

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**BRAND AVOIDANCE: AN INSIGHT FROM GHANAIAIAN SERVICE
CONSUMERS**

BY

FAIZA ABDULAI SAFANA

(10599442)

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MPHIL MARKETING DEGREE**



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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is the result of my own research and have never been presented by anyone for any academic award in this or any other university. All references used in the work have been duly acknowledged.

I bear sole responsibility for any shortcomings.

.....

.....

**FAIZA ABDULAI SAFANA
(10599442)**

DATE

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this thesis was conducted in accordance with procedures laid down by the University of Ghana.

.....

DR. RAPHAEL ODOOM
(PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR)

.....

DATE

.....

DR. ERNEST Y. TWENEBOAH-KODUAH
(CO-SUPERVISOR)

.....

DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the memory of my late brother, Abdulai Abdul-Razak Safana. I also dedicate this work to my husband, Majeed Abdul-Aziz and my two daughters, Inaaya Abdul- Aziz and Ismat Abdul-Aziz, whom I dearly love.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGFI	---	Average Goodness of Fit Indices
AVE	---	Average Variance Extracted
CBBE	---	Consumer-Based Brand Equity
CFA	---	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	---	Comparative Fit Index
CR	---	Composite Reliability
GDP	---	Gross Domestic Product
GFI	---	Goodness of Fit Indices
GM	---	Genetically Modified
IBM	---	International Business Machine
ICT	---	Information Communication and Technology
MoC	---	Ministry of Communications
MOH	---	Ministry of Health
NC	---	Normed Chi-square
NHIS	---	National Health Insurance Scheme
PCA	---	Principal Component Analysis
R ²	---	Squared Multiple Correlation
RMSEA	---	Root-Mean-Square-Error of Approximations
RMSR	---	Root-Mean-Square-Residual
S-D	---	Service Dominant
SD	---	Standard Deviation
SEM	---	Structural Equation Modelling
SPSS	---	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, supply exceeds demand rendering consumers the opportunity to select, buy and consume brands that equals their personalities. Owing to the fact that several offerings are available in the market, consumers tend to reject some brands. Whereas most prevailing studies are geared towards building robust consumer-brand relationships and nurturing brand loyalty, the area of brand avoidance has received little attention. Furthermore, it is argued that brand emotions act as mediators between brand stimuli and consumer behaviour. However, it is unclear how negative brand emotions impact brand avoidance. This study therefore determined the drivers of brand avoidance among Ghanaian service consumers; and examined the mediating role of brand hate in the relationship between brand avoidance and its drivers. To investigate this, a large-scale quantitative study with a sample size of 318 respondents within the Greater Accra metropolis was conducted. The data was analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in AMOS. The findings of the study revealed that, out of five proposed drivers, three drivers - unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence and unacceptable trade-offs - are shown to influence the avoidance of brands. Failed communications was shown to have an inverse significance on brand avoidance. Furthermore, the three validated drivers, including failed communications, are partially mediated by brand hate. Ideological incompatibility had a non-significant effect on brand avoidance. Managers must ensure that they prevent the drivers of brand avoidance from occurring to avoid negative consumer-brand relationships. Further studies may want to investigate into more detail the three drivers confirmed to influence brand avoidance among Ghanaian service consumers using an inductive approach.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

This section presents the background to the research. It addresses the need for brand avoidance among Ghanaian service consumers, problem statement and gaps, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study and chapter disposition.

1.2 Background of the Study

Globally, service branding plays an exceptional role in marketing activities of service organisations (Berry, 2000; De Chernatony, 2010). In a services marketing setting, influential service brands convey their beliefs across each spot of connection they have with the customer (Underwood, Bond, & Baer, 2001). According to Pinar Girard, Trapp and Esser (2016), one of the main obstacles in branding services is the dissimilarity amid the consumers' opinion of brand reflections and the firm's branding attempts, which could result in experience gaps.

The choices consumers' make as far as brands are concerned usually depends on a whole lot of positive factors that these brands represent. Consumers, by the brands they consume, define themselves (Banister & Hogg, 2004) or even respond to their individual identities (Cherrier, 2009; Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015). Furthermore, according to Martin and Morich (2011), customers are becoming more aware, and each purchase decision signifies a conscious choice, which has effects outside the consumption of a good or service. Additionally, Rumbo (2002) argue that the multiplication of competing brands and advertising "clutter" implies that it is likely clients may perceive multiple brands as alike

(Ehrenberg, Barnard & Scriven, 1997). Therefore, customer loyalty to a particular brand is hard to create and envisage (Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005). According to Abougomaah, Schlacter and Gaidis (1987), this multi-brand loyalty implies that any brand included in a consumer's evoked set of options may be chosen with respect to the situation at hand.

However, consumers may regularly decide to reject specific brands, resulting in what Lee, Motion and Conroy (2009a) refer to as "anti-consumption", a scenario where consumers may circumvent a product or brand (Lee et al., 2009a). Furthermore, Lee et al. (2009a) claim that anti-consumers may also deliberately reject a brand even when it is available and affordable, termed as "brand avoidance". So practically, although it is crucial to belong to the set of selected brands, it is also crucial to not belong to the rejected brands group.

Unfortunately, studies pertaining to the reasons consumers avoid some brands are scarce or barely elucidated (Dalli, Romanni & Gistri, 2006). This breach is reasonable since firms and institutions are concerned about the favourable reactions toward their brands. They are engrossed in knowing the desires of consumers and what they are willing to purchase (Dalli et al., 2006). Nonetheless, understanding why consumers might avoid a brand might help in developing strategies in countering anti-consumption behaviours (Khan & Lee, 2014). As Hogg (1998, p.133) posits: "The creation of meaning via consumption involves both positive and negative choices".

In addition, marketers strive to make emotional connections with their customers through their brands (Smith, Fisher & Cole, 2007). As a result, firms gain some amount of benefit via positive emotions in the form of reduced marketing budgets and price insensitivity, which provide the organisation with a significant competitive advantage (Demirbag-Kaplan,

Yildirim .Gulden & Aktanet, 2015). Therefore, the favourable sentiments regarding brands are enormous and well recognized (Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, & Bagozzi, 2016). Particularly, most studies concerning emotions towards brands have looked at brand love (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Rossiter, 2012), brand attachment (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013), etc. Nonetheless, just a few of them considered the unfavourable emotions directed at brands (Fournier & Alvarez, 2013). Consequently, in relation to Romani et al. (2012), researchers are beginning to discover the unfavourable emotions consumers may harbour concerning brands, particularly “brand hate” (Zarantonello et al., 2016; Grégoire, Tripp, & Legoux, 2009). As Rempel and Burris (2005) argues, “hate” is recognised as an intense and significant human emotion that may bring about a disposition to injure. In fact, according to Fehr and Rusell (1984), hate was the next most crucial sentiment. Furthermore, research (Gregoire et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2011) in marketing has revealed how consumers cultivate “hate” sentiments when they encounter incidents of service disappointment. These emotions bring about unfavourable repercussions for the brand and the firm, precisely resulting in the rejection of the brand or speaking negatively about it (Zorantonello et al., 2016). Therefore, according to Bryson, Atwal, and Hultén (2013), hate may be interpreted as the strong negative emotional element of attitude towards a brand.

However, even though it is known that consumers’ unwanted behaviour is elicited by experienced unfavourable sentiments (Romani et al., 2009), it is not clear how negative emotions lead to brand avoidance. This thesis, therefore, seeks to determine the influence of brand hate on the association between brand avoidance and its drivers.

1.3 Problem Statement

A lot of marketing managers and academics till now have concentrated on the desirable facets of branding and brand equity. However, customers turn-down particular brands to prevent adding negative connotation to their lives (Lee et al., 2009). In fact, consumers are more expressive about their distaste and dislikes when compared to their preferences (Wilk, 1997). Yet, interest in anti-consumption is still emergent (Bryson et al., 2013), specifically brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009). Besides, in the field of symbolic consumption, research has proposed that knowledge on what consumers do not like is equally appreciated as the knowledge of what they like (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Ogilvie, 1987), consequently, highlighting the need to study brand avoidance as a topic (Knittel, Beurer, & Burndt, 2016), especially for service businesses. Knittel et al. (2016) posits that it is imperative for service organisations to comprehend brand avoidance from the services perspective since an organisations status and benefit can be affected by its (brand avoidance) outcomes. Similarly, Khan and Lee (2014) proposed that brand avoidance should be studied in the service sector.

Furthermore, as stated by some authors (Aaker, 1996; Rumbo, 2002), years upon years of brand multiplication and advertising jumble has brought about a decrease of real brand devotion, possibly causing consumers to swap brands. A brand that encounters continuous periods of brand avoidance could suffer negative brand equity, as consumers reliably respond negatively to the brand (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). Therefore, in a competitive industry like the service industry in Ghana, there is the need for studies on brand avoidance to enable managers to make informed decisions on creating the right meanings for their brands.

Academically, studies in the area are usually one-sided (Lee, 2007). Meanwhile, some studies (Stern, 2006; De Chernatony & Dall’Olmo Riley, 1998, 1997; Keller, 1993) have revealed that the brand concept is multi-faceted. Therefore, it is only rational to presuppose that brand avoidance is multifaceted. However most of the studies concerning this issue have only concentrated on one-dimensional motives of anti-consumption (Lee, 2007). Accordingly, a key gap in the extant anti-consumption literature is the fact that it is unable to provide an explanation for the broad nature of brand avoidance behaviours that might exist (Lee, 2007). This thesis will therefore examine and enumerate the multiple reasons for brand avoidance.

Furthermore, the extant literature on brand avoidance has several limitations; the majority of research in the area of undesirable brand associations are qualitative in nature (Bryson et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2009a; Khan & Lee 2014). Therefore, there exists a gap that requires the study of brand avoidance using a quantitative approach (Hegner, Fetscherin & Delzen, 2017; Knittel et al., 2016). Additionally, brand avoidance has not yet been studied from an emerging market perspective having been limited to New Zealand (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Khan & Lee, 2014), Sweden (Knittel et al., 2016), Germany and UK (Bryson et al., 2013). Meanwhile, Izberk-Bilgin (2010) has asked that studies on consumer resistance be extended from Western economically advanced countries to less advanced countries (emerging markets) as these nations are at a different modernization and cultural development level. A careful scrutiny of the literature in a global sense reveals most studies on brand avoidance has been done in developed economies (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Cherrier, Helene, Black & Lee, 2010; Khan & Lee, 2014; Lee et al., 2012), revealing a context gap as proposed by Bryson et al. (2013). Hence, this research endeavours to address this gap by investigating brand avoidance from an emerging market perspective, the

Ghanaian context to be precise. Moreover, a thorough review of the extant literature shows that the majority of the research regarding the issue of anti-consumption focuses on displeasure general products and service brands (overall consumption), or counter-cultural situations like that of voluntary simplification and consumer resistance (Kozinets, 2002; Zavestoski, 2002; Banister & Hogg, 2004) resulting in a gap that demands research into specific industries (Knittel et al., 2016; Strandvik, Rindell, & Wilen, 2013; Lee et al., 2009b). Therefore, this study specifically targets the service industry in Ghana.

1.4 Research Purpose

This research seeks to specifically examine the reasons for brand avoidance among Ghanaian service consumers, and to determine the mediating effect of brand hate on the relationship between brand avoidance and its drivers.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Precisely, the main objectives of the study are;

1. To determine the drivers of brand avoidance among Ghanaian service consumers.
2. To examine the mediating role of brand hate between brand avoidance and its drivers

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was limited to Ghanaian service consumers in the Accra metropolis who avoids a service brand. It involved customers across all the service firms in the Ghanaian service industry. The target sample was selected because they were perceived to have the required knowledge to comprehend and appropriately react to the items on the questionnaire.

1.7 Chapter Disposition

The thesis is partitioned into six chapters: the introduction of the study; literature review; methodology for the study; the context of the study; data analysis and discussions; and finally summary, conclusions and recommendations. These chapters are briefly explained below.

Chapter one is the introductory chapter covering the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, justifications as well as significance of the study.

Chapter Two is the literature review. It presents a review of the literature on the subject matter under three main sections - theoretical, empirical and conceptual. Topics covered include anti-consumption, the undesired self, the concept of brand, service branding versus product branding as well as brand avoidance.

Chapter Three, which is the context of the study, is dedicated to giving an overview of the Ghanaian service industry.

Chapter Four comprises of research design, research approach, population of the study, sample frame and sampling technique, sources and data collection procedures, data analysis instrument and research paradigm.

Chapter Five presents empirical findings, discussion of findings in relation to the objectives, hypotheses and previous empirical evidence.

Chapter Six, the last chapter, is dedicated to the presentation of the summary of the study and conclusions based on the findings as well as the implications of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter is focused on placing the study in context. Precisely, it presents a brief overview of the global service industry, a description of the structure of the Ghanaian service industry, and its contribution to Ghanaian economy.

2.2 Overview of the Service Industry

The service sector entails the "soft" aspects of the economy, i.e. deeds where people enhance productivity and sustainability through their knowledge and time. The main feature of this sector is the creation of services instead of end products. Services (also known as "intangible goods") comprise attention, advice, experience, and discussion. There exists a number of interpretations of what constitutes a service. Interpretation of services emphasise the fact that the service itself does not result in any physical outcome or tangible amount produced, even though it may be an instrument for the creation of physical goods (Lovelock & Patterson, 2015).

Lately, the service sector appears to be the main driver of several economies, even more so with technological development and globalization (Enu et al., 2015). In Europe, Asia, Africa and the other continents, the service sector has been shown to be a key contributor to GDP (Angus, 2003). Services presently contribute over 60% of GNP in many of the advanced economies, and the sector remains a prominent element in the performance of manufacturing and resource industries in several countries.

Furthermore, according to the World Bank (1995), the services sector contributes jobs to about 60% in the manufacturing sector in USA. The rate of growth of trade in services is also greater than other trade constituents. The trade in services between the years of 1989 and 1998 increased on an average of 7%; the corresponding increase in merchandise trade stood at 6%; and the share of trade of services increased from 15.7% to 16.3% in 1989 and 1998 respectively.

In India, for instance, the service sector has appeared as the fastest growing sector. It is noted that, within the space of fifteen years, after the sector recorded a low growth, it grew at an unusually remarkable rate (Einchengreen & Gupta, th2009). The Chinese economy is no exception, with the economy growing steadily with the service sector playing an important role with a substantial increase in its contribution to GDP. The non-manufacturing activities now cover a large percentage of the economy while the manufacturing sector covers about 45 percent, with the remaining percentage going to agriculture. Consequently, China is diversifying its economy from the heavy dominance of the industry, manufacturing and investment in infrastructure, which for decades were the driving forces of China`s economic development, to a more productive growth by raising the share of activity generated by the service sector especially in areas of logistics, tourism, engineering, healthcare and information technology (SENER, 2013).

Services account for a large and growing share of overall Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) economic output. In 2015, the services sector accounted for 58.0 percent of SSA gross domestic product (GDP), up from 47.6 percent in 2005. However, despite rapid growth, the services share of SSA`s GDP remained significantly lower than the 2014 global average (68.5 percent, latest available data). The extent to which individual SSA countries rely on

the services sector output varies widely. For example, in 2015, services accounted for more than 70 percent of GDP in Cabo Verde, Mauritius, and Sao Tome and Principe. Distribution services (including restaurants and hotels) and financial, business, and real estate services are large contributors to services output in each of these countries. By contrast, services accounted for a particularly small share of output in Chad (33.4 percent) and Sierra Leone (33.9 percent) as at 2015. The agriculture sector accounted for over half of GDP in each of these countries in 2015 (52.4 percent for Chad and 61.3 percent for Sierra Leone). Services accounted for a large and growing share of overall SSA economic output. In 2015, the services sector accounted for 58.0 percent of SSA gross domestic product (GDP), up from 47.6 percent in 2005. However, despite rapid growth, the services share of SSA's GDP remained significantly lower than the 2014 global average (68.5 percent, latest available data).

2.3 Structure of the Ghanaian Service Industry

In the past years (in the 1990`s), the service sector of Ghana contributed a little to GDP at a steady rate. At that time, the agricultural sector was known for its dominance followed by the service sector and then followed by industry. With time, the service sector has seen incredible performance, notably the remarkable growth. The main sub-sectors of the service sector in Ghana include: trade and repair of vehicles; households and goods; hotels and restaurants; transport and storage; information and communication; financial intermediation; business; real estate; public administration and defense; social security; education; health; and social work, community, social and personal. The major subsectors of the service industry are discussed below.

2.3.1 Financial service industry

Ghana's financial services sector can be classified into three main categories, i.e., banking, insurance and capital markets. The sector has shown significant development over the past years (PwC, Ghana).

The Government of Ghana has displayed resistant commitment to the growth of the financial sector. The endorsement of the Financial Sector Strategic Plan (FINSSP) by parliament in 2003 went a long way to prove Government's resilient dedication to the sector whose objective is to expand and deepen the financial sector. The Government of Ghana desires to foster the development of the financial sector by the implementation of the FINSSP, which is suitable for the needs of a country presently of middle income status. The objective is to make the financial sector receptive to the requests of the 21st century, particularly given the view of more international and regional competition and opportunity for Ghanaian financial market competitors.

The mission, in line with the government's ambition, has a primary aim of instituting a conducive atmosphere buttressed by operative guidelines, with the aim that all stakeholders and savers will have the value of regulatory supervision. The financial sector reform agenda, as a "second generation" financial sector reform program, recognizes that the basic organisations mandated for the delivery of financial services are mainly intact. Here, the aim is to permit them to function in a more competent way. The Banking Act (Amendment) Act 738, 2007 (formerly The Banking Act 673 (2004)) has paved the way for the institutionalization of the International Financial Services Sector (IFSS) by the government. This is established to intensify the competitiveness of the Ghanaian financial sector. The sector, after major developments, is unquestionably in an enhanced position to function

productively through the employment of financial assets for sustainable economic growth of the country.

The financial sector in Ghana is dominated by banks with bank loans being the main source of outward funding for indigenous firms. After decades of Government domination of banking firms, the public sector banks' service principles started falling as government-owned banks began to reduce in number, their success fell and the competence of employees became doubtful. Non-performing assets of these banks began to rise. As part of the structural and economic reforms and financial sector liberalization in 1990s, the government gave way for individuals to put new banks under the supervision of the Bank of Ghana.

The new group of private banks has now been recognized in the sector and they have established novel principles of services and productivity. Additionally, they (private banks) challenged the existing public banks by giving them a strong race. Regrettably, although the quantity of Ghanaian banks have shot up considerably, the size of their capital does not permit them to offer loans for projects in industrial, infrastructure and service sectors that required huge funding.

The banking system in Ghana is made up of a nationwide system of certified and legal financial organisations involved in the commerce of banking under the banking regulations of Ghana. It is made up of banks and non-banking financial institutions, or NBFIs (Nair & Fissaha, 2010). Bank of Ghana is the main bank and it controls the undertakings of all the banks. Banks are categorized under the formal system. These are organizations that are limited liability companies certified by the Bank of Ghana to offer financial services. As at the end of 2016, the number of Deposit Money Banks (DMB) went-up to thirty-three (33)

from twenty nine (29) in 2015. Subsequently, the number of Ghanaian controlled DMBs increased from twelve (12) to sixteen (16), while the foreign controlled banks remained at seventeen (17). There were 64 NBFIs, 141 RCBs, 564 MFIs, 420 forex bureaux and three credit reference bureaux functioning in 2016. The DMBs operated 1,341 branches in the ten (10) regions of the country and employed 19,977 persons compared with 19,846 in 2015. The deployment of ATMs increased by 111.4 per cent to 1,928 in 2016 and POS terminals went-up by 34.3 per cent to 6,501 in 2016 (BoG). Conversely, the new banks established by individuals (private sector banks) were in a position to cater for the small and medium enterprises whose credit needs are not as huge.

2.3.2 Real estate

The real estate sector affords several economic benefits to big and small nations across the world in areas spanning construction, building technology and, last but not least, sales and marketing. The striking features of Ghana's real estate sector include the rise in gated residential communities, enclosed shopping malls, high rise buildings, cocooned offices and modern residential retail and office space, leased on well-defined contracts. In the last few years it would seem as well that there has a proliferation of newspaper advertisements promoting real estate industry players like Regimanuel Grey Estate's Kwabenya housing project, Essipon housing estate, the Katamanso cluster of housing estates, Vanguard Properties Development Companies Limited, Vanguard Oasis at Prampram; Devtraco housing project at Teshie Nungu, Dovehill Estate on Spintex Road, Devtraco Villas at Batsoona, to mention but a few (GBDR, 2016).

The liberalization of the housing sector has attracted more capital investments into the sector through the private sector. The policy was a success between 1995 and 2005, with the Ghana

Investment Promotion Council (GIPC) having had 81 real estate projects registered and the total investment was in excess of 105 million US dollars.

According to the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), the residential market is one of the most active in Ghana recording a projected 85,000 housing units per annum over the past decade with an estimated value of about 1.7 billion US dollars per year. The Ghanaian housing sector has changed since the commencement of the liberalisation policies in 1983 allowing private market initiatives to formalize urban lands. This has led to an infrastructure deficit with better prospects for growth still to come.

2.3.3 Health sector

The healthcare industry has seen significant growth over time. The growth is very much apparent in the private sector-self-financed undertakings, non-profit organisations and the pharmaceutical industry. The organisation and delivery of healthcare goods and services in Ghana takes place at five levels: national, regional, district, sub-district and the community health provision services compounds, clinics, health centres and district hospitals. These health facilities refer clients needing specialised diagnostics and treatments to regional and teaching hospitals. Private-not-for-profit faith based health organisations (FBOs) and self-financed private (SFPs) providers are located at multiple points along the structure.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) and its agency, the Ghana Health Service (GHS), manage the public sector providers. The MOH finances capital investments and formulate policies to be implemented at all levels of the service delivery chain. The GHS provides governance and leadership for health facilities at the regional and micro levels.

Before 2005, healthcare services were available on a fee-for-service basis to clients except for a few exempt groups: this system was found to be fairly successful for revenue generation and cost recovery efforts of service providers. However, it resulted in the market failure to equitably distribute healthcare goods and services across socio economic profiles, thus constraining the ability of the poor to receive adequate health benefits. These problems, coupled with a huge government fiscal deficit at the time, provided incentives for passing legislation on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in 2003 (Act 650) amended in 2012 (852). Since its inception, the NHIS has increased its client base substantially. Every year 60-80 new industry players, mainly from the private sector, join the scheme as service providers. Finances of the NHIS are overstretched by the increasing numbers of providers and utilization. Cost of claims of payments increased from GHC785.64 in the year 2013 to GHC 968.48 million in the year 2014 representing 78.48% and 75.6% of the schemes inflows in 2013 and 2014 respectively (GBDR, 2016).

2.3.4 Information and technology (ICT)

ICT is generally defined as the set of digital technologies that mediate and facilitate interaction and transaction among social and economic actors (GBDR, 2016). Over the past two decades, information and communication technologies (ICT) have become more pervasive, more accessible and more relevant in the lives of people around the world.

Over the last decade, Ghana's ICT sector has advanced from being one of the first nations in Africa to initiate extensive liberalization in simple telecommunications services in 1992. Ghana made a significant move forward in implementing the potential of a competitive market to engender development and novelty. The information communication's sector in Ghana consists of Software Operators, VSAT data operators, Internet service providers,

Internet backbone providers, Tele-centres, SAT-3 access, Dedicated transmission networks (Cable, TV, DSL), telephone systems, Mobile Network Operators (MNO'S), Internet service providers, and network infrastructure operators.

The Ministry of Communication (MoC), in conjunction with its auxiliary agencies (the National Information Technology Agency and the National Communications Authority), regulate activities within the sector. A 2014 Government of Ghana report showed that the country remains a very safe and secure investment destination for ICT infrastructure and services.

2.3.5 Hospitality and tourism industries

The industry has grown from an insignificant position in the 1960's to become a major player in the economy. From the 1960's the country had one hotel that accommodated guests who were in the country to celebrate its independence. This has grown to where there are significant numbers of both local and international hotels operating in the country.

This development has been highly influenced by the Hospitality and Tourism Development Plan: the landmark event being the maiden Panafest that took place in 1995. The present era has also seen the emergence of eco-based and heritage tourism in addition to an increasing hotel accommodation of a 45,500 bed capacity. The sector is today celebrated as one of the country's strategic economic arms, contributing to 5.8 and 5.9% to the services sector contribution to the country's GDP in both 2014 and 2015 respectively (GSS).

The hospitality and tourism industry is showing increasing growth generally, which reflects in the total growth in tourist arrivals from 993,600 in 2013 to 1,093,000 in 2014 employing 91,000 and 101,000 people directly in 2013 and 2014 respectively.

2.4 Contributions of the Service Industry to the Ghanaian Economy

The service sector contributes immensely to the growth of the economy. For instance, in 2013 the sector experienced a growth rate of 10.0%. Although it experienced a decline in this rate in 2014 with 5.6%, it still remains the largest sector contributing to 49.6% of GDP in the country. The second largest sector, which is the industrial sector, however decreased slower with 0.8% in 2014 and 6.6% in 2013. In addition, the agricultural sector experienced a decline from 5.7% in 2013 to 4.6% in 2014 (Table 2.1). Hence, the growth rates of all the three sectors declined between the years of 2013 and 2014. The GSS (2016) indicated that the service sector continues to influence the country with a GDP growth rate of 56.9% in 2016, followed by the industrial sector with 24.2%, and then the agricultural sector with 28.9% GDP

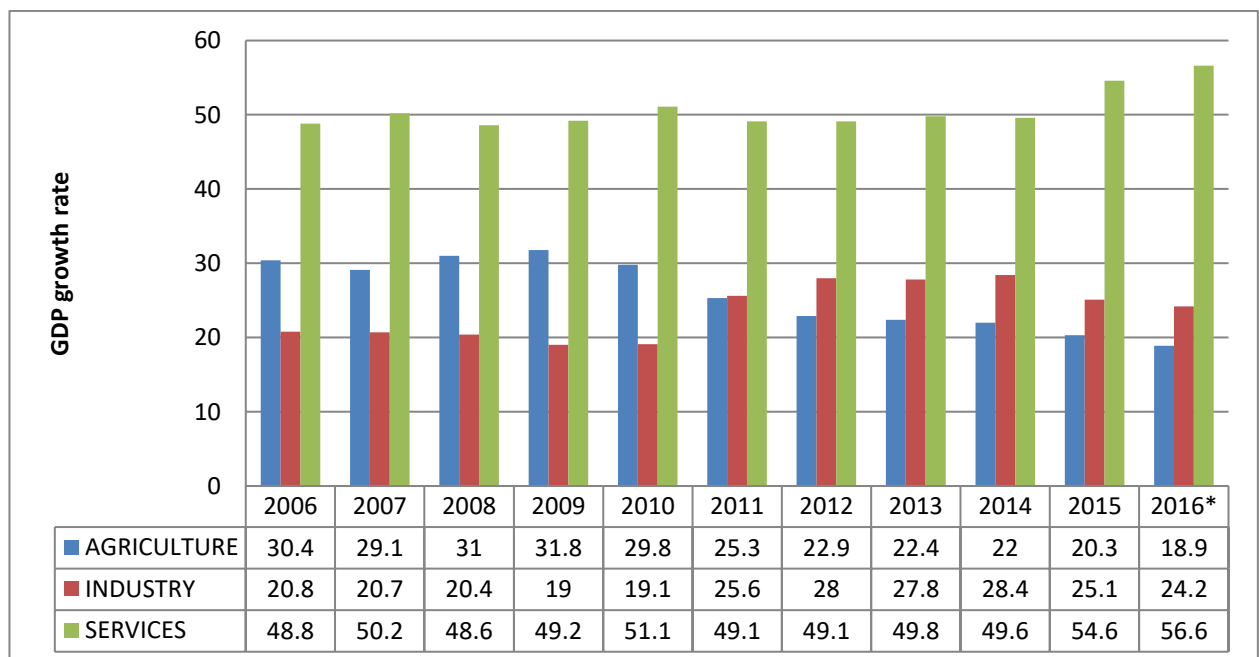


Figure 2.1: Sectoral contribution to national output, 2006-2016 (% at GDP; Basic price)

Source: SGER, 2014; GSS, 2016 (provisional)

From Figure 2.1, the sector stands as the largest sector in the economy in 2016. The growth in the service sector has improved in several areas including: health and social work (1.4%); administrative and support service activities (4.0%); hotels and restaurants (5.9%); trade; repair of vehicles social, household goods (6.4%); education (4.0%); transport and storage (13.3%); public administration and defence (5.4%); community, personal and social services activities (3.7%); and real estate, public administration and support services activities (4.0%). This is underscored in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Sub-sectorial distribution of GDP (%)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016*
Trade; Repair of vehicles, household goods	6.4	6.1	6.0	5.9	6.2	5.9	5.6	5.8	5.6	6.1	6.4
Hotels and restaurants	5.0	5.6	6.0	6.2	6.0	5.4	4.8	5.8	5.6	5.8	5.9
Transport and storage	13.2	13.1	11.4	10.5	10.6	10.7	11.0	11.2	12.3	13.0	13.3
Information and communication	2.7	2.4	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.8	2.2	1.7	2.3	2.7	3.3
Financial and insurance activities	2.7	3.4	3.8	4.3	5.2	4.4	4.7	6.5	8.4	8.9	9.4
Real estate, professional, administrative and support services activities	5.1	4.7	4.1	4.1	4.5	4.6	4.8	3.9	3.6	3.9	4.0
Public administration and defence; social security	4.8	5.9	6.3	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.8	5.9	5.4	5.3	5.4
Education	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.3	3.6	3.6	3.7	4.0
Health and social work	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.4
Community personal and social services activities	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.7	4.0	3.9	3.7	4.3	4.1	3.8	3.7
Trade; Repair of vehicles, household goods	6.4	6.1	6.0	5.9	6.2	5.9	5.6	5.8	5.6	6.1	6.4
Hotels and restaurants	5.0	5.6	6.0	6.2	6.0	5.4	4.8	5.8	5.6	5.8	5.9
Transport and storage	13.2	13.1	11.4	10.5	10.6	10.7	11.0	11.2	12.3	13.0	13.3
Information and communication	2.7	2.4	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.8	2.2	1.7	2.3	2.7	3.3
Financial and insurance activities	2.7	3.4	3.8	4.3	5.2	4.4	4.7	6.5	8.4	8.9	9.4
Real estate, professional, administrative and support services activities	5.1	4.7	4.1	4.1	4.5	4.6	4.8	3.9	3.6	3.9	4.0
Public administration and defence; social security	4.8	5.9	6.3	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.8	5.9	5.4	5.3	5.4
Education	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.3	3.6	3.6	3.7	4.0
Health and social work	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.4
Community personal and social services activities	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.7	4.0	3.9	3.7	4.3	4.1	3.8	3.7

Source: GSS, 2016

Undoubtedly, the Ghanaian service sector has contributed tremendously to the growth of the Ghanaian economy over the years. The sector has experienced major development and has increasingly expanded. Aside from the direct consumption of services by the increasing population, the sector also provides auxiliary outputs to the manufacturing firms that increasingly depend on external sourcing of such basic inputs as communication, transportation, financial services, etc. (WTO, 1997).

For these striking performances to be sustained, Ghanaian service firms would have to continuously strive to maintain the positive relationships consumers form with their brands and, as well, avoid ending up in a negative relationship with their customers. For this reason, academics and practitioners have focused on the positive aspects of branding and how firms can attain loyalty (Srivastava et al., 2001). Nonetheless, the negative aspects of branding has received less attention (Lee et al., 2009a), especially in Ghana where there seemed to be no study on brand avoidance at the time of this study. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to determine the drivers of brand avoidance as well as to examine the mediating role of brand hate on the relationship between brand avoidance and its drivers.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the context of the study. It presented a brief overview of the global service industry, an overview of the Ghanaian service industry, the structure of the service industry in Ghana and its contribution to the Ghanaian economy.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Chapter Overview

In view of the objectives and theoretical parameters outlined in the previous chapter of this study, the purpose of this chapter is to review the relevant literature pertaining to brand avoidance. The concept of anti-consumption and the attachment theory (brand attachment) are employed to inform this study's understanding of brand avoidance. The literature on the concept of brand, negative brand equity as well as a comparison between product and service branding is discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter discusses literature on brand hate as well as a thorough review of the limited brand avoidance literature, its typologies and their corresponding drivers.

3.2 Theoretical Background

This study is informed by the concept of anti-consumption since it is the overarching construct from which brand avoidance emerges. In addition, the attachment theory informs this study because it entails vital consumer behavior aspects, i.e. attachment styles that may envisage anti-brand behaviour (Thompson et al., 2012).

3.2.1 Concept of anti-consumption

Traditionally, exchange has been believed to be the core of marketing (Kotler, 1972; Bagozzi, 1978). Therefore, marketers have been fixated on enabling valuable exchanges with clients by discovering customers' needs, wants and preferences (Ozanne & Ballantine 2010). However, in recent times, there has been the appearance of some consumer actions that pursue researchers to contest the essential beliefs of marketing and consumption

(Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). Therefore, it is worth noting and admissible that, those who decide to oppose consumption, avoiding particular products, brands or some institutions are also declaring a form of choice (Zavestoski, 2002) worthy of study.

Anti-consumption has particularly been interpreted as the optional or deliberate abstinence from consumption and arises either as a result of reducing overall consumption or rejecting specific products or brands (Iyer & Muncy 2009). More generally, it captures every aspect that is against consumption (Lee, Tsai & Lanting, 2011). Similarly, according to Lee, Fernandez and Hyman (2009c), the phrase “anti-consumption” means against consumption and the central theme here is a focus on the personal reasons behind consumers opposing consumption, as compared to the focus on social activities and collective demonstrations. Further, anti-consumption is denoted as consumer resistance to the consumption culture, the marketplace, as well as the stance on mass production (Penelaza & Price, 1993). Similarly, Zavestoski (2002) discusses it as a resistance to and distaste of consumption in general.

According to Iyer and Muncy (2009), scholars have examined anti-consumption from diverse perspectives. For example, Albrecht, Campbell, Heinrich and Lammel (2013), Farah and Newman (2010) and Mrad, Sheng and Hart (2013), studied it from the perspective of “boycotts”. Hofmann and Hutter (2012), as well as Carrigan and Attalla (2001), examined the issue from the aspect of ethical consumption. Kim et al. (2013), Lee et al. (2009a, b) and Strandvik, Rindell and Wilen (2013) studied anti-consumption in terms of brand avoidance. Lee et al. (2011) similarly examined consumer resistance. Voluntary simplification was examined by Cherrier (2009). Truong, Romaniuk and Nenycz-Thiel (2011), Nenycz-thiel and Romaniuk (2011), and Sandikci and Ekici (2009) looked at anti-consumption from the perspective of brand rejection.

According to Hogg (1998), there exists two key motives for consumption anti-constellations that results in failure to consume some products or services. One of them is directed at the products or brands consumers are not able to purchase because the product or service is not affordable, accessible or available, resulting in a *non-choice* behaviour. Thus, consumers do not have an option here. The other motive results in an *anti-choice* behaviour. Here, the decision rests entirely with the consumer, where he/she actively decides to abandon, avoid or dislikes (aversion) the brand (Hogg, 1998). See figure 3.1 below.

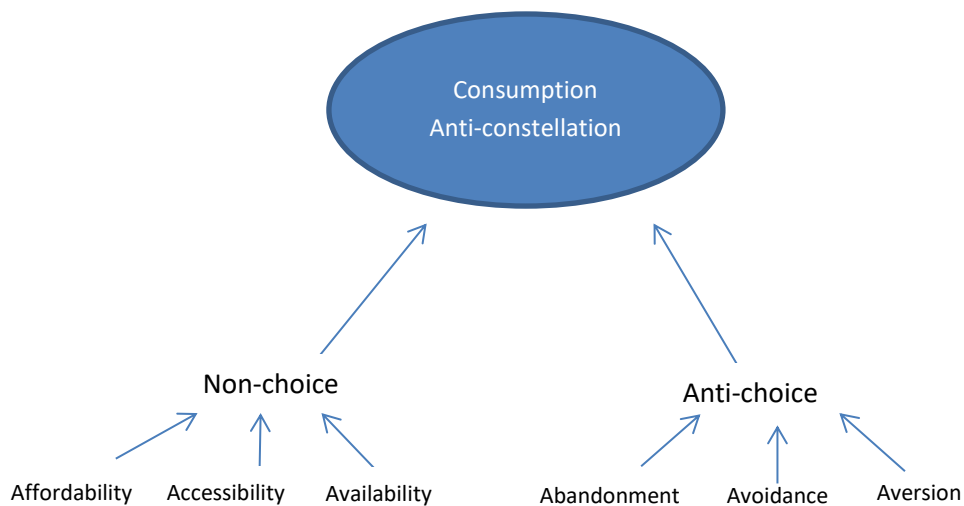


Figure 3.1: Consumption Anti-constellations (Hogg, 1998).

The key difference between the two motives of consumption anti-constellations is that the *non-choice* behaviour is towards products and brands consumers are not able to purchase as a result of, for example, lack of financial accessibility or availability of the product or service in the marketplace; whereas the *anti-choice* concerns the perspective of a consumer who perceives the product or brand as contradictory with individual choices and decides actively not to patronise the product or brand (Hogg & Banister, 2001).

Nonetheless, the motives driving anti-consumption should not be mistaken as the exact opposite of the motives driving consumption of some products or brands. For instance, in a case where some consumers do not choose to purchase environmentally-friendly products, an assumption that their reason for anti-consumption is as a result of their intention to harm the environment (which is the direct opposite of the motivation for consumption in this case) would be deemed far-fetched or unreasonable (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013).

Hogg (1998) argues, in line with Lee et al. (2009c), that brand managers need to recognise the factors that influence anti-choices as part of consumer behaviour; organisations should strive to avoid ending up in anti-choice anti-consumption.

- **Anti-Consumption Dimensions**

Current studies display that anti-consumption behaviours are much more complicated than predicted (Kozinets, Handelman & Lee, 2010). Established by Craig-Lees (2006), the authors claimed that, while anti-consumption lifestyles are usually centred on the decline of general consumption, it is likely to concentrate on the decrease in consumption of certain products and brands. Likewise, Iyer and Muncy (2009) argue that there exists several distinct attitudes to anti-consumption and that the motivations for anti-consumption differ across environmental, political and individual concerns.

According to Cherrier (2009), there is a difference between those who reject consumption for universal purposes (such as environmental concerns) and those who reject consumption for personal reasons; for example, a desire to live a simpler life through the reduction of consumption (Cherrier, 2009). Further, studies (Chatzidaki & Lee, 2013; Richetin, Perugini, Corner & Adjali, 2012) have shown that individuals who act unfavourably towards

consumption for universal purposes do not automatically act unfavourably towards consumption as individuals and conversely. According to Iyer and Muncy (2009), four distinctive groups (based on the purpose and object) of anti-consumption have arisen over the last few years, namely global-impact consumers, simplifiers, market activist and anti-loyal consumers.

Global impact consumers are concerned with decreasing consumption in general for the benefit of humanity. Hence, the object of anti-consumption here is universal consumption and the purpose of anti-consumption is societal (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). The next set of anti-consumers is appropriately referred to as “simplifiers”. This group of anti-consumers desires to abandon the rapid, excessive-materialistic lifestyle and adopt a less-materialistic and a simple way of life. Thus, the object of anti-consumption here is universal consumption and the purpose is personal (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). The third group is known as “market activists”, and are consumers who make efforts to utilize “money power” to influence public affairs. Market activists may shun the use of a brand or product because they may perceive that that particular brand or product harms the environment in some way or encourages a negative social behaviour. Accordingly, the object of anti-consumption is specific and the purpose of anti-consumption is societal (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). The last group of anti-consumers are the “anti-loyalists”. These consumers display the reverse of brand loyalty: anti-loyalty reflects an individual decision not to consume a product or brand they think is either of low quality or as a result of a past unfavourable encounter with the product or brand. Thus, the object of anti-consumption is specific and the purpose is individual (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). See Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Four types of anti-consumers

Object of anti-consumption		Purpose of anti-consumption	
		Societal concerns	Personal concerns
	General (all consumption)	Global impact consumers	Simplifiers
	Specific(Individual brands)	Market activist	Anti-loyalists

Source: Iyer and Muncy (2009).

This thesis focuses on the group of anti-consumers who are against specific brands for their personal reasons i.e. anti-loyalist. As brand avoidance is concerned with brand-level rejection: it is a subset of the anti-consumption phenomenon (Lee et al., 2009a; Kim et al., 2013). Nonetheless, as the subject of brand avoidance is only just beginning to be considered by academics, the literature on the subject is pretty rare and deprived of inclusivity (Truong et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2009a, b).

3.2.2 Attachment theory and brand attachment

Attachment theory was initiated by Bowlby (1980) in the field of psychology. According to him, emotional attachment is an unwavering emotional connection that exists between an individual and an entity and this relationship satisfies a fundamental requirement for the human being's survival. Bowlby further attributed this to the period of reliance of an infant on its mother to the requirement of a relationship and affection in adolescence. By this theory, one's encounter with an entity is envisaged by the extent to which one is emotionally connected to that entity and, as such, one who is extremely sympathetic with another individual is inclined to protect, be more devoted to, work more closely with, and give up a lot for that individual. However, they are displeased and hurt when that individual disappoints or lets them down (Bowlby, 1982). According to Feeney and Noller (1996), studies in the field of psychology mostly centre on partners and caregivers, Nonetheless, scholars in the marketing field have revealed that, not only do individuals get attached to

their caregivers, consumers also get attached to places of residence (Hill & Stamey, 1990), gifts (Mick & DeMoss, 1990), collectibles (Slater, 2001), brands (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), and other types of special or favorite objects (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Consequently, as this study discusses brands and why consumers avoid them, it is important we discuss “brand attachment”.

Brand attachment is interpreted by Park, McInnis and Priester (2006) as the strength of the emotional and cognitive connection that links the self to the brand. This interpretation of brand attachment depicts two vital components: the link between the self and the brand; and the cognitive and emotional connection, the strength of which evokes eagerness to apportion one’s processing resources toward the brand. According to Thomson, MacInnis and Park (2005), brand-self connectedness reflects the extent to which the brand is linked to the self, considering the fact that it is crucial in enabling symbolic, functional and or experiential objectives. Similarly, just as newborns form attachments to their caregivers depending on how they react to their needs e.g., warmth, food, comfort, etc.), consumers form attachments to brands that they can rely on to satisfy their needs. While the needs of infants are less complicated as compared to that of the adults, they both follow a similar fundamental process of forming attachments. As seen in Sperling and Berman (1994), bonds formed between the self and the brand are both emotional and cognitive. Individual encounters and recalls of the brand arouse substantial reasoning schemes, which links personalized components of the self to the brand. Further research by Mikulincer and Shaver (2005) stated that brand attachments intrinsically possess strong self-implications and self-relevance and have strong self-implications, which make the links that connect the brand to the self likewise emotional. Summarily, Park et al. (2006) posit that brand attachment is more than an attitudinal construct and is responsible for higher-order consumer behavior

associated with devotion to a relationship. Thus, brand attachment is a characteristic of the relationship between a consumer and a brand leading to an instinctive recall of thoughts. The process of instituting relationships between individuals is a complicated one (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Drawing from the attachment theory, this complication is as a result of the individual's attachment style.

- **Attachment styles and consumption**

Bowlby (1982) describes attachment styles as the systematic patterns of one's feelings, anticipations, behaviors and memories of past encounters (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005). According to Mende and Bolton (2011), attachment styles do not apply to only person-to-person relationships, but they also affect the relationship between companies. Thus, consumers' attachment styles depict the kind of relationship they form with firms. Drawing from studies in psychology, consumer attachment styles are classified into two distinct dimensions: attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance (Mende & Bolton, 2011).

The anxiety dimension (self-view) examines the extent to which the self is distinguished as being deserving of love or not (or one's lovability). Anxious individuals are continually engrossed with their self-esteem and self-worth concerns, and are noted for channelling undue attention towards attachment figures. In order to deal with their hypersensitivity to relationship threats, anxious individuals seek interdependence and continuous assurance. (Thompson, Whelan & Johnson, 2012). The avoidance dimension of attachment concerns how the individual perceive others (e.g., untrustworthy). They are characterized by a high degree of self-reliance and desire for autonomy (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). Further, "the extent to which a customer distrusts the firm's goodwill, characterised by an excessive need for self-reliance, fears depending on the firm, and strives for emotional and cognitive distance from the firm" (Mende, Bitner & Bolten, 2013, p. 127). Thomson and Johnson

(2006) revealed that consumers' pattern of satisfaction, devotion, commitment and involvement when they are in consumption relationships with service providers and brands is envisaged by their attachment styles. Further, Swaminathan, Stilley, and Ahluwalia (2009) show that attachment styles predict brand choice based on a preference for certain brand personality types. Also, Mende, Bolton, and Bitner (2009) discovered that word-of-mouth and repeat purchase intentions are envisaged by consumers' attachment style. In the same vein, Johnson et al. (2012) demonstrated that attachment styles predicts a couple of consumers' negative behaviours. Upon laying the foundations for the study, the next section will discuss empirically.

3.3 Empirical Literature Review

In many scholarly regulations the literature review is an acclaimed category (Schryen, Wagner & Benlian, 2015). Conventionally, this category is employed by scholars when they begin a study (Rowe, 2014; Okoli & Schabram 2010), since they “cannot perform significant research without first understanding the literature in the field” (Boote & Beile, 2005, p. 3). The process of reviewing literature not only aids scholars in improving prevailing knowledge (Schryen et al., 2015), it also prevents them from reproducing that which has already been investigated (Zorn & Campbell, 2006). This study's literature review consists of a review of articles (on branding, brand avoidance and brand hate) that were derived from databases such as Google Scholar, Esmerald, EBSCO host Business Source Premier, ResearchGate and Science Direct, Taylor and Francis.

3.3.1 Brand

The significance of a brand as an essential advantage of any commerce is well acknowledged by marketing practitioners and academics (Brodie, Glynn & Little, 2006). This is intensely emphasized each year in Business Week when the most recognized brands in the world are ranked (Brodie et al., 2006). The report reliably displays the worth of the brand as an essential constituent of organizations' financial advantages, especially for service businesses (Brodie et al., 2006). Moreover, inside the Service-Dominant (S-D) logic, the brand is seen as an essential "off-balance sheet" advantage (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Similarly, many researchers and experts acknowledge nowadays that building robust brands is one of the crucial subjects for attaining a competitive advantage and guaranteeing the organization's survival (Zablah et al., 2010). Further, according to Tsiotsou and Ratten (2006), brands also serve as a competitive approach that distinguishes and positions services, goods and firms to serve as a source of financial worth for both the brand owner and the customer.

Brand is given diverse elucidations within the branding literature (Aaker, 1996). Illustratively, it is defined by Lovelock and Wright (1999) as a designation, slogan, blueprint, an emblem, or specific amalgamations of these that classifies an organisation's services and distinguishes it from its competitors. Similarly, a typical description conceptualized by the American Marketing Association (AMA) in 2007, reveal that a brand is "a name, term, sign, symbol or any other feature that identifies a company's product or service as distinct from those of other sellers".

However, Gronroos (2007) points out that the AMA's interpretation is suitable for tangible goods and does not cover service products for two motives: one, the interpretation does not include the justification that services are procedures (Andreassen, 2008; Lovelock & Wright, 1999); and two, in relation to Kay (2006), it omits the function of customers as co-producers of services. Therefore, to improve accuracy, Gronroos (2000) proposes a definition that appears to work well for services as well as tangible products. The authors assert that, "the brand is created continuously developing brand relationships where the customer forms a differentiating image of a physical product, a service or a solution including goods, services, information and other events based on all kinds of brand contacts the customer is exposed to". Moreover, Gronroos (2000) purports that, if there is anyone who moulds a brand, it is none other than the customer. Therefore, drawing on Brodie (2009), the essence of this association-based interpretation is the role the customer plays in the development of a service brand, which is rooted in a collective approach to branding. The authors further argue that the heart of this collective standpoint is that it permits insights from the client, worker and the organisation about the service brand.

Essentially, the duty of brands is to differentiate between service and product from others in fulfilling a given customer demand (Edvardson, Enquist & Hay, 2006). Thus, brands transmit the principles of a firm to customers so as to craft a well-defined and positive image (Edvardson et al., 2006). Moreover, in relation to Keller (2008) firms that adopt brands tend to have a competitive edge over other firms and make it almost impossible for them to enter into the same market. Subsequently, brands are dire for a firms' prosperity (Wood, 2000).

Moving on, Lee (2007) argues that there exists a transition between the unfavourable brand associations that are inside any market and that of the firm's favourable brand building efforts; both aspects add to the co-created interpretation of a brand. The authors added that, if the unfavourable brand associations linked to a brand increases in quantity and effect and a considerable number of consumers tend to circumvent the brand, the brand equity becomes negative and could become a liability for the firm. Consequently, the next section will discuss brand equity and negative brand equity.

- **Brand equity**

Over the last period, brand equity has turned out to be increasingly substantial as the basis to comprehending the aims, tools and the net impact of marketing (Reynolds & Phillips, 2005). If robust brands are likely to increase a firms' clientele base, most importantly attract loyal customers and increase profit, then brands are significant resources for an organization and hence it is crucial for marketing practitioners to weigh the equity that has been constructed by their brands (Kimpakorn & Trouquer, 2010). Additionally, the idea of brand equity has a marketing and monetary side (Kimpakorn & Trouquer, 2010). Similarly, brand equity is classified in two ways by Chaudhuri (1995): customer-based and financial aspects. From a fiscal approach, it is conceivable to evaluate the monetary worth of the brand as this may be of benefit to brand owners in case of mergers or acquisitions (Kimpakorn & Toucquer, 2010).

Brand equity has several interpretations in literature. From a financial perspective, Simom and Sullivan (1993) describe it with respect to the difference in cash flow between an instance where the brand name is included in the product and when it is not included.

Similarly, Bailey and Ball (2006), explained brand equity from a financial approach as the financial worth created by brands and may be shown as the profit generated by a brand (Biel, 1992). However, this approach to brand equity is unable to aid brand managers comprehend the procedures involved in the formation of brand equity (Kimpakorn & Trouquer, 2010).

From a marketing standpoint, Aaker (1991) outlines brand equity as a combination of liabilities and assets connected to a brand and a sign resulting in the enhancement and deduction of the value offered by a service or product to the firm and its clients. Further, Aaker (1996) classifies these assets into five main groups; perceived quality, brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association, and other proprietary assets. Similarly, Tsiotsou and Ratten (2010) links the extra worth a brand offers a service or product to brand equity as an inclusion of the brand's attributes i.e. name, association, reputation and symbols. Further, brand equity is observed as a combination of four main assets, namely; brand associations, perceived quality, brand awareness and brand loyalty (Salzer-Morling & Strannegard, 2004).

What is more, Keller (1993) interprets brand equity from a customer-based perspective as the effect of brand knowledge on the reaction to a marketing activity. In relation to this stance, Hoeffler and Keller (2003) posit that a brand is weighed to have positive brand equity to the point that, when the brand is recognised by the customer, he/she responds more favourably than when the brand is not recognized. This interpretation of brand equity from the customer's standpoint is termed by Keller (1993), as "Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE)". According to Keller (1993), by examining brand equity from the perspective of CBBE, a comprehension of the customer's reaction to some marketing programs may lead

to an enhancement of the marketing programs of a company. This strategic-based approach equips managers with different strategies as well as an improved foundation for making choices (Keller, 1993).

Davis (2000) and Ambler (2003) contend that brand equity is a significant marketing advantage and, according to some authors (Capron & Hulland, 1999), it builds a solid and distinct connection that distinguishes the bonds amid shareholders and the firm as a whole, and also develops a long-lasting purchasing behaviour. According to Yoo, Donthu and Lee (2000), appreciating brand equity and its associations, and then capitalising on its formation, leads to increased profits as well as making it difficult for other firms to access the market. At the same time, Berry (2000) proposes that brand equity may be favourable. Therefore, in examining the occasions where the inclusion of a brand name to a product truly diminishes the value of, or preference for the product, this concept of brand avoidance adds to the concept of negative brand equity (Lee, 2007).

- **Negative brand equity**

In relation to the resource-based view of a firm, as compounded by Srivastava, Fahey, and Christensen (2001), the authors expounded various forms in which a brand, linked to its favourable brand equity, is capable of improving shareholder value (Lee, 2007).

Conversely, Lee (2007) interpreted a market-based liability as anything that is seen as a demerit for the firm. Drawing on Barney's (1991) understanding of what a firm's asset is, the authors explained it as that unique asset (that stands out) from the lot that "improves a firm's efficiency and effectiveness". Therefore, according to Lee (2007), it will make a lot of sense if all or at least most brands are expected, by their corresponding companies, to grow into market-based assets. Nonetheless, inside the marketing and consumption system, some occurrences may lead to a brand promise becoming negatively re-created, hence resulting in brand avoidance attitudes or behaviors (Lee, 2007). Therefore, the authors argue that when many consumers tend to reject a brand, it is likely to result in a market-based liability.

Explanatorily, in relation to Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993), when a brand faces from continual ages of rejection, it could form negative brand equity as consumers dependably respond negatively to the brand. Hence, the brand hinders, instead of improving, the company's value creation assets, diminishes cash flow in some situations or, at a minimum, restricts the firm's complete possibility of generating worth (Lee, 2007).

Upon discussing the concept of brands and how they lead to the formation of both favourable and unfavourable equity, the next section will discuss how the branding of services differs from that of products.

3.3.2 Service branding vs. product branding

Fundamentally, according to the AMA (2006), brands are bundles of meaning employed in categorizing and distinguishing the products of one firm from the products of another. As it is a natural thing to form heuristics as well as emotionally classify information, it is unavoidable that all services, products, and firms go through branding (Lee, 2007). Essentially, branding is an approach that intends to distinguish as well as position a firm's offering from a competitor's offering, to yield more worth for the client and the company (Aaker, 1996).

Several authors (Berry, 2000; Brodie, 2009, 2012) have emphasised the significance of branding and concur that branding is a vital tool for service firms and should therefore be recognized as "a corner stone of services marketing in the 21st century". Similarly, numerous conceptual models (Aaker, 1991; Berry, 2000; de Chernatony & Dall'Olmoriley, 1998) have been suggested to describe how consumers assess, as well as react towards, brands. Drawing from Grace and O'Cass (2005), Berry (2000) and Brodie (2009), the variation between services and goods tend to doubt the significance of current models used in branding services.

One of the vital distinctions between the branding of a service and that of a product has to do with the fact that, inside the service industry, the firm's designation becomes the brand's

designation, as the consumer often sees the entire company as the supplier of the service experience (Berry, 2000). Hence, in relation to Alexandris, Douka, Papadopoulos and Kaltsaou (2008), the robustness of a service brand is mainly regulated by the characteristics of the company; for example, the nature of the service offered by a firm's staff as well as the overall relationship amid the company and the clients. Nonetheless, de Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2003) posits that the relations between the client and the workers may bring about inconsistent encounters with a service brand that may cause serious impediments for service marketers.

Service branding, according to de Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2001), is being influenced by the distinctive features of services (i.e. perishability, heterogeneity of quality, inseparability of consumption and production), particularly with reference to the consumer. The idea is that, since the provision and consumption often occur simultaneously, it is difficult to assess the service prior to the delivery of the service (Kandampully, 2007; De Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2001). Therefore by branding services, there is an enhanced discernment of the invisible service by the client before he or she makes a purchase (Berry, 2000; De Chernatony & McDonald, 1998). Consequently, branding in services can be said to be more crucial than for physical products ((McDonald, De Chernatony & Harris, 2001). As in the case of services, the firm is regarded as the core brand (Berry, 2000; de Chernatony & McDonald, 1998), thus a service brand can usually be equated with the whole firm, which infers that the service becomes the corporate image (Rindell & Strandvik, 2005), hence the need to view the process of branding comprehensively is heightened (De Chernatony & Cottam, 2006).

Moving on, de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley (1999) in exploring branding ideologies for service goods proposed that the process for building a brand is similar for both services and products. In this regard, the authors considered a brand as the fusion of practical and psychological features that represents an assurance or promise for future customer fulfillment that aids in developing the brand image. The exhibition of specific features of service brands should be stressed at the point of operation (Krystallis & Chrysochou, 2013). Nevertheless, the conclusions reached by De Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley (1999) do not represent the customers' standpoint. Therefore, in relation to Berry (2000), whereas a service brand may be fundamentally regarded as “a blend of what the company says the brand is, what others say, and how the company performs the service”, it is nonetheless customers who create an association of several service-related aspects. Accordingly, there is a necessity for customer-centric information on which the brand dimension is cherished by service consumers (Krystallis & Chrysochou, 2013).

Further, a comparison was conducted between the significant brand dimensions for branded services and products by Grace and O’Cass (2002). It was recommended by the authors that brand dimensions may vary between physical goods and services such that consumers regard some to be distinct to a particular sector and others common to both sectors. For example, with regards to the assessment of branded services, word-of-mouth communication (WOM) and tangible characteristic of the company and staff were revealed as pertinent. Conversely, elements like consumers’ emotions and self-image congruity with respect to the image of the brand were the main focus for tangible goods. What this means is that service brands are not exactly the same as brands for physical goods and, as such, are likely to necessitate the adaptation of marketing techniques to some extent (Krystallis & Chrysochou, 2013).

Moreover, in service branding, apart from the rationale behind customers' expression of brand dimensions, one crucial fact is to appreciate the significance of these dimensions and the degree to which they impact customers' attitude and behavior (Krystallis & Chrysochou, 2013). Although past branding models (Keller, 1993; De Chernatony & Dall' Olmo Riley, 1998) claim to suit both services and products, they are being denounced (Berry, 2000; Grace & O'Cass 2005) with respect to their use in service products. Moreover, most of the initial branding frameworks were not tested empirically; what is more, the majority of them employs an irregular language and discovers diverse brand components (Krystallis & Chrysochou, 2013).

To confront this shortcoming, a service branding model that interprets the link between the performance of the firm and service brand dimensions was suggested by Berry (2000). In constructing the model, he signaled that, in marketing a physical good, the product is regarded as the main brand; hence the external communications and the company's presented brand are the key factors of brand equity. Nonetheless, when the main product of a firm is a service, then the firm is considered as the main brand or "the service brand". Therefore, according to Berry's (2000) service branding model, the experience from the customer's encounter with the service customer's service experience forms a crucial part of the formation of brand equity by creating 'brand meaning'. Berry (2000), further suggests that. Whereas the model also comprises the effects of a company's presented brand and external communications on awareness, brand meaning instead of brand awareness is the main contributory factor to brand equity. Upon discussing the literature on the comparison between product and service branding, the next section places emphasis on the literature on brand avoidance and its drivers.

3.3.3 Brand avoidance

Examining brand avoidance is crucial for marketing practitioners, as the repercussions of this behavior can be noteworthy for a firm's status as well as its success (Knittel et al., 2016). In relation to Huefner and Hunt (1992), avoidance is a tenacious departure minus the psychological anger of grudge holding. They defined grudge holding as "a composite of voice and exit exacerbated by extreme emotional upset" and concluded it was a subset of the avoidance behavior. According to Olivia, Oliver and Macmillan (1999), the notion of brand avoidance is the converse of brand loyalty and, as result, the phrase "brand avoidance" is employed virtually as a substitute for brand switching. Afterwards, Lee et al. (2009a) interpreted the concept of brand avoidance as the intentional circumvention of a brand by consumers. Furthermore, brand avoidance results from the anti-choice brand constellation (brands that are rejected through abandonment, avoidance or aversion) characterised by a conscious decision to reject a brand not in situations when customers are incapable of buying brands because they are too costly or unattainable (Hogg, 1998; Lee et al., 2009a). Backed by Khan and Lee (2014), they argue that the consumers must be able to obtain and afford the brand for this type of rejection to be characterized as brand avoidance.

There are few efforts made to classify brand avoidance in literature; nonetheless, since the scholars who categorize brand avoidance studied the subject from diverse viewpoints, the categorizations are pretty different. While a number of them are based on the stimuli/reasons for brand avoidance as seen in Nenycz-thiel and Romaniuk (2011) as well as in Lee et al. (2009a, b), it is noteworthy to mention that in the Nenycz-thiel and Romaniuk (2011), the reasons were derived for brand rejection, but since both terms are used interchangeably, it therefore applies to brand avoidance (Nenycz-thiel & Romaniuk, 2011). Other classifications evident in Kozinets et al. (2010) and also in Iyer and Muncy (2009) were

based on the motivations behind brand avoidance, i.e. collective /personal motivations. Notably, even though the classification was a subset of the over-arching construct of anti-consumption, it revealed the type of anti-consumption targeting of specific brands; hence, it is applicable to brand avoidance (Kim, Jung Choo & Yon, 2013). Furthermore, some authors (Strandvik et al., 2013), from the standpoint of ethical consumption, studied brand avoidance with regards to its period (persistent or temporary) of existence and how it is manifested (latent or explicit). However, this study did not disclose the motivations. Having defined brand avoidance, the next sub-section will discuss the types of brand avoidance and their corresponding drivers.

3.3.3 Negative brand emotions

Literature approves of the significance of emotions in the purchase behaviour of consumers in making choices; they believe these decisions are grounded on feelings and emotions about certain brands (Sinha et al., 2011). Similarly, researchers approve that emotions play a role amid environmental events/stimuli and behavioural reactions (Romani et al., 2009, 2012; Dalli et al., 2007). Therefore, the emphasis of marketing practitioners moved from the classical four (4) Ps to emphasis on endorsing products that touch consumers' feelings (Sinha et al., 2011). Nonetheless, there exist diverse interpretations of emotion as a result of its complicated nature (Sherer, 2005). Meanwhile, Laros and Steenkamp (2005) suggest a description for negative emotions towards brands; as "consumers' negative emotional reactions aroused by the evaluation of brand-related stimuli". They contend that unfavourable emotions play an important role in the consumer-brand relationship. When negative opinions about brands become so powerful that they are able to arouse negative emotions directed at brands, brand avoidance may occur (Nenycz-thiel & Romaniuk, 2011; Romani et al., 2009, 2012; Thompson et al., 2006).

- **Brand hate**

Studies regarding favourable feelings concerning brands are rife (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Laros & Steenkamp, 2005). Lately, researchers have emphasised brand love, which, possibly, is the strongest favourable feeling consumers may have for a brand (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). However, the literature on negative emotions toward brands is rare (Fournier & Alvarez, 2013; Romani et al., 2012; Sarkar & Sreejesh, 2014).

Meanwhile, hate was mentioned next to love as the next most crucial emotion, according to Fehr and Russell (1984). Similarly, hate was in third place out of 213 emotions in a study by Shaver et al. (1987). Although brand hate is conceivably the strongest intense and resulting negative emotion that consumers might sense toward brands, it has mainly been abandoned as an object of research (Zorantonello et al., 2016).

Initially, hate was conceptualised in Grégoire et al.'s (2009) study as a craving for vengeance and a longing for avoidance. Vengeance is interpreted as customers urge to penalize and cause damage to companies for the harm done whereas avoidance is explained as customers' desire to pull out from any connections with the company (Zorantonello et al., 2016). Further, brand hate can basically be interpreted as a strong negative emotional affect towards the brand (Bryson et al., 2010). A key consequence of this phenomenon is the decisive and conscious intention to avoid or reject a brand, or even behave in ways that prove this desertion, i.e. blogging, as harbouring unfavourable emotions, complaining publicly, shunning, or even damaging assets belonging to the firm (Bryson et al., 2013). Furthermore, Johnson et al. (2011) offered a conceptualization of brand hate as consumers' intense obstruction to the brand largely signified by the concept of vengeance, which can result from experienced critical incidents (product- or service-related). What is more, Alba

and Lutz (2013) explain “brand hatred” as “true brand disgust” and that it is used to define a condition where the consumer is “held hostage” by the firm, for instance, because of high switching costs, a local domination or some other displays of exit barriers. The next conceptualization of brand hate results from the research by Romani et al. (2012). The authors interpret hate as an emotion descriptor in their concept of negative emotions toward brands and treat it as an intense form of distaste for the brand. Bryson et al. (2013) explain brand hate in general terms as “an intense negative emotional affect toward the brand” (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Further, hate is mainly a combination of direct and, occasionally, in-direct emotions. Their research concentrates on diverse emotions eliciting inactive or active brand hate.

According to the promise mechanism model (Grönroos, 2006), a brand sets a level of expectation through its brand image and attributes. When the expectation matches the promise, it increases consumers’ patronage. In contrast, if the expectation is not fulfilled by the promise, consumers may experience disappointment, which could later turn into hate. Risk and uncertainty may also cause brand hate. The uncertainty and difficulty in the selection and choice actuate the negative actions towards brands. When the negative feeling reaches an intolerable level, brand hate is witnessed (Anderson, 2003). In addition, personal factors (e.g., representatives of a brand), and political and social marketing issues are two other possible causes of brand hate stated in the extant brand literature (Klein et al., 1998; Sandikci & Ekici, 2009).

3.3.4 Types of brand avoidance

The findings from Lee et al.’s (2009a) study revealed three types of brand avoidance, namely: experiential avoidance, which was shown to be driven by unmet expectations;

identity avoidance, which was driven by symbolic incongruence; and moral avoidance driven by ideological incompatibility. A fourth typology, deficit-value avoidance driven by unacceptable trade-offs, was introduced by Lee et al. (2009b). Later, Knittel et al. (2016) revealed a fifth typology termed as “advertising avoidance”: this typology was shown to be driven by failed communications.

- **Experiential avoidance**

Experiential avoidance occurs in instances where the aftermath of the performance of a product or service is beneath the initial anticipations; thus, the major subject in experiential avoidance is ‘*unmet expectations*’ (Lee et al., 2009a).

Typically, when a client’s anticipation of a service or product matches their encounter with the service or goods, they are satisfied. Conversely, when the consumer experiences exceed or is below the consumer’s initial expectations, disconfirmation is said to have occurred (Halstead, 1989; Oliver, 1980). Similarly, customer satisfaction is said to consist of three phases, namely: “pre-sales” phase where the customer forms expectations regarding the service, product, type of delivery, benefits, availability and price; the “time of sale” period where the customer has an encounter with the type of service, quality, delivery and redress of the purchase; and the “post-sale” phase, when the customer expects some form of guidance, refund, repair or the use of the complaints procedure (Naumann & Jackson 1999).

In relation to Lee et al. (2009a), dissatisfaction may result in brand avoidance. Supported by Kim et al. (2013), the incidence of unmet expectations is seen as an effective tool in eliciting behavioural intention of brand avoidance. Additionally, literature (Lee et al., 2012;

Nenycz-thiel & Romaniuk, 2011) asserts that negative previous experiences are the most crucial in anti-consumption behaviour.

In assessing consumer dissatisfaction, a consumer's decision to exit has a lot to do with the factors causing the failure of a product or service in meeting the satisfaction of the customer (Bryson et al., 2013). For instance, an anti-consumer may circumvent a company's brand because of its substandard environmental reputation (Lee & Ahn, 2016). "Poor performance" of the product, "hassle" (additional efforts) to get or replace a product and "store appearance", according to Lee et al. (2009a), are the sub-themes under unmet expectation informing experiential avoidance.

Poor performance

A brand or product's performance is linked to its functional value; for instance how the service or product meets the functional desires of the customer (Delasus & Descotes, 2012). Further, Doyle (2002) argue that functional value plays a crucial role in making purchasing decisions that are mainly rational e.g. industrial purchasing and in relation to health and food products when the functional quality of the product displays trustworthiness (Melin, 1999).

According to Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991), the primary instigator of consumer choice is the value of the product. Therefore, defective products (and services) lead to emotional states of lost control and misused time (Thompson, 1997). Aside from adding needless impediments and distress to the lives of the consumers, defective products make it problematic for consumers to satisfy their essential necessities of living a stable existence (Thompson, 1997). Further, according to Cho and Song (2012), most of the causes of

dissatisfaction in the service industry are linked to the quality of the service performance by the service provider.

Store environment

Store environment denotes the tangible settings of a firm, which comprises of elements such as music, lighting, design, signs and people (Lin & Chiang, 2010). There exists a common agreement that the service atmosphere has a firm impact on consumer behaviour throughout diverse studies (Nyer, 1998; Roy & Tai, 2003). Similarly, in relation to Ballantyne and Nilson (2017), the visual setting of a firm has an influence on how people react and act. This is because, in relation to Lemoine (2005), store atmosphere is measured by brands as a “strategic variable”. These particular purchasing atmospheres are targeted at providing a distinctive customer experience and have one key aim: to impact the shopper’s behavior. Hence, as stated by Turley and Milliman (2000), these physical elements may be understood as impetuses resulting in some cognitive effect which then results in some behavioral response (Turley & Milliman 2000).

What is more, in terms of brand image, some scholars contend that the tangible atmosphere and service setting plays a crucial role in building the image of the brand, creates emotional and psychological assessments resulting in behavioral reactions (Bitner, 1992); and, in relation to Hyllegard, Ogle and Dunbar (2006), the physical atmosphere of a firm communicates the image of the brand and its identity. For instance, shopping for foodstuffs in a filthy, sub-standard badly kept store is seen as displeasing, leading to the avoidance of the store (Knittel et al., 2016). Additionally, it is proposed that the atmosphere of a retail outlet can impact consumers’ approach-avoidance behaviour (Turley & Milliman, 2000). In

the same vein, delight and excitement are favourably linked to approach-avoidance behaviour both in an appealing and unappealing store environment (Tai & Fung, 1997).

Hassle

The hassle involved in dealing with complaints or product failures by customers may additionally lead to the dissatisfaction of customers and consequently result in customers avoiding that store or brand (Lee, 2007). Even though classical ideas propose that the inclusion of warranties or service recovery may compensate for poor performance, the extra effort made when a service or product fails to satisfy the consumer, experiential avoidance of a brand is even worsened (Lee et al., 2009a). According to Firnstahl (1989), when a consumer is hassled in the replacement or acquisition of a product, just a refund of the unsatisfactory product may not be enough to redeem satisfaction. Further, as discovered by Keaveney (1995), consumers named inconvenience and employee response to service failures as reasons as reasons for brand switching.

- **Identity avoidance**

This type of avoidance arises as a result of the incongruity between a consumer's self-concept and symbolic meanings of a brand; in other words, "*Symbolic incongruence*" inspires identity avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a). Here, the weight is on the unfavourable intelligence collected by consumers from outside sources instead of the immediate encounters with the product or brand (Lee, 2007). This intelligence, according to Ogilvie (1987), comprises of the attachments and values with which the consumer does not want to be connected to, otherwise known as the consumer's undesired self. Disidentification and the undesired self-concept helps to inform identity avoidance (Lee et al., 2009).

According to Bhattacharya and Elbasch (2002), the disidentification theory recommends that consumers, in building their self-concepts, may misidentify with groups or associations that are alleged to be unpredictable with respect to their standards. Therefore, discrepancies amid the symbolic connotations of a brand and a consumer's sense of self may result in unfavourable feelings toward the brand (Hegner et al., 2017). While brand choice is grounded, consumers' quest to create their ideal selves or even maintain their real selves through the consumption of preferred consistent brands, brand-avoidance entails the isolation of one's self from the undesired self by refusing brands that are inconsistent symbolically (Lee, 2007). The sub-themes informing this type of avoidance as mentioned by Lee et al. (2009a) are negative reference groups, deindividuation and inauthenticity.

Negative reference groups

In relation to the social identity theory, one's uniqueness is built on the groups he/she belongs to, and the connotation these groups signifies to that individual (Hogg & Abrams & Brewer, 2017). Concurrently, in relation to several authors (Hogg, 1998; Banister & Hogg, 2001), consumers by what they prefer to and not consume construct their self-concepts and describe their social reference. Furthermore, as stated by Grubb and Hupp (1968), consumers often have the belief that, through the consumption of some brands, they portray self-concepts akin to those of other consumers of the same brand. Therefore, in relation to the self-congruity, consumers often compare the image of the product-user to their self-concepts (Sirgy, 1982). In turn, marketers usually make an effort to connect their brands to constructive reference groups, hoping that the target group will prefer to purchase the brand (Lee, 2007); therefore, the basis for circumventing a product is echoed in their eagerness not to be connected with a particular group (Knittel et al., 2016).

Deindividuation

Drawing on Zimbardo (1969) and Diener (1980), deindividuation is an emotional situation of diminished self-assessment and decreased concern for judgement causing anti-normative and disinhibited behavior. Furthermore, the authors contend that one can feel withdrawn from the blame for his or her actions just because the individual no longer has a severe cognizance of the individuality of self and others (individual and corporate entities) as well as the social environment that offers the atmosphere for the conduct (Postmes et al., 1998; Diener, 1980).

Deindividuation avoidance arises when brand consumption results in loss of individuality (Lee et al., 2009a). Furthermore, it occurs when consumers circumvent popular brands to prevent a dissipation of one's uniqueness and individuality (Knittel et al., 2016). Thus, rather than enhancing significance via the use of brands (Hogg & Banister, 2000), it is proposed that one's individuality may be concealed or eroded through the consumption of some brands. As more and more people consume a brand, the brand's capability as an instrument to build a distinctive individuality decreases (Lee, 2007).

Inauthenticity

Authenticity is commonly interpreted as the state of being “genuine”, “trustworthy”, or “real” (Arthur, 2006). Therefore, as Lee et al. (2009) mentioned, inauthenticity avoidance occurs when brands are alleged to be counterfeit. Meanwhile, the capacity to achieve and preserve a brand's authenticity and its related associations is tough for any firm (Thompson, et al., 2006). Hence, certain brands are assessed as incapable of conveying the associations that the brand was formerly built to represent (Lee et al., 2009a). The authors further stated that the inauthenticity sub-theme entails a breach between the firm's intended identity and

the consumer's judgment of the brand's image (Lee, 2007). Therefore, brand avoidance is a result of inauthentic brand connotation (Thomson & Johnson, 2006). In addition, the findings from Thompson et al. (2006) and Olivia et al. (1992) revealed that consumers' rejection of the Starbuck's brand was driven by inauthentic brand meanings.

- **Moral Avoidance**

The third type of brand avoidance is motivated by "*ideological incompatibility*". An ideology can be elucidated as "a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view" (Hodge & Kress, 1993). More precisely, the term "ideology" denotes socio-economic and political and socio-economic collections of views. Therefore, Kozinets and Handelman (2004) claim that an anti-consumption campaign strives to modify the consumerist ideology through ethical and moral changes thus moral avoidance is the next type of avoidance (Lee et al., 2009). Here the typical outlining characteristic is that the brands are observed as being cruel, dishonourable, and possibly causes damage to society; as an outcome, the consumer desires to circumvent the brands for moral reasons. A clear example of moral brand avoidance is the decision not to consume or purchase a brand because of its supposed association with a certain political philosophy that the consumer dislikes and does not want to be associated with, known as "politically motivated brand rejection" (Sandıkçı & Ekici, 2009). The ideological sub-themes that informs 'moral avoidance' are "country effects" and "consumer cynicism" or "anti-hegemony" (Lee et al., 2009, Knittel et al., 2016).

Anti-hegemony

Otherwise stated, hegemony is the notion that a group made up of a variety of cultures may be shepherded or controlled by one group of persons. Simply put, anti-hegemony strictly means “against domination” (Lee, 2007). Therefore, in relation to Gramsci (1971), anti-hegemony entails the confrontation of multi-national brands that are alleged to be excessively authoritative in the market (interpreted as hegemonic brands).

The anti-hegemony avoidance denunciation is usually concentrated on huge, rich organizations (Holt, 2002). The desire for this kind of avoidance does not concern a reduction in overall consumption; rather it concerns a decision to reject some brands because of their conduct in the market (Cromie & Ewing, 2009). Particularly, consumers engendering this idea are confident that hegemonic brands are, on a social basis, damaging to society since they are capable of dominating competing brands and are able to broaden cultural diversity (monopoly resistance) in order to eliminate the human component of any business operation (impersonalisation), and to engender environmental destruction as well as take advantage of dishonourable recruitment and business policies (corporate irresponsibility) (Lee, 2007). The growing issue is that, not only do these brands control the corporate environment, they are, at present, capable of impacting humanity on a wider level (Klein, 2000). An illustration of this is where a consumer evades brands in order to avert or because they have a link with commercial negligence (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). Thus, the conduct of associations is understood as a motive for brand avoidance, as well as opinions of their political relationships and how they handle their workers (Knittel et al., 2016).

Country of origin

Country-of-origin is usually seen as a cue that aids consumers in evaluating the excellence /consistency of products from that nation and successively impacts consumption intents (Peterson & Jolibert, 1995). Similarly, country of origin signals are traits that are not tangibly connected to the product itself. However, influenced by circumstances surrounding the purchase or consumption, it may be employed by the customer in the assessment of the product (Elliott & Cameron 1994; Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder, 2000). The fundamental idea of country-of-origin is that, when a consumer is aware of a product's source, it impacts their approach and conduct towards the product (Lee, 2007). Similarly, as stated by Aiello et al. (2009), country-of-origin affects a consumer's assessment of the product or brand. Essentially, according to Kaynak et al. (2000) as well as Hong and Wyer (1990), a brand may represent principles such as quality or trustworthiness, therefore this affects the assessment of products: in the same manner, a product's country-of-origin may affect the assessment of a product.

A sub-theme under country of origin effect is animosity. According to Klein et al. (1998), the animosity model may be employed to enlighten the connection amid a brand's country-of-origin and its avoidance (Lee et al., 2009). According to the animosity model, consumers may circumvent a product from a particular country, not as a result of the quality of the product but for reasons involving economic, military, or political activities that a user sees as grave and unpardonable (Klein et al., 1998).

Another sub-theme under the country of origin effect that informs moral avoidance is "financial patriotism": this entails situations where consumers avoid brands that they deem are damaging to the resident economy (Lee, 2007). Thus, according to Shimp and Sharma

(1987) and Klein et al. (1998), when consumers trust that buying imported products is unnationalistic, they feel a nationalistic association with indigenous products or brands. These consumers purchase domestically as a way of assurance that the monetary proceeds of their purchases will be left in their respective nations (Lee et al., 2009a). Since international businesses offer less assurance that the proceeds will be left in the indigenous economies, those brands are avoided by nationalistic consumers (Lee, 2007).

- **Deficit-value avoidance**

Deficit-value avoidance, according to Lee et al. (2009b), arises when the brand is being recognized as demonstrating an *unacceptable cost to benefit trade-offs*. Past studies on value and quality (Parasuraman & Grewal, 2000) informs this type of avoidance (Lee et al., 2009b).

According to Ligas (2000) and Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), consumer-based brand benefits are grouped in two ways, namely as symbolic and functional benefits, by most researchers. This present segment deliberates the instances of brand avoidance that are driven by a deficiency of functional benefits or deficit-value (Lee, 2007). The authors argued that deficit-value avoidance is driven by the discernment that the brand promise is simply insufficient with regards to the terms of the one's functional desires. Simply put, the brand is alleged to be undersupplied in value (Lee, 2007).

Drawing on Dodd's et al. (1991) price-perceived quality relationship influences the customer's perceived value preferences and purchase intention. The issue of value rests entirely with the customer (Murphy & Narkiewicz, 2012). Therefore, no matter how

valuable the product or brand owner thinks the product is, if the consumer perceives otherwise, he/she will not purchase it (Murphy & Narkiewicz, 2012).

Even though there seems to be an overlap (since they both seem to concern unmet expectations) between deficit-value avoidance and experiential avoidance, unlike experiential avoidance, deficit-value does not necessitate a personal encounter with the product, but then scrutinizes the connection between value and cost (Knittel et al., 2016).

The three sub-themes proposed by Lee under this category are unfamiliarity, aesthetic insufficiency, and food favouritism.

Unfamiliarity

Brand familiarity traps consumers' brand knowledge structures, thus the brand recalls that which is stored in a consumer's memory (Keller, 2003). Hence, those consumers with higher brand familiarity have more favourable brand attitudes and are more likely to examine the brand for consumption in the near future (Bogomolova & Romaniuk, 2005). Although numerous marketed offerings are known to consumers, several others are unfamiliar to them. This may be because these products are novel or because consumers may not have had an encounter with them yet (Stewart, 1992). Consumers do not have any recalls of an unfamiliar brand since they have not had any encounter with the brand (Keller 2003). Hence, according to Nelson et al. (2006), they are not easily recalled. When consumers recognize a brand they find it a signal that the brand is good (Aaker, 2002) Conversely, some consumers circumvented unfamiliar brands, assessing such brands to be inferior in quality and advanced in risk (Richardson et al., 1996), and therefore yielding less value when likened to brands that were more familiar (Lee et al., 2009b). This challenge is mostly faced by new brands (Knittel et al., 2016).

Aesthetic insufficiency

Olson and Jacoby (1973) categorized product features as intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic signals denote product-related features like ingredients, taste, freshness, texture, aroma and nutritional value. Extrinsic signals are product-related features that do not form part of the tangible product itself and are not influenced if the tangible product is not modified (Mendez et al., 2011). Similarly, visual product aesthetics comprise those features that make up a product's appearance and possess the ability to impact onlookers and customers (Lawson, 1983). These features comprise ingredients, proportion, colour, ornamentation, shape, size and reflectivity (Brunel & Kumar, 2007). It is widely recognized by some researchers (Moulson & Sproles, 2000; Page & Herr, 2002) that graphic aesthetics play a crucial part in the efficient consumption of products (Moulson & Sproles, 2000; Page & Herr, 2002). In a society where consumers may take standard product value and reasonable pricing for granted, aesthetics has turned out to be a key measure through which consumers assess and distinguish between products and services in making purchasing decisions (Postrel, 2003). Therefore, products with beautiful appearances evoke favourable reactions from consumers at an affective, cognitive, or even emotional level (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008; Reimann et al., 2010). Consequently, Lee et al. (2009b) discovered in their study that consumers avoided some brands as a result of insufficient aesthetics. Simply put, from a practical viewpoint, good looks stimulate confidence, while aesthetic insufficiency does the reverse (Lee et al., 2009b), hence the sub-theme "aesthetic insufficiency".

Food favouritism

It has been proposed that consumers will probably become more careful and evade unacquainted, polluted, inexpensive or risky food (Green et al., 2003). Accordingly, "food favouritism" in deficit-value avoidance relates to a situation whereby consumers purchase

some products of a certain brand that are insufficient in value but circumvent food-related products of that same brand name (Lee et al., 2009). Conclusively, the collective essential feature of the sub-themes of deficit-value avoidance is that they all contain a negative opinion of the brand's usage (Lee et al., 2009b).

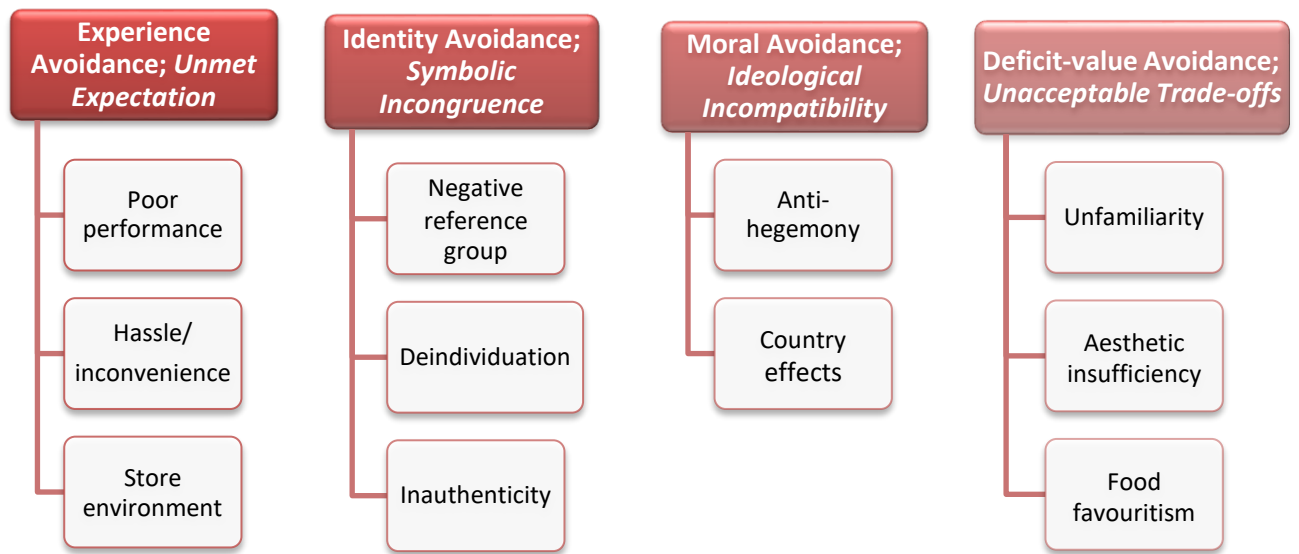


Figure 3. 2: Four types of brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a, b)

- **Advertising avoidance**

In addition to the types of brand avoidance originally identified, Knittel et al. (2016, p. 35) named “*failed communications*” as a reason for advertising avoidance. In their study, Knittel et al. (2016) established that statements made were in connection to either TV or radio advertisements, with several of these commercials not still airing at the time of the study. Respondents were, however, still able to recollect the common unfavourable emotions and the subsequent brand avoidance. Furthermore, the push-pull model of marketing communication shows that consumers control the information flow, making their attitude toward advertising a critical factor in determining whether a shield is erected and

when a message is received (Schultz, 2008). According to Knittel et al. (2016), the sub-themes under this type of avoidance are content, celebrity endorser, music and response as conceptualised below.

Content

The content of the commercial denotes various features that make up an advertisement, for example, the information and the storyline, which is a crucial aspect of the commercial, as it signifies the vision and the message it desires to transfer to the public (Knittel et al., 2016). Several recent studies (Anderson et al., 2013; Liaukonyte et al., 2015) postulate that advertising content has major effects on the consumer. Furthermore, Knittel et al.'s (2016) study demonstrated that the content of the commercial can impact the acceptance of the brand; thus, an early distaste of the commercial may lead to the avoidance of the brand being promoted. Along with the content is the innovative nature and execution of the commercial; these demonstrated the impact brand of avoidance (Knittel et al., 2016).

One other facet associated with content of a commercial is when the advertisement is seen as being offensive (Knittel et al., 2016). They contended that the employment of violence in an advert is forbidden and consequently may lead to the avoidance of the promoted brand. Strong forbidden subjects have been confirmed to have an unfavourable influence on brand approaches and consumption intentions (Sabri & Obermiller, 2012). The authors claim that consumers based on how sensitive he or she may be, respond in diverse ways to forbidden subjects employed in a commercial: these may thus be a dangerous approach to commercials. Nudity and sexually-related content in some commercials were believed not to suit the advertised product and, as a result, was adjudged unfavourable (Knittel et al., 2016)

Celebrity endorser

Erdogan et al. (2001) refer to celebrities as popular individuals who are able to influence consumers' behaviour and individuals are more likely to relate to them. According to Choi and Berger (2010), celebrities seem to be attaining a rising effect in society. Leveraging their status, celebrities are used as advocates of brands in commercials (Muda et al., 2014). Thus, marketing managers make an effort to leverage the process of meaning transmission from the celebrity to the products or brands concerned (McCracken, 1986). It is therefore not surprising that Celebrity endorsement has become a recognized method of brand and product communication (Mikulas & Svetlik, 2016). In addition, a lot of consumers seek to share the values and lifestyles of celebrities, enhancing the capacity of celebrities to convey the message by penetrating the advertising clutter in the transmission process (Muda, Musa & Putit, 2012). Further, consumers are more likely to consume the products these personalities recommend, because the celeb attaches favourable figurative connotations to the product (Walker et al., 1992; Aperia & Back, 2004). However, White et al. (2008) found that one of the serious challenges faced in celebrity endorsements is the likely emergence of unfavourable publicity associated with the celebrity endorser. Drawing on Spry et al. (2011) and Louie and Kulik (2001), consumers may respond favourably or unfavourably to the advertisement depending on whether the celebrity employed is admired or not.

Music

Right from the inception of television, music has been one of the utmost regularly employed execution signals in advertising (Allan, 2008). Music designed with the aim of marketing consumer goods and services forms a reasonable share of the songs, jingles, and melodies faced by society every day (Bronner, 2008). As stated by Shimp and Andrews (2013) as well as Lantos and Craton (2012), a lot of studies on music employed in adverts indicates

that it is one of the most commonly inventive tools used in commercials to affect the public and their assessment of a commercial. Whether we go shopping, listen to the radio, watch television, or surf the internet, we are probably going to encounter music that is designed with the sole aim of marketing (Jantzen, 2009). Music is an influential feature of advertising; it is able to draw attention, transmit hidden and clear messages, induce a perception in several ways, elicit feelings and assists in the remembrance of information (Gorn, 1982; Alpert & Alpert, 1991).

Diverse music arouses diverse feelings; music may lead to a favourable relationship between advertisements and a firm or product (Muhammed & Hudraysah, 2016). Marketers appreciate this understanding, making the efforts to use music a passionate appeal in their advertisements (Muhammed & Hudraysah, 2016). Therefore, studies concerning music in advertising concur that music will improve the value of the advertisement (Stout et al., 1990). Undoubtedly, musical “pet peeves” are crucial advertising concerns as they result in unfavourable hedonic feedback (Lantos & Craton, 2012). The authors also claim that unfavourable attitudes directed at disliked musical styles are as strong as favourable attitudes toward preferred musical styles. Therefore, music used in the advertisements was disclosed as one of the reasons for brand avoidance (Knittel et al., 2016).

Response

This denotes the individual elucidation of a piece of information as part of the communication process (McQuail & Windahl 2015). It signifies the final part of the communication process; yet a very crucial constituent of the process and is subjective to the receiver of the message, in this case, the consumer (Knittel et al., 2016). According to Burton et al. (2015), consumers are likely to respond differently to various plot elements in

an advertisement. This implies that the same commercial brings about possibly diverse reactions in diverse audiences (Percy, 2008). It, therefore, is important for advertisers to have a better understanding of meaningful differences in consumer response (Burton et al., 2015). Overall, “response” may be viewed as hating, which may not even be defined in detail or on a balanced level, but can be viewed as an individual assessment and psychological response. This can be viewed in the unclear declarations and explanations of respondents who describe their avoidance with a “stupid”, “annoying “or “senseless” advertisement (Knittel et al., 2016). The brand avoidance framework by Knittel et al. (2016) comprises the broadest scope of possible reasons/motives/drivers for brand avoidance, hence adopted by this study.

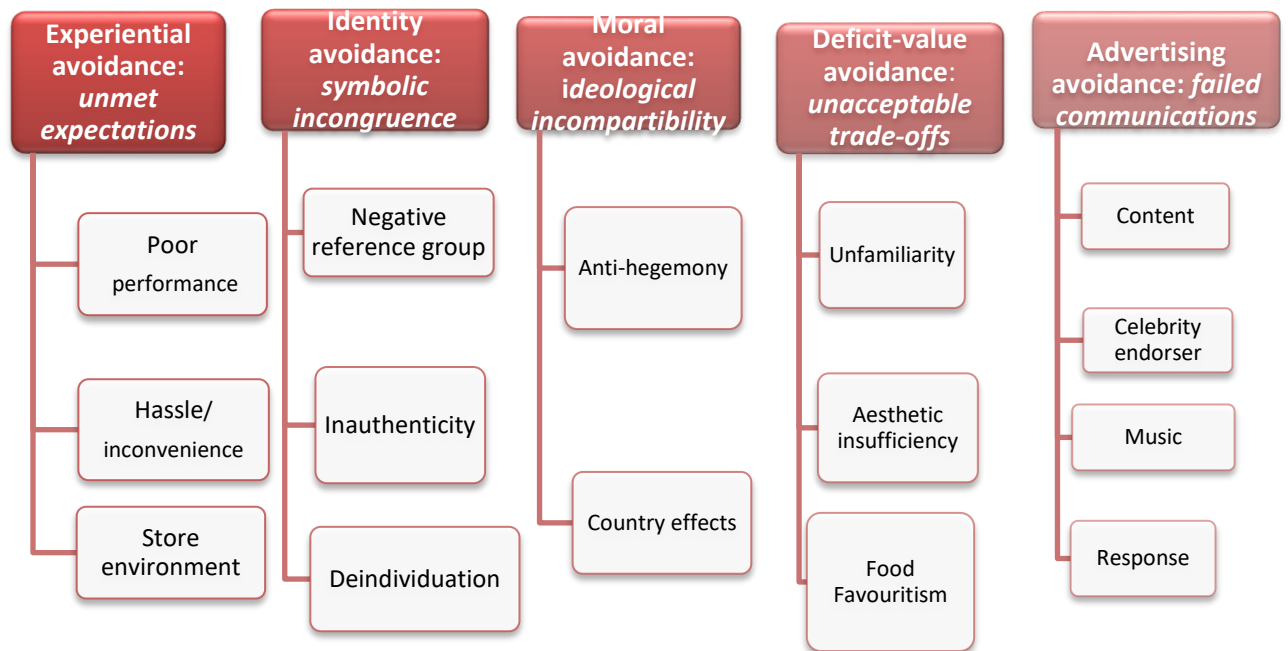


Figure 3. 3: Five types of brand avoidance. Expanded framework by Knittel et al. (2016)

3.4 Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Formulation

This section will discuss the relationship between brand avoidance and its drivers, the relationship between brand hate and brand avoidance drivers as well as the relationship between brand hate and brand avoidance.

3.4.1 Relationship between drivers of brand avoidance and brand avoidance

According to Funches et al. (2009) who conducted a qualitative study, the authors discovered four reasons for consumer brand retaliation: situational factors, perceived injustice, product failure and service recovery failure. Furthermore, there has been proof of customers articulating their discontent via their behaviour, which has been described by academics investigating customer reactions to unsuccessful services (Dart & Freeman, 1994; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). In addition, the expectations variable has been observed as playing a key role in consumer assessment of service quality (Groenroos, 1994; Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988). Its connotation in the service quality literature is comparable to the desired standard in the consumer contentment/discontentment literature (Gilbert & Wong, 2003). Dolliver's (2001) study conveyed that 49% of consumers try to avoid brands when they shop; of those, 81% attributed their avoidance to an unfavourable encounter with the brand experience (Dolliver, 2001). Furthermore, Dalli et al. (2006) found that participants are discontent with some product or service features and this results in them abhorring the brand. Furthermore, the substantial consequence of poor performance on fast fashion avoidance was in line with past studies (Kim et al., 2013), which recommended that poor quality of clothing, with respect to issues such as stitching, suitability, wear ability, and ease of care, is seen as being restraining to fast fashion (Kim et al., 2013). Based on the above discussion, the following is hypothesised:

H1a: Unmet expectations have a significant positive effect on brand avoidance

Consumer-related issues mostly has to do with symbolic incongruity where a brand signifies an undesired image to the consumer (Dalli et al., 2006). Drawing on Escalas and Bettman (2005), consumers decide not to select products or brands by way of building their individual identities and self-concept. Furthermore, Kressmann et al. (2006) posits that self-congruity literature has well recognized a favourable connection amid the brand image and the conformity of consumer's self-image leading to favourable brand relations. Therefore, consumer's anti-choices are targeted at separating the consumer from the undesired self they want to be isolated from (Banister & Hogg 2004; Hogg & Banister 2001). According to Hogg's findings, consumers are able to define themselves by means of the formation of distaste and associated negative stereotypes. Similarly, Khan and Lee (2014, p. 330) state that "consumers have the tendency to buy those brands with images congruent to their self-concepts or those that will give desired meaning to their lives". The authors also alluded to the fact that deindividuation has a positive effect on fast fashion avoidance, which means that if Korean consumers believe fast fashion brands provided deindividuated styles, their behavioral intention of fast fashion avoidance is likely to increase, thus Korean consumers seem to value fashion products that are unique enough to express their personality and individual taste (Kim et al., 2013). Similarly, in Lee et al. (2012), incongruity between participants' self-concepts and the meanings they associated with genetically modified (GM) products was a significant reason for negative perceptions of GM. GM was considered to have negative symbolic associations such as "unnatural" and "creepy" (Lee et al., 2012). In the same vein, Hegner et al. (2017) discovered that brand avoidance is mainly triggered by symbolic incongruity. According to Dalli et al. (2006), occasionally consumers condemn brands since they are incapable of communicating their individuality; in other situations they are linked with unfavourable, money-oriented and condescending stereotypes they do not want to be associated with. Hence, the more congruent an individual's undesired self is

with the brand's image, the more intense the avoidance approach to that brand (Khan & Lee, 2014). Based on the above discussion, it is reasonable that we hypothesise that:

H1b: Symbolic incongruence has a significant positive effect on brand avoidance

Ideological avoidance of brands happens when consumers draw upon sets of thoughts or principles that show a brand will have an unfavourable effect on humanity (Lee et al., 2012). Ideological avoidance is further distinguished by the consumer opposing a dominating force or advocating for fairness and equity (Lee et al., 2009). No matter what the product features are, consumers condemn organizations for the reason that they have allegedly acted unjustly (Dalli et al., 2006). Such consumers are said to have focused on societal needs rather than individual; they resist forces that have a negative impact on society and believe that they have to avoid certain brands because it is the right thing to do (Lee et al., 2009a, 2009b). They may likewise assume a tirelessly unfavourable attitude and outline behaviours directed at a brand grounded on a universal assessment of the organisation's actions over time (Rindell et al., 2014). In relation to Lee et al. (2012), respondents set out a moral ideological frame as the foundation for decision making about genetically modified (GM) products. Similarly, in Demirbag-Kaplan et al. (2015), ideological and/or moral incongruity was recorded as an additional motive for disapproving brands. Research recommend that consumers condemn brands that disregard human rights or harm the environment, just as consumers circumvent brands that are involved in immoral business practices (Sandikci & Ekici, 2009). In that regard, consumers recognize an ideological incompatibility with the brand because of lawful, ethical or societal issues when a brand is suspected of corporate irresponsibility (Lee et al., 2009b; Bryson et al., 2013; Romani et al., 2015; Zarantonello et al., 2016). Consequently, a negative Cooperate Social Performance image will be an

influential burden to a firm's brand (Klein & Dawar, 2004). In the light of the above description we hypothesise that:

H1c: Ideological incompatibility has a significant positive effect on brand avoidance

Brands may be circumvented if they put forward deficit-value or the benefits are not noteworthy enough to offset observed unfavourable links/cost (Lee et al., 2012). Additionally, innovation resistance research proposes that consumers embrace new products for their profits and expediency rather than technological advancement (Higgins & Shanklin, 1992). In Lee et al. (2009b), some contributors avoided budget brands that they interpreted to be of low quality and, accordingly, deficient in value. Furthermore, unfamiliar brands are less accepted and chosen by consumers than familiar brands (Colombo & Morrison, 1989; Kent & Allen, 1994). In light of the above discussion, we hypothesise that:

H1d: Unacceptable trade-offs has a positive significant effect on brand avoidance

Knittel et al. (2016) found in their study that failed communications was a reason for brand avoidance. In particular, he discovered that unfavourable consumer discernment of the celebrity creates a dislike of the brand ultimately leading to avoidance, which can be explained by the link of a celebrity's image that transfers to the brand when used as a spokesperson for advertisements (Felix & Borges, 2014). Moreover, if the message in the commercial is disingenuous or deceptive, the image of the product, endorser and advertiser may depreciate as a consequence (Muda et al., 2014). Furthermore, literature establishes that music used in advertisements effect the approach and may influence consumption intentions and product choices and possibly influences avoidance behaviour (Blair & Shimp, 1992; Lantos & Craton, 2012). Hence, we hypothesise that:

H1e: Failed communications has a significant effect on brand avoidance

3.4.2 Influence of brand hate on drivers of brand avoidance and brand avoidance

Negative experiences (unmet expectations) with a particular product can be a foundation for brand hate (Salvatori, 2007). In a study by Bryson et al. (2013) consumer dissatisfaction was observed as the sturdiest forecaster of brand hate in the setting of luxury brands. Additionally, Zarantonello et al. (2016) recognize infringement of expectations as a pertinent issue resulting in brand hate in their study. Accordingly, it is reasonable to expect that negative past experience or unmet expectations lead to brand hate.

Zarantonello et al. (2016) denote a symbolic incongruence type of taste system and recognize it as a likely cause for brand hate. Therefore, incongruity amid the symbolic connotations of a brand and the customer's sense of self could bring about unfavourable feelings toward the brand (Hegner et al., 2017). Furthermore, Bryson et al. (2010) argued that, when brand consumer stereotypes are negative, this very strongly predicts that the respondent hates the associated brand. Furthermore, Bryson et al. (2013) discovered that an additional probable foundation of brand hate was the opinion that some luxury brands were perceived as being too popular.

Research displays that circumstantial-related issues concern ideological incompatibility, consumers perceive legal, social or moral corporate wrongdoing leading to negative feelings toward the brand (Hegner et al., 2017). While Bryson et al. (2013) did not discover straight forward proof that firms of luxury brands are the target of brand hate due to their unfavourable corporate social performance; they did emphasis that it is a crucial effect of negative brand emotions and that it could be a possible brand hate instigator for other brands. Adding to the activities of companies, consumers can experience hate emotions toward brands entangled in issues of ethical misbehaviours, and such emotions become active

constituents in triggering anti-brand actions (Romani et al., 2015). Additionally, consumers participate in anti-brand actions when they observe the occurrence of discriminations in the marketplace and they refer to these brands and their parent companies as being “exploitive” or “unethical” (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006).

Obermiller, Spangenberg and MacLachlan (2005) argued that far-fetched or exaggerated advertisements tend to annoy consumers. Annoyance results in negative attitudes toward advertising (Fennis & Bakker 2001; Morimoto & Chang 2006), which subsequently impact the brand attribute beliefs, brand cognitions, brand recall and recognition, as well as purchase intentions (Myers et al., 2010). Accordingly, we hypothesis that:

H2a-e: The drivers of brand avoidance (a. Un-met expectations, b. Symbolic incongruence, c. Ideological incompatibility, d. Un-acceptable trade-offs, and e. Failed communications) has a significant effect on brand hate

3.4.3 Relationship between brand avoidance and brand hate

Approach-avoidance inspiration is usually linked with one’s emotional state and enables numerous behavioral consequences (Corr, 2013; Elliot et al., 2013). Whilst positive impetuses induce the approach behavior, negative impetuses induce the avoidance behavior (Chen & Bargh, 1999). Additionally, literature in psychology reveals diverse unfavourable feelings that may stimulate distinctive cognitive and behavioral reactions (Roseman, 1984). Specifically, the conclusions of Zeelenberg and Pieters (2004) point out that incidents triggering undesirable sentiments and guilt are influential in encouraging switching behaviour. Like desirable sentiments toward brands, when a person feels negatively toward a brand, we expect this to bring about isolation and avoidance behavior (Grégoire et al., 2009; Park et al., 2013; Zarantonello et al., 2016). In their 2017 study on “Determinants

and outcomes of brand hate”, Hegner et al. (2017) revealed that brand avoidance is a consequence of brand hate. In the same vein, Grégoire et al. (2009) argue that consumers' hate can turn into two different behaviours: avoidance and revenge. On the basis of the above observation, it can be proposed that:

H3: Brand hate is significantly associated with brand avoidance

Conceptual framework

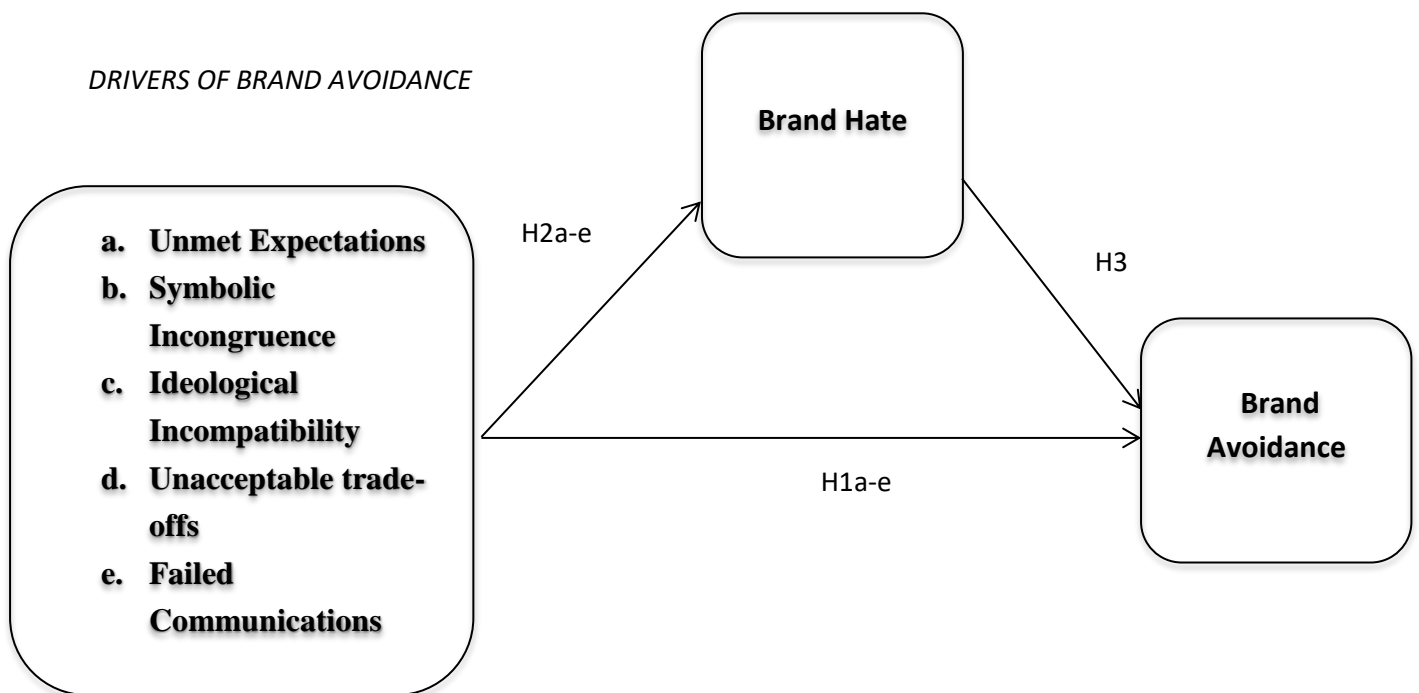


Figure 3.4: Conceptual framework for brand avoidance and brand hate adapted from Hegnar et al. (2017)

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed relevant literature pertaining to this study; specifically, it grounded the study using the concept of anti-consumption and brand attachment, the authors also reviewed empirically, literature on the concept of brand, negative brand equity, a comparison between service and product branding, brand avoidance as well as a review of the brand hate literature. The final part of the chapter formulated the hypotheses to be tested based on the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Chapter Overview

After reviewing the literature and discussing the main theoretical foundations/framework and context of the study, this chapter discusses the research methodology employed for this study. Specifically, this chapter highlights the research approach, method and strategies used for data collection, the sampling technique employed, and the data analysis procedure.

4.2 Research Paradigm

Academics of late have contended that empirical research should provide a detailed explanation regarding their choice of paradigm(s) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Consequently, Morgan (2007) defined paradigms as a classification of opinions and views that affect how researchers choose both the questions they study and approaches that they employ to study them. Alternatively, a paradigm can be interpreted as an all-encompassing logical position, a classification of views about the nature of the world, and eventually, when employed in the research situation, the assumptive foundation from which knowledge emerges (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Actually, not all researchers (including those in favour of the mixed method) agree that paradigms are necessary: this, according to them, is because paradigms possess the ability to disregard other beliefs or compel other scholars to believe in a classification of opinions and views (Maxwell, 2011). However, even though a group of scholars support this notion, they contend that the deliberate employment of paradigms can bring forth a guideline for academics to help monitor their decisions in the research process (Shanon-Baker, 2015). Furthermore, paradigms assist researchers who are beginners to position their decisions with their morals (Shanon-Baker, 2015). Furthermore, they can offer a distinct signal to others who are willing to position themselves with other

scholars who buy into comparable or matched philosophies (Johnson, 2011). Paradigms not only assist the researcher in establishing the study (Shanon-Baker 2015), but also regulate which method to employ, the approach and how to interpret the data.

Furthermore, MacNaughton, Rolfe and Siraj-Blatchford (2001) offered an interpretation of paradigm, which comprises three components: credence about the disposition of knowledge, a methodology and criteria for validity. Other researchers argue the interpretive framework in terms of 'knowledge claims' (Creswell, 2003); epistemology or ontology; or even research methodologies (Neuman, 2000) instead of mentioning paradigms. Proctor (2005) assumes that the two extreme extents of logical stances can be grouped into Positivism and Phenomenology: this was confirmed in Collis and Hussey (2014) who asserts that there exist two key research paradigms when carrying out any research: positivism and interpretivism.

4.2.1 Positivism

Positivism (also known as the scientific method or empirical science) emerged in the course of the enlightenment in the eighteenth century when rational thought and reason substituted religion and faith to interpret situations (Petty, Thompson & Stew, 2012). The authors claim that positivism adopts an established reality that can be measured and detected in a thorough and orderly manner to build impartial knowledge (facts). On the same grounds, positivists in social sciences employ scientific approaches applied in natural sciences, to study a social occurrence, seeing it as value free and dependent on scientific justification. Thus, scholars follow the social world impartially (Mertens, 2011), and accept all those methods that coordinate scientific approaches with human activities (Grix, 2010). Ontologically, it adopts a solitary impartial reality (Petty, Thompson & Stew 2012). This form of study is carried out with reason and severity to elucidate occurrences and predict their result due to causal

connections (Collis & Hussey, 2014) and it is connected to numerous views such as empiricism, naturalism, behaviourism, scientism, determinism and reductionism. Furthermore, it mirrors a deterministic viewpoint in which reasons determine consequence (Creswell, 2003). Knowledge of this reality (epistemology) is by observation; whatever can be observed is believed to be real, whether in the natural or social world (Petty et al., 2012). Human beings are observed, measured and tested, and will, according to the positivist view, act in relation to some generalizable rules (Bruce et al., 2008). The observer carries their own familiarities and facts to the study and it is crucial they isolate this from the study, therefore remaining impartial (Petty et al., 2012). Additionally, reliability will be improved via replicating the research, and the inferential reasoning approach is employed whereby a philosophy (or hypothesis) is verified via scientific observational approaches and measurement (Petty et al., 2012). Finally, logical reasoning, impartiality and accuracy buttress the approach that frequently depends on statistical interpretation from quantitative research data (Collis & Hussey, 2013).

4.2.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism, on the other hand, has arisen as a censure in opposition to positivism; thus social reality is highly subjective because reality is moulded by our discernments (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Similarly, interpretivism holds that people pursue an interpretation of the world in which they live. Drawing from Dyson and Brown (2006), meaning is not spontaneously present in objects or social situations; it is to be created by individuals (Dyson & Brown, 2006). Individuals create their own individual connotations of their involvements; connotations are diverse and numerous (Creswell, 2009). Ontologically, reality is socially constructed (Petty et al., 2012). The authors further posited that, because of this postulation, the social world cannot be investigated in the same manner as the natural world and that

knowledge of this reality (epistemology) comprises the numerous opinions of people in certain circumstances. They also opined that the research question is retained to capture this variation and the study evolves as it proceeds. Furthermore, the researcher moves to and fro (iterative) between in order to apprehend data collection and examination, chasing leads and thinking inductively from the data, increasingly concentrating on matters from the data: thus the research process is adjustable (Robson, 2011). Furthermore, individual connotations are usually created via co-operation with others and inside certain cultures and this broad view is frequently discovered (Petty et al., 2012). Scholars recognize that their individual involvements and partiality affect their understanding and this forms part of the research procedure, referred to as reflexivity (Petty et al., 2012). Furthermore, interpretivism is founded upon exploring consumers' life familiarities concerning their morals and sentiments by studying their social lives (McLaughlin, 2007) and employing the qualitative research approach (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

Based on the above understanding of the research philosophies, this research holds the positivistic perspective for the research philosophy. As mentioned in the introduction, this research is interested in finding the main driver(s) for brand avoidance among Ghanaian service consumers and the effect of brand hate on the relationship between brand avoidance and its drivers. Literature has helped to build testable hypotheses. The research thus needs to test and prove the hypotheses.

4.3 Research Design

One fundamental subject in determining how to carry out research is to first choose the appropriate study design for attaining the specified aim and objectives of the suggested research question (Checkoway, Pearce & Kriebel, 2007). Selecting the appropriate study

design is the most important step in determining the methodology of any research study (Omair, 2015). This is crucial for the manner in which the research will be carried out, particularly the sampling and data interpretation (Kothari, 2008). Therefore, Boateng (2014) describes research design as how, when and where information for a study is to be gathered and examined. Alternatively, Collis and Hussey (2014) identify different categories of research in order to categorise research studies. They identified the type of study based on the process, purpose and logic.

4.3.1 Research purpose

In relation to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), scholars are categorized with regards to the purpose of the study. They acknowledged three kinds of research centred on purpose, which are exploratory, descriptive and explanatory researches.

- ***Exploratory***

Usually, exploratory research is employed to engender fresh concepts (Manerikar & Manerikar, 2014). Furthermore, exploratory research has been distinguished as the preliminary research, which builds the foundation for further decisive research. It may assist in shaping the research design, sampling methodology and data collection method (Singh, 2000). According to Manerikar and Manerikar (2014), exploratory research is convenient when a researcher has an inadequate amount of familiarity or information about a research topic. What is more, the researcher should be prepared to adjust his/her orientation as a result of discovering new data and new concepts (Saunders, 2012).

- *Descriptive*

Descriptive research explains what was observed and these graphic descriptions can be communicated in words or numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Furthermore, descriptive study designs are beneficial for recounting the preferred features of the sample that are being considered (Omair, 2015). It could likewise attempt to take a broad view of the results from an illustrative sample to a bigger target population as often seen in a cross-sectional survey (Grimes & Schulz, 2002). Drawing on Burns and Grove (2003), descriptive research is formulated to offer an image of a situation as it occurs naturally. Moreover, descriptive studies could be measured as the effort to regulate, define or recognize what is (Ethridge, 2004). In relation to Brown (2007), descriptive research is intended to decipher contemporary topics via the gathering of data to permit them to define the circumstances more fully than when this method was not applied (Brown, 2007).

- *Explanatory*

Explanatory research emphasises cause and effect relationships (Yin, 2014). Thus, explanatory research is typically employed to answer the “Why” research questions (Saunders et al., 2012). Concurrently, Maxwell and Mittapalli (2008) posit that the phrase “explanatory research” suggests that the study in question is envisioned to clarify, rather than just describe the event studied. They further added that, usually, explanatory research is quantitative in nature and typically examines previous hypothesis by estimating the association between variables.

This study intends to examine the relationship between brand avoidance and its drivers as well as examine the effect of brand hate on the relationship. To achieve this objective, hypotheses were developed from the conceptual framework for the study, which was

adopted from Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b) and Knittel et al. (2016). Therefore, it is explanatory in design.

4.3.2 Research process

According to Collis and Hussey (2014), the research process can be categorised as either quantitative or qualitative. According to Harwell (2011), quantitative research makes it imaginable to infer, as the implications from examining statistical hypotheses bring about universal deductions leading to general inferences concerning the characteristics of the population. It is evident that quantitative research usually brings about the appreciation of universal inclinations against qualitative research, where thorough knowledge of a specific motive may be discovered (Woodwell, 2014). Furthermore, according to Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt (2013), quantitative research is interpreted as a type of research that highlights the application of proper questions and is pre-decided to answer choices that are provided in questionnaires distributed effortlessly to a great number of respondents and allows credible statistical examination. He further posited that quantitative data is mainly employed when there is a distinct and accurate research problem available, and that it also consists of the use of analytical tactics and numerical measurements. This, he said, permits the investigator to examine substantial relationships and attain deeper insights into these relationships (Hair et al., 2013).

On the other hand, drawing on O'Leary (2013), when the research problem and research approach is not clear then the researcher usually embraces the exploratory methods of qualitative research design. The primary benefit of qualitative research, which forms its primary distinction from quantitative research, is that it provides a thorough account and examination of a research topic, at the same time not restricting the reach of the study and

the disposition of respondents' replies (Collis & Hussey, 2003). What is more, the magnitude of sampling in qualitative research is lesser than quantitative research: this is as a result of the difficulty in the data gathered (Woodwell, 2014). Therefore, as it is more suitable for lesser samples, it is dangerous for the outcomes of qualitative research to be alleged as manifesting the thoughts of a larger population (Bell, 2005). Furthermore, in contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research employs inductive reasoning (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010) and is targeted at acquiring a deeper understanding of human behaviour and the reasons for the existence of that behaviour. Similarly, qualitative is known as interpretive research as its core objective is not to broaden the view but to provide deeper interpretation of the situation (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

The appearance of an additional methodological approach has been witnessed of late in the world of research known as the mixed method approach, which is a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

The quantitative approach to research is adopted in this study because it aids in the acknowledgement of the ideal predictors of outcomes (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) recommended that it is reasonable to employ quantitative data in situations where the researcher wishes to juxtapose the data in an orderly way or the researcher endeavours to examine a theory with hypotheses.

4.3.3 Research logic

Research logic can either be deductive or inductive (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Hyde (2000) stated that there are two kinds of research logic dominating scientific research: deductive research logic and inductive research logic. Some approaches are contended as more suitable when compared to others, considering what research viewpoint one have chosen in

the study (Saunders et al., 2009). Nonetheless, a third approach exists and has yielded more consideration, namely, “abduction” (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). All research approaches are employed to construct theories and provide reasonable implications about the world, using diverse cognitive philosophies (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The deductive approach entails the formation of an assumption founded on the prevailing theories and establishing a research strategy to examine the assumption (Wilson, 2010). Furthermore, Beiske (2007) suggests that the deductive research approach examines a certain theory and checks to understand if that theory applies in anticipated circumstances or not. The deductive approach precisely backs the evolution of logic (Zalaghi & Khazaei, 2016), with the authors alluding that the research commences with a theory and proceeds to a fresh assumption. The data are gathered to examine and check the hypothesis to determine whether the theories are recognized or not in the particular situation (Bryan & Bell, 2011). Alternatively, Johnson-Laird (1999) opines that the deduction procedure in deductive reasoning is that which produces legitimate deductions and has to be accurate given their state.

However, on a more common level, induction is apparent in a variety of reasoning events that comprises classification, probability judgement, analogical reasoning, scientific research and decision making (Hayes, Heit & Swendson, 2010). The authors further expounded on this occurrence that comprises making an interpretation about the characteristics of the participants of a universal group based on previous information of a certain fundamental group or set of groups, i.e. inductive reasoning is a “bottom-up” approach, which commences on a particular level and works its way up to a more conceptual point of theory (Hayes et al., 2010). The inductive research begins with the data, establishes

the overall conception and then theories and frameworks are formed (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Nonetheless, the key flaw of the inductive approach is that it creates generalized theories and deductions founded only on a lesser amount of observations, so the credibility of the study outcome becomes disputable (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Abductive reasoning is an amalgamation of deduction and induction, as it depends on hypotheses formulated from empirical data that is further examined on new empirical objects (Patel & Davidsson, 2003). The abductive research is employed in a situation where the prevailing theory requires adjustment or does not apply to the area: the novel theories are expected to answer the research questions. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), in abductive research, data is gathered to construct fresh theories, which are deduced again and then data is gathered to verify the theory.

The logic employed in this study is deductive as the purpose of this study is to examine the hypotheses, and make informed deductions grounded on statistical investigation of the data with the tendency of being comprehensive (Lee & Lings, 2008). Having outlined the research design for the study, the next section discusses the research strategy employed in the study.

4.4 Research Strategy

Yin (2003) postulates five key strategies for studies in social sciences to collect firsthand data. As stated by the authors, the following strategies can be employed in research: experiments, survey, and analysis of archival records, history, and case study. This relies upon the nature of the research questions, the degree to which the researcher has power over

observable activities and to what extent the emphasis is on a current issue. Consequently, the study adopted the survey strategy.

4.4.1 Survey

According to Williams (2004), survey research is a technique used in collecting data in the social sciences. On the same grounds, Creswell (2009) defines survey as a structure for gathering information for evaluating views and developments. Additionally, surveys are seen as common research strategies that permit the gathering of huge amounts of data from a considerable population in a highly cost-effective manner (Saunders et al., 2009). Similarly, in relation to Bryman and Bell (2011), a survey is capable of acquiring information from a huge number of respondents with fewer disturbances. Thus, this method is used for sampling data from respondents that are representative of a population and uses a closed ended instrument or open-ended items. In this study, the respondents are all service firms' customers in Accra who avoid a service firm. Since this group of consumers is relatively huge, the survey technique was appropriately employed. After identifying the appropriate strategy for the study, the next step is to describe the sampling designs for the study, hence the next section.

4.5 Sampling Design

When conducting primary research, it is essential to deliberate on the sampling design (Hair et al., 2013). As stated by the authors, a sampling design functions as a framework that outlines the suitable target population, recognises the prospective respondents, decides processes to be adhered to for choosing the sample and defines the appropriate sample size. Furthermore, McDaniel and Gates (2010) posit that a sampling design may be denoted as

the essential stages that are employed to assure that the information that is gathered constitute the target population.

4.5.1 Target population

The word “population” may be mentioned as the identifiable set of elements of interest to the researcher and relevant to the research problem (Hair et al., 2013). However, by population, many often refer to people only. Meanwhile, population does not necessarily mean a number of people (Waliman, 2011). It can also be mentioned as the complete number of items or cases that are the subject of the research (Etican, Eder & Harmon-Jones, 2016). Furthermore, Fraenkel and Wallen (2007) state that the whole target population is not always easy to sample therefore a more closely distinct population or the reachable population is measured. In this study the target population are all service firms’ customers in Accra who avoids a service brand.

4.5.2 Sampling technique

A sample is a part of a population (Taylor, 2005). Similarly, sampling techniques are modified to select a collection of illustrative cases from a universal set (Hair et al., 2013). In relation to Cooper and Schindler (2008), participants of a sample may be chosen by employing probability or non-probability techniques: they further on stated that sampling techniques have an effect on a diversity of characteristics outside their representativeness of the sample as well as cost, time and accessibility concerns (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). The technique to be employed relies upon the kind, nature and drive of the study.

In probability sampling, each personality or item in the population has equivalent probabilities of being part of the sample, while in non-probability sampling members do not have an equal probability of being added (Levy & Lemeshow, 2013). Moreover, probability sampling is more complicated, involves a great deal of time and is expensive compared to non-probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2003). Probability sampling methods comprises the simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, and cluster sampling; while the non-probability sampling methods comprises the convenience sampling, judgmental sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Usually in business and management research, the research questions, objectives and choice of research strategy may employ non-probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2012). The benefits associated with non-probability sampling are enormous; non-probability sampling is comparatively inexpensive and is employed when there is no sampling frame (Saunders et al., 2003).

In relation to the above discussion, the author will use non-probability sampling for this research. The main argument for this is limited time and resources. Secondly, non-probability sampling is familiar with identifying and interviewing the participants on the basis of their background and past experience (Jankowicz, 2005). Furthermore, given that it was not practically possible to obtain a sampling frame of the all customers of the many service firms in Ghana, it was quite difficult to apply a probability sampling technique that would be closer to obtaining a sample worthy of a true reflection of the customer base of service firms in Ghana. Specifically, purposive and convenient sampling (e.g. judgment and quota) were used in this study. According to Etican et al. (2016), for purposive sampling, a researcher has an intended goal and respondents that are appropriate for the study are

included. Usually scholars are certain they can attain a reasonable illustrative sample through their own discretion. This, they think, goes a long way in helping them save time and money (Black, 2010). Additionally, purposive sampling empowers a researcher to choose units that possess knowledge on particular action so as to get suitable answers to research questions (Saunders et al., 2012). Also known as “judgment sampling” it is suitable in initial phases of research where choice is made based on screening conditions (Sibons et al., 2012).

This study also employed convenience sampling (or haphazard sampling), which involved selecting indiscriminately those units that are not difficult to acquire for the sample (Saunders et al., 2012). Similarly, under convenience sampling, participants are chosen on the premises of closeness, reachability, ease of access and readiness to contribute (Emerson, 2015). Consequently, the sample for this study comprised of students of the University of Ghana. The students were chosen because, as students, they possess adequate literacy skills to be able to comprehend and respond appropriately to the questions. Moreover, they were chosen because they were easily accessible and willing to co-operate.

4.5.3 Sampling size

Within a quantitative survey design, selecting a sample size and handling non-response prejudice is crucial (Bartlett, Kotrilik & Higgins, 2001). The subject of sample size for all non-probability sampling techniques (except quota sampling) is uncertain and no guidelines exist (Saunders et al., 2012). In relation to Patton (2002), sample size is subject to the research questions and objectives, as well as the logical and analytical expertise of the researcher. Largely, scholars do not limit themselves to any particular sample size. Fortunately, Hair et al. (2013) presented some direction by recommending a smallest sample

size of 100, whereas Coakes and Steed (2005) are of the view that the sample size should not be less than 200. Additionally, Kent (2007) contends that a sample size of 100 participants and beyond is suitable for a quantitative study. At the same time, Mercado (2007) argues that many sample sizes for research are defined by the researcher's time and money available for data collection. Consequently, for this study the sample size for the first survey (EFA) is 123 respondents and that of the second survey (CFA) is 318 respondents. Having discussed the sampling design, the next section will focus on discussing the data source and collection.

4.6 Data Source and Data Collection

Data collection is crucial in research since the data is destined to add to a better comprehension of a theoretical framework (Bernard, 2002). It is therefore pertinent for a scholar to gather all the required data to be effective in achieving the anticipated aims and objectives of the study. According to Saunders et al. (2012), fundamentally, there are two data gathering techniques, i.e. primary and secondary source of data. In relation to Collis and Hussey (2014), primary data is recognized as authentic information that is gathered from the prime source. Sources to collect primary information consist of observation, survey, questionnaire and personal interviews (Collis & Hussey, 2014). On the other hand, secondary data entails gathering and examining data that has previously been gathered by academics for some other reason. It can be in the form of fresh information or published summaries (Saunders et al., 2012).

4.6.1 Secondary data

Secondary data collection methods employ data gathered and documented formerly for a reason other than the existing desires of the researcher (Saunders et al., 2012; Blumberg et al., 2008). They include textbooks, surveys, reports, newspapers, magazines, articles, video recordings etc. (Saunders et al., 2012). The amount of secondary data obtainable offers the foundation for a robust literature review and secondary research analysis. What is more, handiness of the secondary data improves the prevailing knowledge of the researcher and provides direction for primary data collection (Creswell, 2009). The gathering and examination of secondary data saves money and time and offers a wider range of alternatives and findings (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005; Saunders et al., 2012). Nevertheless, its demerits cannot be overlooked. The information is gathered for diverse reasons to aid diverse researches. It implies that the aims and objectives of the former study are not in line with the prevailing aims and objectives (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Additionally, the secondary data may not be precise and up to date since the information may have been gathered some years ago and might not be relevant as far as the aim of the prevailing research question is concerned (Saunders et al., 2012). The authors categorized secondary data into three kinds: documentary; survey-based; and one compiled from multiple sources.

4.6.2 Primary data

This is information gathered right from source to tackle existing research problems unearthed (Saunders et al., 2012). Jankowicz (2005) further states that data gathered via primary sources is more relevant and reliable as far as the aim of the study is concerned. Furthermore, Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) assert that only primary data can aid in re-questions connected to people's attitudes, intentions and purchasing behaviour. Similarly,

the primary data source is the most effective and shows an honest picture (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Examples are observation and interviews.

In this regard, primary data were the major source of data for the study. Closed-ended structured interviews were used to collect data. Other sources of information were obtained from marketing books, electronic journals and articles from the internet and the university library. Thus, the author adopted the survey strategy in order to collect primary data for this study.

4.6.4 Questionnaire design and administration

According to McDaniel and Gates (2013) and Hair et al. (2013), a questionnaire can be seen as a collection of enquiries and measures intended to incite distinct and significant responses and are employed to gather unrefined primary data with the aim of answering a research question. A questionnaire is one of the most popular data gathering devices in business and management studies (Saunders et al., 2012). Generally, questionnaires contain all the data collection techniques in which each respondent is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order (Akinici & Saunders, 2015). Moreover, it prevents the researcher from being partial in the data gathering process (Saunders et al., 2012). Consequently, the questionnaire has become the most sound and suitable technique in gathering data from a large number of respondents so as to achieve the goals of the study. Hair et al. (2013) proposed that a questionnaire must adhere to a systematic method, which entails choosing the most suitable guidelines and language.

Signifying the importance of an instrument in producing precise survey evaluations, Straub et al. (2005) highlighted the use of formerly authenticated accessible instruments. Therefore,

in this study, the researcher adopted previously authenticated measurement items for some of the constructs, but with some adaptations in the context of the present study. Altogether seven constructs were to be measured. Five (5) of them - unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence, ideological incompatibility, brand hate and brand avoidance behaviour - were measured with items adapted from Hegner et al. (2017). The remaining two constructs - unacceptable trade-offs and failed communications - were measured with the author's owned formulated measurement items coined from definitions given by Lee et al. (2009b) and Knittel et al. (2016) respectively. Consequently, thirty-three (32) items were derived to measure the seven (7) constructs in the study.

The questionnaire for the research was partitioned into three parts. The first part dealt with collecting the demographic data of the respondents, for instance, their age, gender, occupation etc. According to Hammer (2011), demographic data is a prerequisite as it enables readers to easily determine whose research findings are to be generalized for comparative studies as well as to enable the identification of gaps in research. This was followed by screening the background information to enable the researcher to adhere to the specific quota. The last section was aimed at collecting the data to prove each hypothesis. The author used a 5-point Likert scale for evaluating the degree of agreement for each question. Likert scale questions are relatively easy to complete (Robson, 2011).

There are various aspects that need to be considered when selecting a method for collecting data. McDaniel and Gates (2013) propose that researchers must contemplate whether the anticipated technique selected will provide information that is of value and whether the technique will present the share of participants essential to allow irrefutable examination of information. Prevailing literature offers three substantial data gathering techniques relevant

to researchers: self-administered, person-administered and telephone-administered (Hair et al., 2013). Saunders et al. (2012) indicates that factors that influence choice of questionnaire administration are population characteristics, confidence that the right person has responded, sample size, response rate, length of the questionnaire as well as financial resources.

The researcher employed a structured questionnaire for the study that took the form of self-administered personal interviews because, as Churchill and Iacobucci, (2006) claims, by this approach participants can find explanations on topics that are unclear from those conducting the interview. Additionally, self-administered questionnaires are commonly faster than interviews and can be administered *en masse*, whereas the interview approach cannot be employed except when numerous interviewers are used (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Additionally, self-administered questionnaires can bring forth a variety of merits such as high response rate, correct sampling and the least amount of interviewer impartiality (Oppenheim, 2000). Saunders et al. (2007) divided the self-administered questionnaire into three types: a) internet-mediated questionnaire (i.e. delivered and return electronically by using the internet); b) postal or mail questionnaire (i.e. posted to respondents who return the questionnaire by post after completion); and c) delivery and collection questionnaire (i.e. delivered by hand to each respondent and collected later). For the current research, delivery and collection was chosen as the main data collection method giving the researcher the opportunity to introduce the research topic and encourage the respondents to provide their answers frankly (Sekaran, 2003). Furthermore, delivery and collection questionnaires ensure a high response rate as well as accurate sampling (Oppenheim, 2000).

4.6.3 Data collection instrument

Research instruments are assessing devices and are intended to collect data on a subject of concern from participants (Creswell, 2009). Examples are observation, and interviews. Interviews are discussions between two or more people, which can be classified as semi-structured, in-depth and group interviews (Saunders et al., 2012). Semi-structured interviews are thematic and are called qualitative interviews. The structured interview, also called a quantitative interview, is the administration of a questionnaire that can be open-ended or closed-ended. The in-depth interview is a one-on-one interview; and for a group interview people are deliberately grouped to respond to a moderator's questions in turn.

4.6.5 Pretesting of questionnaire

As explained by Creswell (2009), testing the questionnaire is crucial in launching the cogency of the instrument and to upgrade the questions, the layout and the scale. Consequently, the researcher pilot-tested the questionnaire with 20 randomly selected students of the University of Ghana. In the final analysis, the pre-testing helped to recognize and remove ambiguous questions and duplications.

4.6.6 Reliability and Validity

Pallant (2011) posits that the scales employed for analysis must be examined for reliability to certify that the items that form the scale "hang together" (i.e. are internally consistent). Reliability (the degree of consistency between multiple of measurement of variable) was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The outcome of the research is deemed unreliable when Cronbach's alpha value is below 0.7 (Pallant, 2011). Similarly, Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) recommend a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value to be 0.70 and above. However, Peterson and Kim (2013) noted that Cronbach alpha is of weak assurance as a result

underrates the real reliability. Consequently, this study employed both the Cronbach alpha and the composite reliability method, which is frequently employed in structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2015). On the other hand, the research must go through the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) and Bartlett test, to test if the research is suitable for the factor analysis. The value of the KMO test is satisfactory at the value of 0.6, and the higher the value the better the scale for the factor analysis. The Bartlett test is also working with the factor analysis, the below 0.5 loadings are seen as sufficient to undertake factor analysis (Pallant, 2011).

According to Cook, Campbell and Shadish (2002), validity has to do with the suitability of the items used to examine the construct it is supposed to assess. Thus, validity informs if the scale is indeed assessing that which it is intended to assess. Construct validity was employed to identify how sound the outcome gotten from the scale is and if it is in line with theoretical anticipations (Hair et al., 2014). To check validity, loadings that were less than the threshold value of 0.50 were dropped from further analysis (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998).

4.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis concerns drawing inferences from the data gathered as well as deliberating on a number of different means of analysing the data (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2009). The authors propose that the suitable technique hinges on the kind of data, the research design, and assumptions governing the type of study, its associated concerns and the influence of the study. The starting point of every data analysis is editing and coding (Saunders et al., 2009; Zikmund & Babin, 2010). Questionnaires were double checked and those filled

completely and correctly were selected and coded before being keyed into the computer for analysis.

To answer the research question and test the hypotheses, the research conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) as well as employed Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with IBM AMOS version 22 to test the causal relationship between the seven variables as well as to test the hypotheses.

Factor analysis functions on the conception that assessable and noticeable variables can be condensed to less latent variables that share a mutual variance and are unobservable, which is referred to as lessening dimensionality (Bartholomew et al., 2011). Consequently, a researcher employs EFA when he/she desires to determine the number of constructs impacting variables and to analyse which variables ‘go together’ (DeCoster, 1998). Thus, the aim of undertaking the EFA was to examine: (i) the nature and number of mutual factors underlying the measures; and (ii) the robustness of the relationship between each factor and each observed measure (Byrne, 2010).

Further, EFA examines all the pairwise relationships between individual variables (e.g., items on a scale) and seeks to extract latent factors from the measured variables (Osborne, 2015). Therefore, eight items measuring two (unacceptable trade-offs and failed communications) of the seven constructs were taken through EFA since these items’ measuring were coined by the researcher based on how they are defined in literature.

SEM has turned out to be a quasi-standard in marketing research (Babin et al., 2008; Bagozzi, 1994; Hulland, 1999), as it permits researchers to examine full theories and

concepts (Rigdon, 2014). Particularly scholars acknowledge SEM's capability to measure latent variables at the observation level (outer or measurement model) and examine relationships among latent variables on the theoretical level (inner or structural model) (Bollen, 1989). SEM adopts a hypothesis-testing approach, also known as Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) approach (Byrne, 1994). As distinct from EFA, CFA is suitable when the researcher has some understanding of the fundamental latent variable structure.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Malhotra and Birks (2007) contend that the subject of ethics is a crucial concern in academic research. Blaxter, Hughes and Tigh (2010) recognise that the general reason for ethical issue in research is the conflict of interest between the researcher's interest and that of the respondents. Fundamental ideologies of ethical practice involve the assent of respondents, to observe these values, the researcher made sure that respondents gave their informed consent before administering the questionnaire. This meant that the participants agreed to take reverence for independence, and to preserve privacy and confidentiality.

In order part in the research before they actually took part. The respondents were made aware of what they were required to do in respect to filling the questionnaire. Furthermore, an information preamble was provided at the beginning of the questionnaire to provide details about the researcher, the research topic and the purpose of the study. In order to prevent respondents hurriedly answering the questions, the researcher only targeted those who had ample time to fill out the questionnaire. This accorded the respondents the opportunity to read the questionnaire thoroughly before filling it out. The demographic questions were structured in such a way that the respondent's identity was not revealed. The

respondents were also made aware that the research was purely for academic purposes, hence their anonymity and their responses are safeguarded.

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed research methodology employed for the study. More precisely, it focused on the research approach, method and strategies used for the data collection, the sampling technique employed and the data analysis procedures.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter tackles the output generated from the analysis of 318 service customers in Ghana who avoids a particular service brand. The study sought to determine the main drivers for the avoidance of service firms in Ghana as well as the mediating role of brand hate in the relationship between these drivers and brand avoidance. The findings are displayed and discussed in detail. Specifically, this chapter describes the demographic characteristics of the participants, EFA descriptive statistics, reliability and validity analysis, CFA and finally the structural model.

5.2 Data Entry, Screening and Treatment of Missing Data

Drawing on Saunders et al. (2012), there exists several essential steps scholars must undertake to organize data before carrying out any statistical analysis. Data editing is crucial in data analysis: this has been highlighted for some time now by researchers (Pallant, 2011). Specifically, data screening entails scrutinizing the data and looking out for missing data and outliers that may end up skewing the data and, as a result, affect the outcome of the study (Coakes & Steed, 2009). Especially, questionnaires that contained bias responses, missing data and outliers were deemed unusable. According to Paulhus (1991), response bias occurs when a person, each time by way of response, responds in an orderly manner to items in a questionnaire on some premise aside from what precisely the items are intended to measure. This manner of response can be complicated for research when left unchecked (Johnson et al., 2005). With regards to outliers, Pallant (2003) argues that some analyses can be very sensitive to outliers. Hence, they were deemed unusable. Furthermore, Sekaran

and Bougie (2013) presented a threshold of 75% completeness for all questionnaires in terms of missing data. Consequently, this criterion was applied in dealing with missing data.

The first survey conducted for the purpose of EFA took four days. Out of 150 administered questionnaires, 139 questionnaires were obtained representing a 92.7% response rate. After entering the data into SPSS software, only 123 of the questionnaires appeared usable. The second survey process took approximately 10 days. Out of 350 administered questionnaires, a total of 335 questionnaires were returned representing a 96.2% response rate. These were entered into SPSS software version 22. After screening the data, 17 of the questionnaires appeared unusable. Therefore a total of 318 responses were valid after the data screening and these were used for further analysis.

5.3 Demographic Profile of Respondents – EFA

The demographic profile of the 123 respondents used in EFA is shown in Table 5.3. A total of 52.8% of the total population of respondents were females while 47.2 % represented the total number of males. Furthermore, the majority of the total population represented by a percentage of 59 were within the age bracket “24 or less”; 33.3% of the population were within the 25-34 age brackets; 7.3% represented the age bracket “35-44”, no respondent fell within the 45-54 age brackets. In addition, 72.4% of the total population were unmarried, 26.8 were married while just about 0.8% were divorced. With regard to respondents’ current level of education, 72.4% of the population were from the bachelor degree category while 26% of the population were of the master’s degree category, and only 2.4% belonged to the PhD category. What is more, 56.9% of the total population had their average monthly income below GHC 500, and 21.1% had an average monthly income of 2000 and beyond; 4.9%, 8.1% and 8.9% of the population were within income brackets 500 – 999, 1000 –

1499 and 1500 – 1999 respectively. Finally, the majority of the population, represented by 23.9% avoided Financial and Insurance brands, next was the telecommunication industry with 17.1%. This was followed by the health and social work sector as well as the hotel and restaurant sector, both came out with an equal percentage of 13.8 each and then came trade; repair of vehicles with 8.1%, next was education, transport and storage, the “other” category and the real estate industry with percentages 6.5, 4.9, 4.1 and 2.4 respectively.

Table 5.1: Demographic profile of respondents - EFA

Demographic variable		Frequency (N = 123)	Percent (100%)
Gender	Male	58	47.2
	Female	65	52.8
Age of respondent	24 or less	73	59.3
	25-34	41	33.3
	35-44	9	7.3
	45-54	0	0
Marital status	Married	33	26.8
	Unmarried	89	72.4
	Divorced	1	0.8
Current level of education	Bachelor’s degree	89	72.4
	Master’s degree	32	26
	PhD	3	2.4
Average monthly income	Less than 500	70	56.9
	500-999	6	4.9
	1000-1499	10	8.1
	1500-1999	11	8.9
	2000+	26	21.1
Service industry categories	Financial and insurance	36	29.3
	Health and social work	17	13.8
	Telecommunication	21	17.1
	Education	8	6.5
	Hotel and restaurant	17	13.8
	Transport and storage	6	4.9
	Real estate, professional, etc.	3	2.4
	Trade; repair of vehicles	10	8.1
	Other	5	4.1

Source: author’s output, 2018

5.4 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Aforementioned, 7 items measuring two (unacceptable trade-offs and failed communications) of the seven constructs were factor analysed, since these items were coined by the researcher based how the constructs are defined in literature.

Firstly, the sufficiency of the relationship between variables was examined using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (i.e., KMO) statistic of sampling adequacy, which assesses if the correlations amongst pairs of variables can be elucidated by other variables and therefore signifies an essential requirement to back the presence of an underlying factor structure (Holmes-Smith, 2011). The results showed a KMO statistic of .737, which surpasses the critical value of .6 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), and which Kaiser (1974) would label as “marvellous.” Largely, this discovery submits that there exists “probably a factor structure underlying the data” (Holmes-Smith, 2011).

Further, Bartlett’s test of sphericity suggested χ^2 (28): 247.406 (p=0.000). This outcome shows that the sample correlation matrix differed greatly from the identity matrix, thus, large correlations were seen amongst the variables (Holmes-Smith, 2011).

Table 5.2: KMO and Bartlett’s Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.737
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	247.406
	Df	28
	Sig.	.000

Source: Author’s output, 2018.

5.4.1 Rotation

For an enhanced elucidation of factors, rotation is recommended as factors that are not rotated are equivocal and difficult to interpret (Yong & Pearce, 2013). The aim here is to try to have each item loaded on as small a number of components as possible, at the same time taking full advantage of the number of high loadings on each component, thereby achieving the most simplified structure (Rummel, 1970). However, rotation does not improve the basic aspects of the analysis, such as the amount of variance extracted from the items (Osborne & Costello, 2005). Varimax rotation is by far the most orthogonal rotation, most likely because it is the default in many software packages, and because it was developed as an incremental improvement upon prior algorithms quartimax and equamax (Osborne, 2015). The varimax factor loading matrix is shown as Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Table Rotated Component Matrix

	Component	
	1	2
UT1		.639
UT2		.690
UT3		.694
FC1	.622	
FC2	.808	
FC3	.873	
FC4	.820	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Source: Author's output, 2018.

5.4.2 Factor Extraction

A Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was used in the extraction of factors. According to Osborne (2015), PCA is still the default dimension reduction method in many statistical analysis software packages. It is employed to extract maximum variance from the data set

with each component thus decreasing many variables to a less number of components (Tabachnick, Fidell, & Ullman, 2007). On the basis of inspection of eigenvalues, two factors each yielded eigen value greater than 1. A two-factor varimax rotation accounting for 53.3% of the total variance was selected as the best representation of the structure of six items. As conventional (Hair, Black, Babi, & Anderson, 2006) items with factor loadings $> |.50|$ were used to interpret these two factors. Thus, all seven items loaded well beyond the .50 threshold recommended. Hence, a new questionnaire containing 32 items was developed for all seven constructs and used in the collection of data for the purpose of conducting CFA.

5.5 Demographic Profile of Participants - CFA

The demographics of the respondents were defined in terms of their gender, year of birth, educational background, average monthly expenditure as well as the category of service brand that is mostly avoided by participants. Table 5.4 shows the frequency and percentages of the various demographic variables describing the respondents.

It is apparent from Table 5.4 that a majority of the respondents were of age 24 and below representing 71.7% of the total number of participants. This was followed by the age range from 25 to 34 with a percentage of 25.2, a small percentage of 3.1 of the total number of participants fell within the range 35-44 and finally just about .3% fell within the age range 44-55. Thus, the age distribution is skewed towards the “24 and below” age range: this was expected as the majority of the participants were undergraduates. Furthermore, with a 55.7% of males and 44.3% of females, there is an indication that the gender distribution was relatively even.

Additionally, as shown in Table 5.4, the majority of the participants had an average monthly income of below 500 GHC, 18.6% had an average monthly income that ranges from 500 to 999 GHC represented by 18.6%, followed by the average monthly income range, 1000 to 1499, 1500 to 1999, 2000+ representing 13.5%, 5.7% and 13.5% respectively.

The educational background profile revealed a relatively high representation of the bachelor's degree category with a percentage of 74.2, a percentage of 25.2 and 0.6% represented by master's degree and PhD respectively. Despite the potential bias arising from the reported demographic skew, it is evident that all participants were adequately educated and therefore could comprehend the context of the study instrument.

Finally, it was apparent from the demographic overview that the most avoided service firms were the financial and insurance firms representing a percentage of 27.4; the next in line was the telecommunication companies with a percentage of 18.2. This was closely followed by firms in the health and social work category with a percentage of 17.0, next was hotel and restaurant, followed by trade; repair of vehicles, this was followed by real estate, professional, administrative and support services then came education and finally transport and storage with percentages 12.9%, 8.5%, 6.9%, 5.0% and 4.1% respectively.

Table 5.4: Demographic profile of respondents - CFA

Demographic variable		Frequency (N = 318)	Percent (100%)
Gender	Male	177	55.7
	Female	141	44.3
Age of respondent	24 or less	227	71.4
	25-34	80	25.2
	35-44	10	3.1
	45-54	1	.3
Marital status	Married	39	12.3
	Unmarried	275	86.5
	Divorced	4	1.3
Current level of education	Bachelor's degree	236	74.2
	Master's degree	80	25.2
	PhD	2	.6
Average monthly income	Less than 500	155	48.7
	500-999	59	18.6
	1000-1499	43	13.5
	1500-1999	18	5.7
	2000+	43	13.5
Service industry categories	Financial and insurance	87	27.4
	Health and social work	54	17.0
	Telecommunication	58	18.2
	Education	16	5.0
	Hotel and restaurant	41	12.9
	Transport and storage	13	4.1
	Real estate, professional, etc.	22	6.9
	Trade; repair of vehicles	27	8.5

Source: Author's output, 2018

5.6 Descriptive Statistics and Test of Normality

Descriptive frequency statistics are used in refining the data by breaking it into small, manageable sets of numbers, staying away from intricacies so as to define the general characteristics of the data (Johnson, 2014). Table 5.5 exhibits the means and standard deviations of the various items employed and these indicate the degree to which the participants concurred with the declarations in the questionnaire. The mean results of the variables indicate how each statement performed from the 318 respondents' points of view. From Table 5.5, the highest mean was 3.57 (I am dissatisfied by brand X) whilst the lowest was 2.63 (I do not patronise brand X because of the people used in the advertisement).

What is more, academics have encouraged the necessity for a dataset to be examined with regards to the form of normality of distribution so as to be able to carry out SEM analysis of data (Kline, 2014; Hair et al., 2010). The study employed skewness and kurtosis in checking the normality of the data set (Bai & Sereena, 2005). Skewness is an evaluation of the irregularity of distribution of data whilst the extent of data point's peak is the kurtosis (Kim, 2013). In relation to Hopkins and Weeks (1990), skewness and kurtosis aid in the comprehension and definition the facets of a specific group of data by offering concise observations and summaries about the sample, which can help identify patterns. Consequently, according to Gravetter and Wallnau (2014), extreme non-normality happens when skewness $> |2|$ and/or kurtosis $> |7|$. A review of the data showed that not even one of the skewness values were greater than $|2|$ (i.e., biggest skewness estimate: UE5: $|.67|$), nor were any of the kurtosis statistics greater than $|7|$ (i.e., biggest kurtosis estimate: II4: $|.95|$). The data therefore seemed to be rationally normally distributed.

Table 5.5: Descriptive statistics and test of normality

Code	Scale Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
UE1	The performance of brand X was poor	3.35	1.14	-0.57	-0.39
UE2	The service package of brand X was inconvenient	3.32	1.05	-0.44	-0.45
UE3	Service rendered by brand X did not meet my expectations	3.55	1.03	-0.66	-0.00
UE4	My hate for brand X is linked to its bad performance	3.38	1.18	-0.44	-0.64
UE5	I am dissatisfied by brand X	3.57	1.13	-0.67	-0.18
SI1	Brand X does not reflect who I am	3.37	1.1	-0.24	-0.58
SI2	I do not want to be associated with the people who use the services of brand X	2.70	1.13	0.25	-0.63
SI3	Brand X does not fit my personality	3.03	1.11	-0.11	-0.77
SI4	Brand X symbolizes the kind of person I would never want to become	3.00	1.18	-0.14	-0.87
SI5	Brand X's image does not match my Image	3.05	1.11	-0.20	-0.75
II1	In my opinion, brand X acts irresponsibly	2.90	1.15	-0.02	-0.75
II2	In my opinion brand X is unethical	2.82	1.13	0.11	-0.80
II3	Brand X does not match my values and beliefs	2.88	1.15	-0.12	-0.88
II4	Brand X violates my moral standards	2.78	1.15	-0.01	-0.95
UT1	I see brand X as less in value because I am not familiar with it	2.98	1.06	-0.09	-0.71
UT2	I think the service package from brand X is unattractive	3.06	1.08	-0.26	-0.75
UT3	I do not know the services rendered by brand X	2.83	1.08	1.55	-0.80
FC1	The message from brand X's advertisement was not clear	2.90	1.15	-0.04	-0.88
FC2	I do not patronise brand X because of the people used in the advertisement	2.63	1.1	0.19	-0.80
FC3	I don't like the music used in the service brand X's advertisement	2.65	1.1	0.10	-0.88
FC4	Overall, brand X's advertisement is annoying	2.88	1.14	-0.05	-0.85
BH1	I'm disgusted by the brand X	2.65	1.12	0.24	-0.68
BH2	I'm totally angry about brand X	2.80	1.16	0.07	-0.88
BH3	I don't tolerate the brand X and its company	2.77	1.1	0.07	-0.74
BH4	Brand X is awful	2.72	1.15	0.16	-0.81
BH5	I hate brand X	2.65	1.1	0.14	-0.75
BH6	The world would be a better place without brand X	2.70	1.19	0.23	-0.85
BA1	I do not use service products of brand X anymore	3.12	1.15	-0.26	-0.77
BA2	I avoid patronising service products of brand X	3.33	1.14	-0.56	-0.61
BA3	I refrain from patronising service products brand X	3.30	1.15	-0.49	-0.65
BA4	I do not patronise brand X	3.30	1.14	-0.43	-0.65
BA5	I reject service products of brand X	3.24	1.19	-0.30	-0.82

Source: Author's output, 2018

5.7 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA is part of a universal set of procedures known as structural equation modeling (SEM) and plays a crucial part in the measurement model justification in path or structural analyses (Brown, 2014; MacCallum & Austin, 2000). SEM using Amos IBM Amos version 22 was used to perform the confirmatory factor analysis. When undertaking SEM, scholars frequently assess the measurement model (whether the measured variables accurately reflect the desired constructs or factors) prior to the evaluation of the structural model. According to Thompson (2004), it is illogical to relate constructs within a SEM model if the factors itemised in the model are not deserving of further consideration. More often, issues with SEM models are as a result of problems with the measurement model specified with CFA (Brown, 2014).

5.7.1 Assessment of the measurement model

Although Bollen (1989) advocates that determining acceptable fit measures rests ultimately with the researcher, the measurement model was assessed based on Hair et al.'s (2010) endorsement of several absolute and/or incremental model fit indices, including the normed χ^2 (i.e., NC), goodness-of-fit index (i.e., GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (i.e., AGFI), comparative fit index (i.e., CFI), the root mean-square error of approximation (i.e., RMSEA), and the standardised root residual (i.e., SRMR). Meanwhile, findings from Monte Carlo studies suggest that, on the basis of effect size, direct measures of fit are more sensitive to model misspecifications than incremental fit measures (Fan, Thompson, & Wang, 1999; Jackson, 2007). Hu and Bentler (1999) recommended the following cut-off criteria for the model fit indices.

Table 5.6: Cut-off criteria for model fit indices

Cut-off Criteria*			
Measure	Terrible	Acceptable	Excellent
CMIN/DF	> 5	> 3	> 1
CFI	<0.90	<0.95	>0.95
SRMR	>0.10	>0.08	<0.08
RMSEA	>0.08	>0.06	<0.06
PClose	<0.01	<0.05	>0.05

Source: Author’s output, 2018.

CFA was undertaken to decide whether the seven-factor model was a good fit for the data. The model was assessed using the maximum likelihood method with Amos (Arbuckle, 2006). The model included seven latent variables (i.e., unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence, ideological incompatibility, unacceptable trade-offs, failed communications, brand hate and brand avoidance) and 33 observed indicators. The first item of each factor was fixed to 1 for identification purposes. Following from this, the results of the initial model fit measures from the CFA indicated acceptable fit for the data [$\chi^2(443) = 977.797$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2 / df = 2.207$; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.912, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.062, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.06 (see Bentler, 1992; Browne & Cudeck, 1992, 1993).

Table 5.7: Initial model fit measures

Initial Model Fit Measures				
Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation	
CMIN	977.767	--	--	
DF	443	--	--	
CMIN/DF	2.207	Between 1 and 3	Excellent	
CFI	0.912	>0.95	Acceptable	
SRMR	0.056	<0.08	Excellent	
RMSEA	0.062	<0.06	Acceptable	
PClose	0	>0.05	Terrible	

Source: Author’s output, 2018,

- **Improvement of the model fit**

It was obvious that the initial model fit measures obtained revealed a not so good fit between the data and the model. Therefore, drawing on Kline (2014), there was the need to refine the model. In doing so, the model was modified by dropping two items (SI1 and FC1) reducing the total number items to 30. Additionally, some error terms were co-varied. This led to an enhancement of the reliability of the respective constructs and consequently improved the model fit indices; as well all factors loaded significantly at a threshold of .5 as recommended by Hair et al. (2010) (see factor loadings in Table 5.9)

Table 5.8: Improved model fit

Final Model Fit Measures			
Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	711.236	--	--
DF	378	--	--
CMIN/DF	1.882	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	0.943	>0.95	Acceptable
SRMR	0.054	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.053	<0.06	Excellent
PClose	0.221	>0.05	Excellent

Source: Author's output, 2018.

5.7.2 The factor loadings table

The factor loadings table (Table 5.9) displays the final items after CFA; it also depicts how well a group of items measures a particular factor. Hair et al. (2010) suggested a threshold of 0.50. All the items were shown to have loaded satisfactorily with the highest loading being 0.854 (I do not patronise brand X) and the smallest being 0.502 (the message of brand X's advertisement was not clear). Furthermore, these loadings are employed in the evaluation of convergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The final CFA loadings as shown in Table 5.9 below reveals a good fit.

5.8 Validity and Reliability

Drawing on Schreiber et al. (2006), the validity of the ultimate outcomes of the structural model is reliant on determining the reliability of the principal constructs. The power of SEM is realized greatly when several measures for each latent variable are initially examined through CFA to institute the conceptual accuracy of latent variables employed in the ultimate structural model (Schreiber et al., 2006).

Table 5.9: Factor loadings table

Construct	Items	Loadings	R²	Cronbach Alpha	t-values
Unmet Expectations				.853	7.129
	UE1	0.755	.532		12.124
	UE2	0.759	.403		10.568
	UE3	0.773	.639		FIXED
	UE4	0.763	.532		13.194
	UE5	0.731	.582		12.655
Symbolic Incongruence				.816	6.454
	SI2	0.723	.397		9.843
	SI3	0.719	.467		FIXED
	SI4	0.729	.588		11.602
	SI5	0.706	.675		12.140
Ideological Incompatibility				.863	8.714
	II1	0.738	.665		15.685
	II2	0.785	.698		FIXED
	II3	0.695	.467		14.241
	II4	0.661	.560		13.340
Unacceptable Trade-offs				.787	7.545
	UT1	0.810	.626		FIXED
	UT2	0.664	.528		11.726
	UT3	0.713	.521		11.671
Failed Communications				.834	7.687
	F2	0.815	.602		FIXED
	F3	0.773	.743		14.598
	F4	0.668	.556		13.072
Brand Hate				.911	9.533
	BH1	0.778	.591		16.357
	BH2	0.796	.713		19.977
	BH3	0.798	.703		19.182
	BH4	0.826	.755		FIXED
	BH5	0.783	.612		16.779
	BH6	0.619	.415		12.728
Brand Avoidance				.932	9.810
	BA1	0.837	.686		19.413
	BA2	0.812	.735		20.914
	BA3	0.852	.805		22.908
	BA4	0.854	.773		FIXED
	BA5	0.78	.680		19.240

Source: Author's output, 2018

In measuring convergent validity of the items, it was evident from the above table that the items loaded well above $> .50$ and regarded well given the sample size of 318 (Hair et al., 2010). This, therefore, provided support for convergent validity. What is more, the Fornell-Larcker test particularly compares the average variance-extracted (i.e., AVE). AVE is the average percentage of variation explained (i.e., variance extracted) among the items of a construct (Hair et al., 2010). As a rule-of thumb, AVE values of $.50$ reveal acceptable convergence (Hair et al., 2010; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Specifically, AVEs as seen in Table 5.10 range from $.532$ to $.734$, hence, offering a strong backing for the model's convergent validity.

Reliability is “estimated as one minus the proportion of the observed variance due to random error” (Kline, 2014, p. 58). The most generally conveyed reliability measure is Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951), which assesses the internal consistency reliability, the level to which answers are consistent through the questions in a particular measure (Kline, 2014). According to Pallant (2011), the lowest value for this estimate should be 0.7 . An overview of the attained Cronbach's alphas is provided in Table 5.10 above. Explicitly, the results indicated the attainment of adequate alphas for each of the seven suggested factors. However, Hair et al. (2010) postulate that, even though coefficient alpha is still a regular assessment of reliability, it may devalue reliability. Therefore, construct reliability (CR) is commonly used in SEM models. One crucial benefit of applying CR is that it is dependent on model parameter estimates. High reliability scores propose that the significant indicators “all seem to measure the same thing” (Hair et al., 2010). From Table 5.10 below, it is evident that reliability is attained since CR values ranges from $.791$ to $.932$.

Discriminant validity reveals the degree to which a construct is accurately different from other constructs (Hair et al., 2010; Bollen, 1989). As far as the Fornell-Larcker test is concerned, it offers a rigorous test of discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1951; Hair et al., 2010; Holmes-Smith, 2011). The basis on which the Fornell-Larcker test is grounded is the idea that a latent construct should describe a more significant amount of the variance in its items than it shares with another construct (Hair et al., 2010). According to Fornell and Lacker (1981), the square root of the AVE should be greater than the correlation between the construct and the other constructs. This is evident in Table 5.10 as it exhibits that the correlations of the various factors with each other are larger than the square of any other correlations in the table. Hence, discriminant validity was realized.

Table 5.10: Correlations table

	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Brand hate	0.913	0.639	0.799						
2 Brand avoidance	0.932	0.734	0.54	0.857					
3 Unmet expectations	0.853	0.538	0.324	0.403	0.733				
4 Symbolic incongruence	0.818	0.532	0.505	0.472	0.332	0.729			
5 Ideological incompatibility	0.864	0.614	0.519	0.471	0.568	0.631	0.784		
6 Failed communications	0.838	0.634	0.55	0.29	0.144	0.402	0.473	0.796	
7 Unacceptable trade-offs	0.791	0.558	0.354	0.387	0.377	0.515	0.484	0.555	0.747

Source: Author's output 2018

Note: Variances extracted (VE) are on the diagonal; squared correlations are off-diagonal. The VEs for each construct are far greater than the corresponding inter-construct square correlations, thereby supporting discriminant validity.

The next stage of the analysis was to test the conceptual model formed, based on the confirmed items and constructs from the CFA. This involved evaluating the model's predictive model. The results for the structural modelling are presented in the table below.

The structural model examines the test of the relationships (between the latent variables) hypothesised by Kline (2014), hence the hypotheses that were formulated based on the conceptual framework were tested in this section. Table 5.11 depicts a reliable and sound model fit for the conceptual model.

Table 5.11: Conceptual model fit indices

Conceptual Model Fit Measures				
Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation	
CMIN	25.502	--	--	
DF	18	--	--	
CMIN/DF	1.417	Between 1 and 3	Excellent	
CFI	0.994	>0.95	Excellent	
SRMR	0.056	<0.08	Excellent	
RMSEA	0.036	<0.06	Excellent	
PClose	0.744	>0.05	Excellent	

Source: Author’s output, 2018.

5.9 Analysis of Hypothesized Relationships

The three key concerns that are considered in validating hypothesised relationships are: “(i) whether the directions of the relationships between the constructs are as hypothesized, which can be examined looking at the signs of the respective parameters; (ii) the strength of the hypothesised links, reflected by the estimated parameters, which should be at least significant (i.e., their respective t-values should be greater than 1.96); and (iii) the amount of variance in the endogenous variables explained by the respective proposed determinants, which can be evaluated looking at the squared multiple correlations (R²) for the structural equations (Bryne, 2016).

5.9.1 Direct relationship (H1a-e), (H2a-e)

The baseline (direct) relationship between the five independent variables i.e. Unmet Expectations (UE), Symbolic Incongruence (SI), Ideological Incompatibility (II),

Unacceptable Trade-offs (UT) and Failed Communications (FC) and the dependent variable Brand Avoidance (BA) were evaluated having controlled for “gender”, “age” and “level of education”. The results are shown below. Furthermore, the relationship between these drivers and Brand Hate (BH) was also evaluated.

Table 5.12: Results of hypothesized direct relationship

<i>Control</i>							
<i>Paths</i>			Estimate	P	S. E	t-value	Outcome
Gender	-- >	BA	0.073	0.073	0.081	1.79	
Age	-- >	BA	-0.068	0.134	0.084	-1.5	
Level of education	-- >	BA	-0.01	0.821	0.095	-0.226	
<i>Path</i>							
UT	-- >	BH	-0.239	***	0.077	-3.931	Not supported
FC	-- >	BH	0.522	***	0.069	9.165	Supported
II	-- >	BH	0.059	0.395	0.074	0.85	not supported
SI	-- >	BH	0.339	***	0.08	5.831	Supported
UE	-- >	BH	0.205	***	0.077	3.633	Supported
UT	-- >	BA	0.185	0.004	0.083	2.879	Supported
FC	-- >	BA	-0.194	0.003	0.082	-2.932	not supported
II	-- >	BA	0.05	0.481	0.078	0.704	not supported
SI	-- >	BA	0.173	0.004	0.089	2.748	Supported
UE	-- >	BA	0.126	0.034	0.083	2.126	Supported
BH	-- >	BA	0.465	***	0.059	8.04	Supported

Source: Author’s output, 2018

The R-squared value for this study is 0.51, which means that the independent variables (unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence, ideological incompatibility, unacceptable trade-offs and failed communications) thus explain more than half of the variation in the dependent variable i.e. brand avoidance (Henseler et al., 2016).

Furthermore, it is evident from Table 5.12 that the path coefficients for the relationship between three of the drivers - unacceptable trade-offs (with $\beta=0.185$, t-value =2.879 and p-value=.004), symbolic incongruence (with $\beta=0.173$, t-value= 2 and p-value=0.006), unmet expectations (with $\beta=0.126$, t-value=2.126 and p-value=0.003) i.e. independent variables

and brand avoidance dependent variable - were positive and significant. Notably, unacceptable trade-offs seem to have made the most impact among the three. On the other hand, failed communications (with $\beta = -0.179$, t-value -2.932 and p-value $= .003$), even though it significantly influenced brand avoidance, had an inverse path, thus it was negatively significant. Finally, ideological incompatibility (with $\beta = 0.05$, t-value $= 0.704$ and p-value $= .481$) yielded no significance even though it was positive. The results confirm hypothesis H1a, H1b and H1d. On the whole a Ghanaian service customer would avoid a service brand if the brand is unable to meet their expectations, if it is symbolically incongruent and if the cost/benefit trade-off is considered unacceptable (perceived to be of low quality, unfamiliar and/or with an unattractive service package).

Additionally, from the direct relationship between the drivers and the mediator, brand hate (BH), it was evident that the path coefficients of three drivers - unmet expectations (with $\beta = .205$, t-value $= 3.633$ and p-value $= .000$), symbolic incongruence (with $\beta = .339$, t-value $= 5.831$ and p-value $= .000$) and failed communications (with $\beta = .5222$, t-value $= 9.165$ and p-value $= .000$) - were positive and significant. Unacceptable trade-offs (with $\beta = -2.932$, t-value $= -3.931$ and p-value $= .000$), on the other hand, was negatively significant. However, the path coefficients for ideological incompatibility (with $\beta = 0.05$, t-value $= .85$ and p-value $= .395$) although positive were not significant. Largely, the Ghanaian service customer would hate a brand if the brand fails to meet his/her expectations, if the brand is symbolically incongruent and if the brand fails in trying to communicate with the customer. Finally, the path coefficients ($\beta = .465$, t-value $= 8.04$ and p-value $= .000$) for the relationship between brand hate and brand avoidance, thus the mediator and the dependent variable (BH and BA), were positive and highly significant. Subsequently, hypothesis H2a, H2b and H2e were confirmed.

5.9.2 Indirect relationship (mediation analysis)

This section documents the mediation analysis that was undertaken to address the effect brand hate has on the relationship between brand avoidance and its drivers. This was done following Baron and Kenny's (1986) regression-based approach, which specifies that the following conditions for the mediating effect of a construct: (i) the independent variable must have a significant association with the dependent variable; (ii) the independent variable must have a significant association with the mediator; and (iii) when both the independent variable and the mediator variable are included as predictors, the mediator must have a significant effect on the dependent variable (Judd & Kenny, 1981; Grayson & Ambler, 1999).

It is evident from Table 5.13 below that all three conditions stipulated by Baron and Kenny (1981) have been met. As earlier on discussed, UE, SI and UT had a significant positive effect on BA. Additionally, UE, SI and FC came out to have a positive significant impact on brand hate (mediator) and finally there was a significant positive relationship between brand avoidance and brand hate, hence it was possible to undertake mediation analysis. The next stage was to determine the type of mediation that exists in the direct relationships.

Complete or full mediation is supported when the p -value for an indirect relationship is significant, while the corresponding p-value in an indirect relationship is non-significant. Otherwise, supposing all three conditions still hold, partial mediation is supported (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Table 5.13: Results of indirect relationship

						Model 1		-	Model 2		
						Estimate	p		Estimate	P	Outcome
<i>Control</i>											
Gender	-- >	BA				0.073	0.073				
Age	-- >	BA				-0.068	0.134				
Level of Edu.	-- >	BA				-0.01	0.821				
<i>Direct</i>											
UT	-- >	BH				-0.239	***				Not supported
FC	-- >	BH				0.522	***				Supported
II	-- >	BH				0.059	0.395				Not supported
SI	-- >	BH				0.339	***				Supported
UE	-- >	BH				0.205	***				Supported
UT	-- >	BA				0.185	0.004				Supported
FC	-- >	BA				-0.194	0.003				Not supported
II	-- >	BA				0.05	0.481				Not supported
SI	-- >	BA				0.173	0.006				Supported
UE	-- >	BA				0.126	0.034				Supported
BH	-- >	BA				0.465	***				Supported
<i>Indirect</i>											
UT	-- >	BH	-- >	BA					-0.144	0.001	Partial mediation
FC	-- >	BH	-- >	BA					0.3	0.001	partial mediation
II	-- >	BH	-- >	BA					0.03	0.52	no mediation
SI	-- >	BH	-- >	BA					0.222	0.001	partial mediation
UE	-- >	BH	-- >	BA					0.133	0.003	partial mediation

Source: Author's output, 2018

Table 5.13 above clearly reveals that, after the introduction of brand hate as a mediator in the relationships hypothesised as H1a-e, specifically, the relationship between unmet expectations and brand avoidance, which previously revealed a positive significant relationship, remained significant since the indirect effect yielded a p-value of 0.003, indicating a partial mediation. Unacceptable trade-offs, which initially yielded a positive

significant effect on brand avoidance had turned out to be inversely significant (after brand hate was introduced) with a p-value of 0.001 and a beta estimate of -0.144, indicating a partial mediation. Failed communications prior to the introduction of the mediator had an inverse significant effect on brand avoidance with a positive significance with a p value of 0.001 also indicating the presence of partial mediation. Symbolic incongruence on one hand had a positive significant effect on brand avoidance prior to the introduction of brand hate as a mediator. The relationship still remained positively significance with a p value of 0.001, depicting partial mediation. However, ideological incompatibility had a non-significant effect on brand avoidance. Therefore, it was no surprise when this relationship revealed a non-mediation effect with a p-value of 0.52 since, according to Baron and Kenny (1981), when there is no significant relationship between the independent and the dependent variable, mediation is absent for such a relationship.

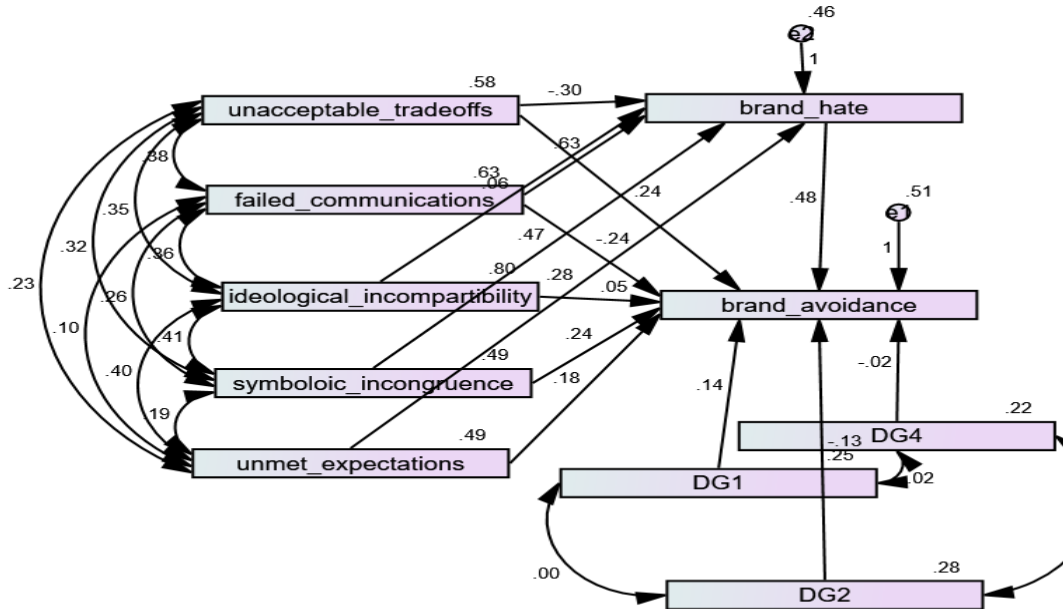


Figure 5. 1: Path analysis of the structural model (mediation analysis)
 Source: Author's output, 2018.

5.10 Discussion of findings

This section discusses the findings from the analysis with respect to the two main objectives of the study.

5.10.1 Objective one (H1a-e)

The first and main objective of this study sought to determine the drivers of brand avoidance among customers of service firms in the Ghanaian context by examining the direct relationship between brand avoidance and the five (5) drivers proposed by Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b) and Knittel et al. (2016). It was revealed from the analysis of this study that, out of the five drivers proposed by literature (Lee et al., 2009a, 2009b; Knittel et al., 2016) three of them (i.e., unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence and unacceptable trade-offs) influenced brand avoidance. In relation to symbolic incongruence, consumers avoid brands that are mostly incongruent with their self-image (Khan & Lee 2014). Similarly, Hegner et al. (2017) discovered that brand avoidance was triggered mainly by symbolic incongruence. Furthermore, the existence of symbolic incongruence as an influential factor, along with unmet expectations was verified by Khan and Lee (2014). Similarly, in relation to unacceptable trade-offs, Lee et al. (2009) as well as Knittel et al. (2016) posits that consumers avoided brands because they were perceived as representing an unacceptable cost to benefit trade-off. Even though these studies were conducted in advanced economies, this study goes a long way to prove that, even from an emerging economy perspective, brands that are unable to meet customers' expectations, brands that are not symbolically congruent with a customers' sense of self or perceived as low in quality and therefore offering unacceptable trade-offs, are equally avoided. Failed communications on the other hand was shown to inversely impact brand avoidance. The novelty about this relationship is that, at face value, one would have thought that customers would avoid brands they perceive

as having failed in trying to communicate to them, being it the content, message or celebrities involved in their advertisements. But then again, a deeper reflection may reveal that, even though consumers may not agree with the message, content or even the celebrities involved in a particular brand's advertisement, they may not necessarily avoid the brand: after all it's just an advert and has little to do with the service product itself. Additionally, we could also infer that advertising may be losing its effectiveness. However, this finding is in contrast with Knittel et al. (2016) who suggested a positive relationship between failed communications and brand avoidance. Finally, ideological incompatibility was shown to have an insignificant impact on brand avoidance. Meanwhile literature does not entirely agree with this finding, some studies have shown that ideological incompatibility result in brand avoidance (Kim et al., 2014; Hegner et al., 2017). Similarly, as seen in Lee et al. (2009b) and Knittel et al. (2016), consumers may become sensitive to corporate actions (ideological incompatibility) and communications in general that relate to their concerns, and react to a company's inconsistent behaviour. However, it is known that cultural differences do have an impact on consumer behaviour (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Therefore, in contrast to some brand avoidance studies conducted in emerging economies (Kim et al., 2014; Hegner et al., 2017), Ghanaian service consumers may not be as sensitive to a brand's action that are not in line with their personal values or morals to warrant a persistently negative attitude and pattern of action towards a brand based on a holistic evaluation of the company's actions over time.

5.10.2 Objective two (H2a-e)

The second objective of the study was to determine the mediating role of brand hate on the relationship between brand avoidance and its drivers. It was apparent after the mediation analysis that brand hate partially mediates the relationship between brand avoidance and

four (un-met expectations, symbolic incongruence, unacceptable trade-offs and failed communications) of its drivers, made up of the three drivers validated in the baseline model analysis, as well as failed communications (which had an inverse significant effect on brand avoidance prior to mediation). This finding is inferred from the positive significant effect failed communications has on brand hate, thereby implying that, even though failed communications may not lead to brand avoidance, when the brand is hated as a result of its failed communications, consequently brand avoidance may occur. It is, however, noteworthy to mention that, once brand hate was shown to have a positive significant effect on brand avoidance, failed communications may eventually result in brand avoidance. Interestingly, although brand hate partially mediates the relationship between unacceptable trade-offs and brand avoidance, the relationship revealed an inverse path: meanwhile prior to mediation, this relationship was positively significant. What this suggests is that, even though consumers may simply avoid brands they perceive as having an unattractive service package, as low in quality and/ or unfamiliar, they would not go as far as hating the brand. However, brand hate failed to mediate the relationship between ideological incompatibility and brand avoidance: this non-mediation was inferred from the insignificant relationship between the two constructs prior to mediation confirming Baron and Kenny's (1989) rule of non-mediation.

Nonetheless, past studies affirm and disaffirm the above findings. Generally, these findings are in line with analysed literature, which argue that emotions act as mediators between stimuli and consumers' behaviour (Romani et al., 2009, 2012; Watson & Spence, 2007), so there should exist a positive relationship between the drivers of brand avoidance and negative emotion (brand hate) towards brands. Particularly, with regards to failed communications, this study confirms the findings from Sabri and Obermiller (2012) who

argue that provocative advertisements can have a negative effect on consumers' attitude (in this case, brand hate) towards brands. This study's findings also confirm the findings from Salvatori (2007) and Zorantonello (2016) who discovered that unmet expectations and symbolic incongruence respectively may result in brand hate. In addition, Bryson et al. (2013) argued that there was no evidence that ideological incompatibility influenced brand hate. Conversely, a current study by Delzen (2014) showed that there existed relations between companies that act unethically and anger emotion (considered as brand hate).

5.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter mainly discussed the findings from the data analysis. Precisely, it displayed and discussed the demographic statistics of the respondents, descriptive statistics, reliability and validity analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and finally the structural model.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study as well as highlights the major findings of the study. It further provides a brief conclusion to the study and discusses the implications, recommendations and finally provides some further research directions.

6.2 Summary

The introductory chapter of this thesis outlined the real challenges encountered by brand managers. It also brought to light the academic gaps in the prevailing brand avoidance literature that required necessary attention. To address these gaps, the study undertook an examination of the topic “brand avoidance” and sought to determine whether the reasons behind brand avoidance as proposed by Lee et al. (2009a, b) and Knittel et al. (2016) are the same reasons why consumers avoid service brands. Furthermore, this study attempted to find out whether these drivers directly resulted in brand avoidance or whether there existed some factors mediating the relationship. Consequently, the study examined the mediating role of brand hate on the relationship. The main objectives of the study were 1) to determine the drivers of brand avoidance among Ghanaian service consumers, and 2) to examine the mediating role of brand hate on the relationship.

Relevant literature pertaining to this area of study was thoroughly reviewed, and a conceptual framework was developed along with a number of hypotheses: each of the drivers were expected to have a positive significant effect on brand avoidance (H1a-e); brand hate significantly mediates the relationship between brand avoidance and each of the

drivers (H2a-e) and finally brand hate was argued to have a positive significant effect on brand avoidance (H3).

Three hundred and fifty (350) structured questionnaires containing 30 items were self-administered, out of which 335 were recovered. However, 17 of them were unusable after cleaning the data. Hence, a total of 318 valid responses were used in the data analysis. The study used SEM with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) IBM version 22 to analyse the data.

6.3 Major Findings

With regard to the first objective of the study, which was to determine the drivers of brand avoidance among Ghanaian service consumers, the study revealed that, out of the five drivers, three of them (unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence and unacceptable trade-offs) had a positive significant effect on brand avoidance, as seen in several studies (Khan & Lee, 2014, Hegner et al., 2017, Knittel, 2016); thus, in the Ghanaian context, consumers avoid service brands that fail to meet their expectations, that are symbolically incongruent and/or are perceived as having unacceptable trade-offs (low in quality or unfamiliar). Furthermore, failed communications revealed an inverse significant effect on brand avoidance; a possible inference drawn from this relationship is that consumers would not avoid a brand simply because something (or everything) about the advertisement is not right. In other words, Ghanaian service consumers in their decision to avoid a service brand do not take into consideration how the firm is unable to communicate well to them through their advertisements. Thus, advertising may be losing its efficacy in the Ghanaian context. Further, Ghanaian service consumers do not avoid brands that are not compatible with their ideologies. In other words, ideological incompatibility failed to have a significant effect on

brand avoidance, this finding concurs with the findings of past studies (Kim et al., 2014) however other study findings (Rindell et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2012) are in contrast with this finding. The inference made from this is that Ghanaian service consumers really would not avoid brands because their (customer and company) ideologies are not compatible. These findings confirmed hypotheses: H1a, H1b and H1d.

The second objective attempted to examine the mediating role of brand hate on the relationship between brand avoidance and its drivers as some scholars (Dalli et al., 2007; Gilboa & Rafaeli, 2003; Romani et al., 2009, 2012) have argued that emotions acts as mediators between stimuli and consumers' behaviour. The findings revealed that brand hate partially mediates the relationship between four of the drivers (unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence, unacceptable trade-offs and failed communications). However, there was no mediation for ideological incompatibility since it (Ideological incompatibility) had no significant effect on brand avoidance in the direct relationship analysis. Interestingly, although partially mediated, the relationship between unacceptable trade-offs turned out to have an inverse influence on brand avoidance, inferring that, even though Ghanaian service consumers may avoid brands they perceive as offering unacceptable trade-offs (i.e. low in quality and/or unfamiliar as was evident in the direct relationship), unacceptable trade-offs may not warrant an intense negative feeling (brand hate) towards such a brand.

6.4 Conclusions

As mentioned at the beginning of this study, unhappy customers offer a basis of education for both scholars and managers. Regrettably, this basis has often been overlooked since many orthodox brand management studies place an emphasis on brand choice, brand loyalty, and consumer preferences. This study addresses the gap in research by investigating

the reasons why Ghanaian service consumers avoid some brands in the Ghanaian service industry.

It is evident from the findings of this study that the concept of brand avoidance exists in the Ghanaian context and it is mostly driven by unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence and unacceptable trade-offs. Furthermore, these factors, including failed communications were shown to be mediated by brand hate. However, ideological incompatibility failed to have any significant effect on brand avoidance.

6.5 Managerial Implications

Practically, the numerous problems that brands may face in today's market suggests that tackling brand avoidance may entail much more than just a re-assessment of marketing communications or a constricted emphasis on the one-dimensional problems faced by brands. Possibly, there may exist diverse motives for a consumer's avoidance of certain brands. Recognition of these reasons may be an influential instrument in the upkeep or enhancement of a brand and may aid marketers to find a way of handling the intentional avoidance of services to a larger extent in the future.

Additionally, we can settle that brands require treating brand avoidance as a situation made up of various inter-dependent variables, not concentrating on them autonomously, but instead as a set of factors. These situations offer a powerful atmosphere for managers to respond appropriately.

6.6 Theoretical Implications

Generally, from an academic viewpoint, awareness of why people avoid brands is remarkable and pertinent to a better appreciation of consumer culture. Moreover, this study adds to the brand avoidance literature in the Ghanaian market as it has not been studied in this context yet. Furthermore, this study emphasised the unfavourable aspects of the brand and consumer relationship in the Ghanaian market, instead of just concentrating on unfavourable aspects. It offers a deeper understanding of the main drivers of brand avoidance behavior, especially to the service providers in the Ghanaian market.

6.7 Recommendations

It is crucial for brand managers to take note of the factors mediated by brand hate in order to help minimise the occurrence of brand avoidance, particularly for failed communications that influenced brand avoidance only in the presence of brand hate. Therefore, firms should endeavour to carefully design appropriate marketing communications programmes that will communicate exactly what it is intended to communicate.

What is more, managers should constantly manage the quality of the product and services and keep promises that are made to consumers. In addition, brands should endeavour to build a congruence of brand image, brand messaging, and consumer experience. Further, marketing managers should always pay close attention to the market group or the combination of groups they are targeting to avoid a dilution of the value attached to the product or service thereby resulting in symbolic incongruence. Values that are shared by the consumer, must be echoed by the brand, and unceasingly highlighted to further improve the consumer-brand relationship, as well as deliver a concrete basis for its growth.

6.8 Limitations and Future Research

As brand avoidance is still an emerging concept, it is a topic that requires more examination. In order to improve upon the comprehension of the drivers for brand avoidance, it is advocated that future research should look at the subject from one trade or a specific sector of the industry perspective. This would create vital discernments not only for the sector but also for this research, whether it can be confirmed or not. For instance future research may study the avoidance of luxury service firms such as 5-star hotels or renowned private hospitals among high-earning consumers.

Based on the findings of this study, the most influential drivers prompting the avoidance of Ghanaian service brands are unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence and unacceptable trade-offs. Further, scholars can be recommended to examine and thoroughly understand the reasons why people are motivated by these factors in an inductive way. To enable recognition of brand avoidance reasons prevailing in other cultures, future studies should be undertaken in countries other than Ghana. As this study interviewed only the end-consumer, future studies from orientations other than the end-consumer's viewpoint may require attention and could offer substantial managerial implications such as the result of brand avoidance on business-to-business affairs and co-branding agreements.

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APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA BUSINESS SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

The researcher is a Master of Philosophy marketing student at the Marketing and Entrepreneurship department of the University of Ghana Business School, Legon. This questionnaire is designed to understand **BRAND AVOIDANCE AMONG GHANAIAN SERVICE CONSUMERS**. It is purely for academic purpose and as such any information provided would be treated confidential. Note that, there are no right or wrong answers, and the researcher would appreciate it if the responses would be as honest as possible.

Section A: General information

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age of Respondent: 24 or less 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-65 above 65
3. Marital status: Married Unmarried Divorced
4. Current Level of education: PHD undergraduate
5. Average Monthly Income (GHC): a. Less than 500 b. 500-999 c. 1000-1499 d. 1500-1999 e. 2000+

Section B: Background

Think of a service brand (**Brand X**) you avoid most or have avoided most in the past and use it to answer the questions below. A service brand in this case refers to a brand that creates services that have no significant tangible aspect to them.

5. Which of the following service industries would you categorise the service brand (**Brand X**) you avoid most.

Financial and insurance

Health and social work

Telecommunication

Education

Hotel and restaurant

Transport and storage

Real estate, professional, administrative and support services

Trade: repair of vehicles []

Any other, specify.....

Section C: Drivers of brand avoidance, Brand hate and Brand avoidance

Please indicate the extent to which u agree or disagree with the following statements you regarding the service brand you avoid. Tick the appropriate number on the Likert scale 1 to 5, with 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Neutral (N), 4=Agree (A) 5= Strongly Agree (SA)

	Experiential Avoidance: Unmet Expectations	1	2	3	4	5
		SD	D	N	A	SA
UE1	The performance of brand X was poor					
UE2	The service package of brand X was inconvenient					
UE3	Service rendered by brand X did not meet my expectations					
UE4	My hate for brand X is linked to its bad performance					
UE5	I am dissatisfied by brand X					
Identity Avoidance: Symbolic Incongruence						
SI1	Brand does not reflect who I am					
SI2	I do not want to be associated with people who use brand X					
SI3	Brand X does not fit my personality					
SI4	Brand X symbolizes the kind of person I would never want to become					
SI5	Brand X's image does not match my image					
Moral Avoidance: Ideological Incompatibility						
II1	In my opinion, brand X acts irresponsibly					
II2	In my opinion brand X is unethical					
II3	Brand X does not match my values and beliefs					
II4	Brand X violates my moral standards					
Deficit-value Avoidance: Unacceptable Trade-offs						
UT1	I see brand X as less in value					
UT2	I think the service package from brand X is unattractive					
UT3	I do not know the services rendered by brand X					
Advertising Avoidance: Failed Communications						
FC1	The message from brand X's advertisement was not clear					
FC2	I do not patronise brand X because of the people used in the advert					
FC3	I do not like the music used in brand X's advertisement					
FC4	Over all, brand X's advertisement is annoying					
Brand Hate						
BH1	I disgusted by brand X					

BH2	I am totally angry about brand X					
BH3	I do not tolerate brand X and its company					
BH4	Brand X is awful					
BH5	I hate brand X					
BH6	The world would be a better place without brand X					
Brand Avoidance						
BA1	I do not use the products of brand X anymore					
BA2	I avoid patronising service products of brand X					
BA3	I refrain from patronising service products of brand X					
BA4	I do not patronise brand X					
BA5	I reject the services of brand x					