3 Questionnaire Focus Groups

Hi!

We're so thankful that you want to take part in this focus group as we appreciate all help we can get. To be able to make a good compilation we would need some information about who you are and what habits you have regarding sportswear.

1. Age: _____
2. Occupation: _____
3. City you grew up in: _____
4. Gender:
 Female Male
5. How many times a week do you work out?
 0 times 1-2 times 2-3 times > 3 times
6. How often do you purchase sportswear (per year)?
 0 times 1-2 times 2-3 times > 3 times
7. Are you active on social media?
 Yes No
8. Do you have an Instagram account?
 Yes No
9. Do you have a Facebook account?
 Yes No
10. How often do you go on Youtube per week?
 0 times 1-2 times 2-3 times > 3 times

Example 1-10

Positive

- Celebrity Endorser
- Channel
- Content
- Frequency
- Music
- Response
- Trustworthiness
- Other: _____

Negative

- Celebrity Endorser
- Channel
- Content
- Frequency
- Music
- Response
- Trustworthiness
- Other: _____

9.4 Examples of Marketing Communication Activities used in Focus Groups

Example 1

Television advertisement for Fabletics where Kate Hudson stars as main character. Kate records a tough workout, but stops the filming as she suggests they should depict Fabletics as a cute brand rather than harsh. This advertisement was chosen mainly to analyse Fabletics choice of celebrity as well as components such as music, content and trustworthiness.

See example here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOhxSRRPjZA>

Example 2

Adidas made a campaign with Messi to put up on their Instagram account. This is a quite short video that shows Messi on the soccer field with an Adidas soccer shoe. This advertisement was chosen to analyse the channel, content and celebrity.

See example here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxzyBnO23Wk>

Example 3

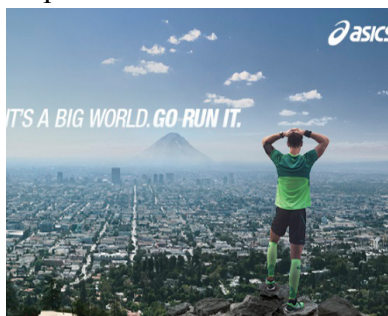
Reebok made a campaign with Swedish blogger Janni Delér. This is a long video of Janni visiting a Reebok event in New York City. The video is made in a video blog, vlogg, kind of way and is meant to be watched from her blog as well as on YouTube. This campaign was chosen to mainly discuss the trustworthiness and choice of celebrity.

See example here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRZFM3FxMKA>

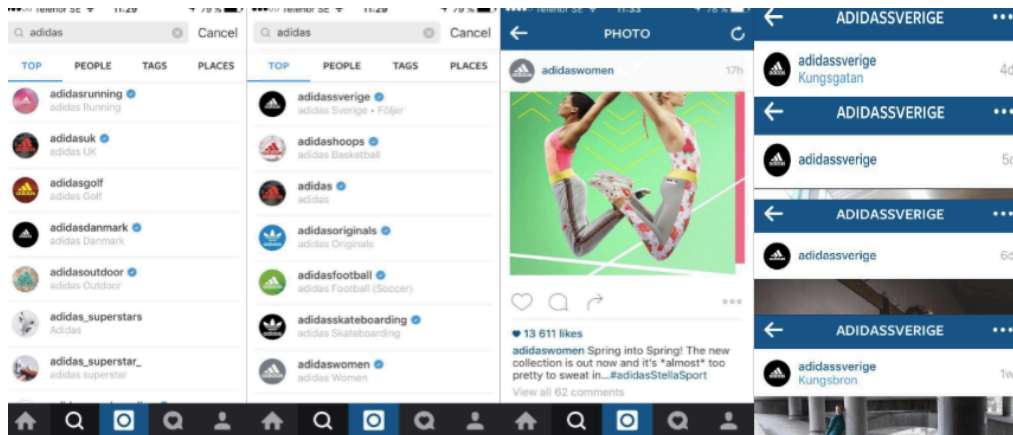
Example 4

Asics made an advertisement as a picture that was displayed as a billboard. It shows a runner on top of a mountain overlooking a big city. This was chosen to discuss channel, content and response.



Example 5

All brands today has an Instagram account. In order to discuss frequency, content and response, Adidas different accounts were shown. Adidas, as well as many other brands today, have several different accounts for different sports, gender, countries etc. Some examples are Adidas Football, Adidas Running, Adidas Sverige and so on. Is this positive or negative? A picture of likes and comments were shown to discuss if those are important factors of the perception of a brand. Also, how often a brand updates its account was displayed to hear comments on frequency.



Example 6

In order to discuss content, two advertisements of Nike was shown. The first one is an informative advertisement that displays a shoe, how it is built up and what functions it has. It is made in a Transformer kind of way, with effects such as light and music.

See example here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J91IcJE6Clg>

Example 7

The second Nike advertisement is one with the comedian Kevin Hart. In opposite of the informative advertisement, this one focus on humor and emotions. Kevin stands on a treadmill and talks during the whole advertisement.

See example here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mvtisYYy04>

Example 8

Adidas hosted a pop-up event in form of a giant shoebox. A picture of this was shown to discuss an event and its content and response.



Example 9

Adidas went together with Stella McCartney in order to co-brand their brands. Stella designed a clothing line for Adidas, and to launch it they hosted events in-store. A picture of one of these events were shown to the focus groups in order to hear thoughts on trustworthiness, response and choice of celebrity.



Example 10

Several prints and handouts from Intersport, Team Sportia and Stadium were shown to discuss channel and response.



9.5 Participants from Focus Groups

Focus Group1	Age	Gender	Active on social media
1A	31	Male	Yes
1B	29	Male	Yes
1C	26	Female	Yes
1D	30	Male	Yes
1E	25	Female	Yes
1F	23	Female	Yes
Focus Group2	Age	Gender	Active on social media
2A	22	Male	Yes
2B	23	Female	Yes
2C	23	Male	Yes
2D	23	Male	Yes
2E	26	Male	Yes
2F	28	Male	Yes
2G	24	Female	Yes
Focus Group3	Age	Gender	Active on social media
3A	22	Male	Yes
3B	23	Female	Yes
3C	22	Female	Yes
3D	24	Female	Yes
3E	24	Female	Yes
3F	24	Female	Yes
3G	22	Male	Yes
3H	21	Male	Yes
Focus Group4	Age	Gender	Active on social media
4A	35	Male	Yes
4B	48	Male	No
4C	37	Female	Yes
4D	44	Female	No
4E	44	Male	No
4F	39	Male	Yes
4G	40	Female	Yes
4H	45	Female	No