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# Why Do Consumers Avoid Certain Brands?

A Study of Brand Avoidance within the Swedish Cosmetics Industry

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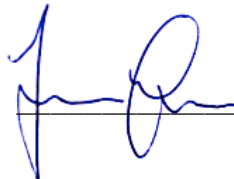
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# Bachelor Thesis within Business Administration

**Title:**

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**Key Words:**

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## Abstract

**Background** - As of today, the positive forms of consumer-brand relationships have been intensively researched, whereas its counterpart has attained far less attention. Whilst current literature is focused on increasing positive brand equity, the knowledge of negative brand equity is sparse. When the brand-consumer relationship is negatively affected and the brand equity is unfavourable, rejection of a specific brand, namely brand avoidance might occur. This may affect companies negatively if not managed properly. Therefore, *brand avoidance* is a phenomenon demanding further research.

**Purpose** - The purpose of this study is to investigate, and gain a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons of why consumers engage in brand avoidance within the Swedish cosmetics industry for women.

**Method** – In this cross-sectional study with an underlying qualitative and abductive research approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted utilising a convenience sampling approach that also incorporated characteristics of snowball sampling. The participants, 18 Swedish female cosmetics consumers, were interviewed face-to-face or over Skype.

**Findings** - This study has validated the main drivers of brand avoidance: *Experience*-, *Identity*-, *Moral*-, *Deficit-Value*- and *Advertising*. Furthermore, it confirmed that the reasons for engaging in brand avoidance could be intertwined and are highly individual, making it nearly impossible to generalise. Moreover, four new factors behind brand avoidance were found: Product Attributes, Employee-Brand Relationship, Ethical Concerns and Negative WoM. Lastly, the motive Food Favoritism was found to apply not only to food products, but also to cosmetic products. Finally, the findings resulted in a modified framework of factors behind brand avoidance.

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# 1 Introduction

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*This chapter presents relevant background information encompassing brand management. The problem motivation and purpose of the study is subsequently outlined. Thereafter, the delimitations of this study are outlined and the essential key terms are clarified.*

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## 1.1 Background

In an increasingly global society, characterised by few trade barriers and high competitive pressure, a well known brand can be vital for success (Keegan & Green, 2015). Organisations today are well aware that the most powerful tool they possess is the relationship between their brand and the consumer (Fournier, Breazeale & Fetscherin, 2012). This relationship usually develops as a result of a positive consumer experience, generally referred to as brand satisfaction (Ha & Perks, 2005). The relationship might thereafter further evolve into brand loyalty (Berry, 2000; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Lau & Lee, 1999).

Through a positive brand relationship, brand equity is attained (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Pervan, 2015). Brand equity is described as “*the differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer response to the product or its marketing*” (Kotler, Armstrong & Parment, 2011, p. 242). As marketers have strived for creating brand equity, they have realised that it is far more intricate than first imagined (Fournier et al., 2012). The brand relationship is complex, and in order for it to flourish it needs to be carefully created and cultivated (Fournier et al., 2012). As a brand can have positive brand equity, negative brand equity can also occur, which is when the brand decreases the perceived value of the product compared to not having a brand at all (Berry, 2000; Keller, 1993). When the brand-consumer relationship is negatively affected and the brand equity is unfavourable, rejection of a specific brand, namely *brand avoidance* might occur (Lee, Motion, & Conroy, 2009a).

## 1.2 Motivation and Problem Discussion

Lee, Conroy and Motion (2009b p. 422) define brand avoidance as “*...a phenomenon whereby consumers deliberately choose to keep away from or reject a brand*”. Furthermore, the consumer must have access to, and be able to afford the brand in order for the deliberate rejection to be categorised as brand avoidance (Khan & Lee, 2014). There are several reasons of why consumers neglect a brand. Some of the most discussed reasons originate from the framework of Lee et al. (2009b) and are grouped into four main drivers: *Experiential-*, *Identity-*, *Moral-*, and *Deficit-Value avoidance*. Moreover, Knittel, Beurer and Berndt (2016) have validated Lee et al.’s (2009b) findings, slightly modified the original framework, and included a newly found category: *Advertising*.

Existing branding research explore mostly positive forms of the consumer-brand relationships, such as brand awareness (Barreda, Bilgihan, Nusair & Okumus, 2015; Rossiter, 2014), brand loyalty (Fournier et al., 2012; He, Li & Harris, 2012; Huang, Lin, & Phau, 2015; Khraim, 2011; Merisavo & Raulas, 2004; Nam, Ekinci & Whyatt, 2011; Nezakati, Yen & Akhoundi, 2013), and brand love (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012; Maxian, Bradley, Wise & Toulouse, 2013). In contrast, the negative form of a consumer-brand relationship, brand avoidance, has been far less researched with approximately six studies to date (Khan & Lee, 2014; Knittel et al., 2016; Lee, Fernandez & Hyman, 2009; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Rindell, Strandvik & Wilén, 2014). It is essential that future research increasingly emphasise brand avoidance studies to achieve a more holistic view of branding and consumption behaviour. To conceptualise this, the consumer-brand relationship could be portrayed as a continuum where one end represents the positive aspects, whereas the other end represents the negative.



Figure 1 Consumer-Brand Relationship Continuum

Source: Developed by the Authors

Furthermore, examining consumer-brand relationships from an avoiding perspective may support marketing managers towards understanding factors behind brand avoidance and thus widen existing knowledge of brand management (Knittel et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2009). Lee et al. (2009, p. 145) provide a clear example of this:

*“Physicians who understood health but not illness could not treat their patients successfully; analogously, business scholars who only study successful companies may never understand what causes unsuccessful companies. Therefore, studying consumption phenomenon without studying its antithesis limits our understanding of consumers.”*

It is apparent that this area of study is still in its infancy as the existing research available is highly unspecified in terms of different industries, product segments and categories (Knittel et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b). This illuminates a knowledge gap within brand avoidance; thus this research paper is focused on the cosmetics industry for Swedish women, emphasising facial beauty products such as colour cosmetics and skincare. This study contributes towards a more complete understanding of brand avoidance through testing, modifying and expanding the existing brand avoidance framework by Knittel et al. (2016), developed from Lee et al.’s (2009b) initial framework. The knowledge is important for marketing managers since it could function as a tool for improving both organisational reputation and profitability (Knittel et al., 2016). When examining the sparse scientific marketing research within the cosmetics industry, the lack of negative aspects of the consumer-brand relationship is evident (Nezakati et al., 2013; Khraim, 2011; Merisavo & Raulas, 2004; Tajeddini & Nikdavoodi, 2014; Mattila & Wirtz, 2008). Whilst some researchers study factors behind brand loyalty (Khraim, 2011; Merisavo & Raulas, 2004; Nezakati et al., 2013), others focus on examining consumer behaviour for enabling firms to increase sales (Mattila & Wirtz, 2008; Tajeddini & Nikdavoodi, 2014). Another direction within the cosmetics marketing research is connected to the consumption behaviour itself. Apalolaza-Ibañes, Hartmann, Diehl and Terlutter (2011) have for example found cosmetic purchases to be linked with feelings of wellbeing, such as a perception of increased sexual attraction, elimination of worry and guilt, and feeling less ugly.

### 1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate, and gain a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons of why consumers engage in brand avoidance within the Swedish cosmetics industry for women.

### 1.4 Delimitations

Firstly, this study is delimited in terms of industry. The researchers have chosen to examine the cosmetics industry due to the various reasons partly described above. When examining which possible markets, industries, or product categories that would be relevant to study, industries with medium to low priced products have been found most suitable for brand avoidance research. This is because the general public has to have access to, and be able to afford the goods and services. Otherwise, the deliberate rejection of a brand could rather stem from a lack of financial means or no accessibility. The cosmetics industry is highly accessible, not only being



physically present in various fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) stores (Aktiespararna.se, 2010; ICA, 2016), but also through the Internet (Kicks, 2016; Åhlens, 2016). Beauty products have during recessions and economic turmoil even shown to increase its turnover in what is called the *lipstick effect* (Hill, Rodeheffer, Griskevicius, Durante & White, 2012), further suggesting that many consumers can afford and want to buy cosmetics despite economic downturns. This is supported from the fact that both the skincare and the makeup market are currently growing, not only in terms of market value, but also in market shares (Marketline, 2015a; Marketline, 2015b).

Moreover, this study is delimited to cosmetics applied on the *face*. The facial care segment within the global skincare industry accounted for a majority (66.1 per cent) of the total market value in 2014 (MarketLine, 2015b). Globally, the makeup industry is divided into lip-, nail-, face-, and eye makeup (Marketline, 2015a). Most of these categories are connected to the face, suggesting that studies of cosmetics applied to it, and the various parts of it, is most relevant.

Another delimitation concerns gender. Specifically, the interview participants are all women. There are several reasons for this selected target group. Firstly, accounting for approximately 85 per cent of the global beauty business sales in 2012, the cosmetics industry market is dominated by female consumers (Goudreau, 2012). Furthermore, the women's market share of the global cosmetics industry is forecasted to still dominate (Sale, 2015). The reason why the men's cosmetics industry currently is less interesting to study is because it is still in its early phase, as well as a minority within the cosmetic market (Goudreau, 2012; Henriksson, 2010; Jones, 2010; Matthews, 2005; Storwall, 2010).

When examining possible geographical delimitations, the researchers firstly examined the global cosmetics market. As of 2014, the global cosmetics market was dominated by the European<sup>1</sup> countries with a market share worth 72.5 billion EUR (Cosmetics Europe, 2015), suggesting that a European country would be most suitable to research if studying cosmetics. Due to limited funding, the researchers, who are situated in Sweden, delimit the study towards Swedish cosmetic consumers. Within Scandinavia<sup>2</sup> Sweden has the highest cosmetics market volume of approximately 1.8 billion EUR (Cosmetics Europe, 2015), suggesting that Sweden is a suitable country to research. Another positive aspect of delimiting the study to Sweden is that it enables communication with the respondents in their native language, which minimises any errors that might occur due to language barriers.

## 1.5 Key Terms

### **Brand avoidance**

*"a phenomenon whereby consumers deliberately choose to keep away from or reject a brand"* (Lee et al., 2009b, p. 422).

### **Cosmetics**

*"'cosmetic product' means any substance or mixture intended to be placed in contact with the external parts of the human body...with a view exclusively or mainly to cleaning them, perfuming them, changing their appearance, protecting them, keeping them in good condition or correcting body odours..."* (Official Journal of the European Union, 2009, p. 64).

### **Brand**

A brand is a "Name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers" (American Marketing Association, 2016).

### **Brand equity**

*"The differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer response to the product or its marketing"* (Kotler et al., 2011, p. 242).

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<sup>1</sup> EU 28 + Norway and Switzerland

<sup>2</sup> Sweden, Norway, Danmark and Finland

## **Brand Awareness**

*“Brand awareness is a marketing concept that enables marketers to quantify levels and trends in consumer knowledge and awareness of a brand's existence. At the aggregate (brand) level, it refers to the proportion of consumers who know of the brand”* (American Marketing Association, 2016).

## **2 Frame of Reference**

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*This chapter outlines the theoretical framework of this study. Firstly, the various types of consumer-brand relationships are discussed, beginning with the positive, followed by the negative. Subsequently, the central topic of this thesis, brand avoidance, is outlined. Furthermore, the brand avoidance framework is reviewed, beginning with Lee et al.'s, (2009b) framework, followed by Knittel et al.'s, (2016) revised framework. Lastly, previous knowledge of consumer behaviour and Word-of-Mouth are introduced in relation to brand avoidance.*

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### **2.1 Consumer-Brand Relationships**

The relationship consumers establish with a brand could be recognised as an important tool for companies, as a strong consumer-brand relationship generates not only sales, but also positive brand equity due to brand-loyalty (Fournier et al., 2012; Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015). Moreover, it can influence new product adoption positively, and create brand advocacy through for example Word-of-Mouth (WoM) (Fournier et al., 2012). These complex consumer-brand relationships have been studied in many aspects such as the drivers behind their establishment and proliferation, and how they affect the consumers (Fournier et al., 2012). In order for the company to succeed, it is crucial to understand the brand and the consumers' attitudes towards it (Fournier et al., 2012). A brand is a multidimensional concept that could evoke either positive, negative, or a mix of feelings, depending on associations and emotions connected with it (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Keller 1993; Keller, 2001). It can for example be symbolic in social terms, functioning as a tool of self-expression (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015).

### **2.2 Positive Consumer-Brand Relationships**

There are several forms of positive consumer brand-relationships such as brand attachment, brand satisfaction, brand loyalty and brand love (Fournier et al., 2012). These are further elaborated below.

#### **2.2.1 Brand Attachment**

Today, one of the most important concepts to study within marketing is brand attachment (Belaid & Temessek Behi, 2011; Dunn & Hoegg, 2014; Fournier, 1998a; Japutra, Ekinci & Simkin, 2014; Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer & Nyffenegger, 2011). According to Thomson, MacInnis and Park (2005), brand attachment is an emotional outcome of a robust relationship between a consumer and a brand and results in commitment, trust, love, and brand loyalty (Loureiro, Ruediger & Demetris, 2012). For example, brand attachment spurs consumer recommendations, revisits, purchases and resilience against adverse information (Japutra et al., 2014).

#### **2.2.2 Brand Satisfaction, Brand Loyalty & Brand Love**

Brand satisfaction is the initial stage of the consumer-brand relationship and evolves when the consumer has a positive experience with a brand (Ha & Perks, 2005). As the relationship continues to grow, the satisfaction may evolve into brand loyalty (Berry, 2000; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Lau & Lee, 1999). The American Marketing Association (2016) defines brand loyalty as a “...situation in which a consumer generally buys the same manufacturer-originated product or service repeatedly over time rather than buying from multiple suppliers within the category”. Furthermore, it is a phenomenon, consisting of two main facets: behavioural and attitudinal (Oliver, 1999). The behavioural facet concerns repeated purchases of a brand, whilst the attitudinal facet involves the degree of brand commitment (Chaudhuri &

Holbrook, 2001; Oliver, 1999). It has been found that loyal customers are less price sensitive and have the tendency to consume more; hence they are more profitable (Reichheld, Markey & Hopton, 2000). It has been further confirmed that brand loyalty is positively related with brand love (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Brand love is defined as *"the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name"* (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, p. 81). Consumers who experience brand love are more intrigued to examine new services or products from that particular brand, as well as more prone to forgive any malpractices (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2007).

## 2.3 Negative Consumer-Brand Relationships

On the contrary to the positive forms of consumer-brand relationships described above, negative forms of consumer-brand relationships also exist. This could be exemplified by the research regarding anti-consumption, boycotts and brand avoidance (Fournier 1998b; Fournier, 2012; Lee et al., 2009; Zavestoski, 2002).

### 2.3.1 Anti-Consumption

Anti-consumption simply means against consumption (Lee et al., 2009), and arises when consumers more generally resist, resent or reject consumption (Zavestoski, 2002). As mentioned, the literature of brand avoidance is sparse. Therefore, Lee et al. (2009a; 2009b) suggest that this multifaceted concept could be examined through anti-consumption literature to find possible reasons for brand avoidance. Iyer and Muncy (2009) distinguish between two types of anti-consumption: the general resistance against consumption, and the more specific resistance against consumption where individual brands or products are rejected.

		Purpose of Anti-Consumption	
		Societal Concerns	Personal Concerns
Object of Anti-Consumption	General (All Consumption)	Global Impact consumers	Simplifiers
	Specific (Individual Brands or Products)	Market Activists	Anti-Loyal Consumers

Figure 2 Four Types of Anti-Consumers

Source: Iyer & Muncy, 2009, p. 161

*Global Impact* consumers motivate their general rejection of consumption from a belief that the consumption level negatively impacts the planet and society as a whole (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). *Simplifiers* refers to the general rejection of consumption based on a personal perception that the current society is too consumption-focused, and that minimising consumption would lead to higher levels of individual well-being (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). *Market Activists* reject consumption of specific products or brands, believing that they cause a specific societal problem such as environmental damage or negative social behaviour. *Anti-Loyal Consumers* reject consumption from a specific product or brand as a result of a negative experience, or perceived inferiority (Lee et al., 2009a). The notion that a societal problem, negative experience, or perceived inferiority might spur anti-consumption of specific brands are expected to be confirmed within this study. Sandikci and Ekici (2009) found another motivation for anti-consumption, namely political reasons. This could be exemplified when a consumer resists a brand owing to its perceived connection to a political philosophy that she opposes.

### 2.3.2 Boycotts

Boycotting is a form of consumer resistance and anti-consumption (Fournier, 1998b; Izberk-Bilgin, 2010). Friedman (1985, p. 97) define boycott as “...an attempt by one or more parties to achieve certain objectives by urging individual consumers to refrain from making selected purchases in the marketplace”. Boycotting is an effective tool for consumers to use in order to declare a discontent towards a company’s business practices (Albrecht, Campbell, Heinrich, & Lammel, 2013; Klein, Smith, & John, 2004; Tyran & Engelmann, 2005). There are two types of boycotts: economic- and social/ethical (Sen, Gürhan-Canli & Morwitz, 2001). Economic boycotts occur when consumers refuse to purchase products or services due to a company’s discriminatory marketing practices (e.g. unjustifiable price increases) (Sen et al., 2001). Social or ethical boycotts transpire when a consumer rejects a business because of its unethical or socially irresponsible behavior (e.g. exploitation of labour) (Sen et al., 2001). Although boycotts might have large impacts on firms, the previous research related to the consumers’ motivation for engaging in boycotting is quite limited (Klein et al., 2004). However, as brand avoidance is a form of consumer resistance against brands, the researchers expect to find similar reasons for brand avoidance as the reasons of boycotts described above.

## 2.4 Brand Avoidance

There are primarily two frameworks that contribute to the existing knowledge of brand avoidance. These are presented below.

### 2.5 Brand Avoidance Framework by Lee et al., (2009b)

Lee et al. (2009a) substantially contributed to the existing sparse knowledge of brand avoidance by investigating it and introducing a framework of the factors behind the phenomenon. In their study, the researchers suggested that the concept of brand avoidance is multifaceted and that the reasons for engaging in it could differ amongst consumers. As of today, Lee et al.’s (2009; 2009a; 2009b) studies still account for the main research body within the topic of brand avoidance. It identifies four categories: *Experiential*-, *Identity*-, *Moral*- and *Deficit-value avoidance*. These four categories together with their subgroups constitute the main reasons for brand avoidance. The model is further explained below.

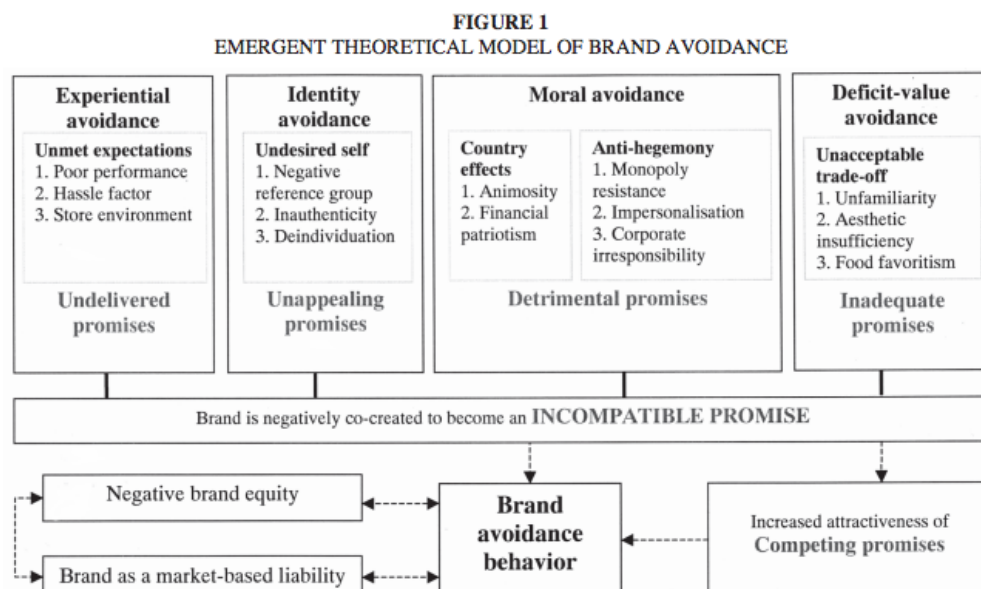


Figure 3 Emergent Theoretical Model of Brand Avoidance

Source: Lee et al., 2009b, p. 423

### 2.5.1 Experiential Avoidance

*Experiential avoidance* stems from expectations that are not met through undelivered promises. It occurs when consumers avoid certain brands as a result of previous negative experiences (Lee et al., 2009b). These could be categorised into three subthemes; *Poor performance*, *Hassle*, and *Store environment*.

Poor performance emerges as the product performance does not fulfil the expectations of the consumer (Dick, Jain & Richardson, 1995; Lee et al., 2009a). A failed product is not only a poor performing one; it could also be a product that add unnecessary complications to a consumer's life and signals a sense of inconvenience (Roos, 1999). The extra hassle a product might add, such as service-complaints can lead to brand switching or avoidance (Lee et al., 2009a). An unpleasant store environment could also result in brand avoidance due to factors such as store ambience or olfactory stimuli (Arnold, Reynolds, Ponder & Lueg, 2005; d'Astous, 2000; Lee et al., 2009a).

### 2.5.2 Identity Avoidance

*Identity avoidance* arises from unappealing promises such as a brand's inability to reflect a consumer's self-concept (Lee et al., 2009b). The self and the concept of undesired self are two key terms within identity avoidance. The self-concept refers to all attitudes, opinions and cognitions an individual has of herself (Hogg & Banister, 2001). The undesired self refers to what the individual does *not* want to be associated with and is important for brand managers since it could lead to a rejection of a brand, product or service (Hogg & Banister, 2001). For example, if one has a self-concept of being a more mature woman, it could be expressed through the rejection of cosmetic brands with a younger target audience.

The framework of brand avoidance stresses three reasons for consumers to engage in identity avoidance; *Negative reference groups*, *Inauthenticity* and *Deindividuation* (Lee et al., 2009b). Consumers tend to avoid brands that they associate with negative reference groups, since the group's image does not conform to the individual's self-concept. Another reason for engaging in identity avoidance concerns inauthenticity, which means that the brand is perceived as fake (Lee et al., 2009b). Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel (2006) further support this in their research, in which they found that the main reason for brand avoidance was that the consumers perceived the brand to lack authenticity, cultural distinctiveness or being too commercial. Deindividuation occurs when a brand is perceived as mainstream and "too popular", which makes the consumer avoid it in order to protect individuality and self-identity (Lee et al., 2009a).

### 2.5.3 Moral Avoidance

*Moral avoidance* arises due to detrimental promises. For example, a consumer could avoid a certain brand, believing that it is her obligation to reject it due to its harmful impact on the society. There are two components of moral avoidance: *Country effects* and *Anti-hegemon*.

Examining country effects, Lee et al. (2009b) have found two aspects: animosity and financial patriotism. Animosity occurs when a consumer feels hostility against a country, which negatively affects the brands connected to that country. For example, a consumer who has a negative perception of Sweden might avoid brands that promote themselves as Swedish, such as IKEA. Financial patriotism refers to when for example a Swedish consumer purchases predominantly Swedish cosmetic brands to ensure that the monetary value is reinvested in Sweden, and therefore avoid foreign cosmetic brands (Lee et al., 2009b).

The second type of moral avoidance is anti-hegemony, which includes monopoly resistance, impersonalisation and corporate irresponsibility (Lee et al., 2009b). Monopoly resistance arises when consumers oppose dominant brands to hinder a company with a large market share from monopolising the market (Lee et al., 2009b). Brand avoidance due to impersonalisation is manifested when consumers believe that the brand has vast amounts of customers, making it difficult for the brand to develop a *personal* customer-brand relationship (Lee et al., 2009b). Another aspect of anti-hegemony is corporate irresponsibility; if a brand acts irresponsibly in the eyes of the consumer by for example having unacceptable labour regulations, the consumer might avoid this brand (Lee et al., 2009b). This is especially crucial for multinational companies

since their visibility makes them a larger target for consumer criticism, as they are most likely to be held accountable for their perceived unethical actions (Holt, 2002; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Cromie & Ewing, 2009).

#### 2.5.4 Deficit-Value Avoidance

Lee et al. (2009b) have expanded their previously conducted framework (2009a) by adding a fourth motive for brand avoidance: *Deficit-value*. It arises when a brand gives inadequate promises, leading to an unacceptable trade-off. There are three themes of unacceptable trade-offs: *Unfamiliarity*, *Aesthetic insufficiency* and *Food favoritism* (Lee et al., 2009b). In all these themes, there is an underlying notion of a cost-benefit evaluation.

A generally unacceptable trade-off described by Lee et al. (2009b) is for example when a consumer avoids a budget brand due to the perception that the quality is negatively affected by the low price, thus not being adequate. On the other hand, a high-end brand might also provide an unacceptable trade-off when the consumer perceives the marginal cost to be higher than the marginal benefit.

Moreover, consumers might avoid unfamiliar brands due to lack of knowledge (Lee et al., 2009b). Sometimes the consumer judge an unfamiliar brand to be insufficient in quality and therefore believe that a purchase entails a higher risk, which negatively affects the perceived value compared to a familiar brand (Lee et al., 2009b). Aesthetic insufficiency might occur when the consumers use the appearance of a brand, for example packaging and colourfulness, to determine its functional value (Lee et al., 2009b). Food favoritism is described as value-deficient brand avoidance in regards to one product category, but not another (Lee et al., 2009b). A Swedish consumer might for example avoid purchasing food from ICA basic, a budget brand by the supermarket ICA, but this brand avoidance might not apply when purchasing for example cotton pads or other non-edible items, thus favoritism occur.

## 2.6 Brand Avoidance Framework by Knittel et al., (2016)

Lee et al.'s (2009b) framework has been validated, modified and expanded by Knittel et al. (2016) who found an additional motive for brand avoidance: *Advertising*.

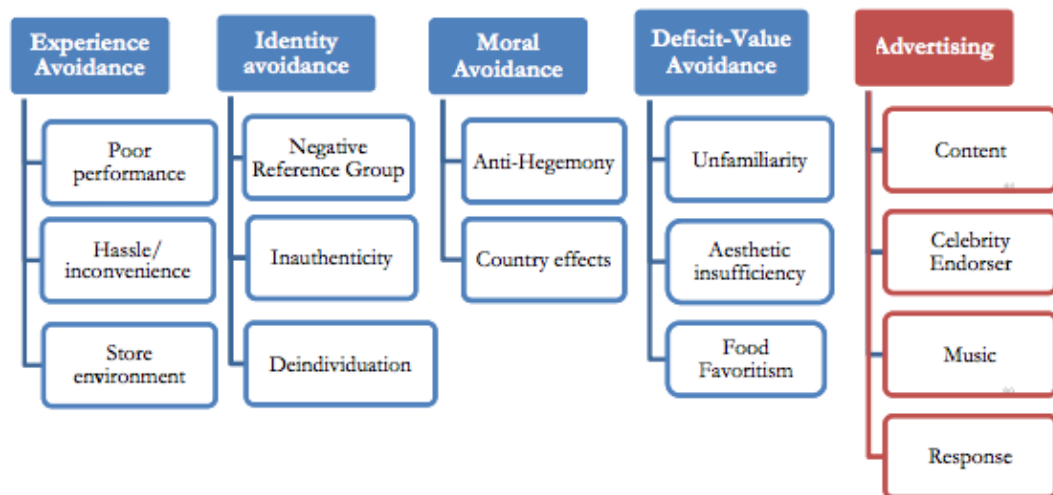


Figure 4 Framework of Drivers and Motives of Brand Avoidance

Source: Knittel et al., 2016, p. 37

### 2.6.1 Advertising

Advertising is defined as: “...any message where the primary communication objective is brand awareness and brand attitude, regardless of the media used” (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015, p.123). When a consumer evaluates a brand's advertisement as negative, an incentive to avoid that brand can occur. Knittel et al. (2016) state that this is an important motive for brand avoidance and should therefore be included in the existing model by Lee et al. (2009b). The study also indicates that it is not only current advertising that provokes negative emotions towards a brand; commercials seen in the past can likewise evoke animosity (Knittel et al., 2016). According to Knittel et al. (2016), there are four distinct categories within advertising that can spur brand avoidance: *Content*, *Celebrity Endorser*, *Music*, and *Response*.

A consumer might avoid a brand due to the advertisement's content such as its storyline and message (Knittel et al., 2016). In their study, Knittel et al. (2016) found annoying or provocative advertisement to be a motive for brand avoidance. Taboo subjects such as nudity and sex exemplified provocative content. Another driver of advertising avoidance is the usage of celebrity endorsers (Knittel et al., 2016). Although marketers worldwide consider celebrity endorsers as an efficient marketing tool, which influences brand recognition, advertising effectiveness, and purchasing intentions (MarketWatch, 2006; Till, Stanley & Priluck, 2008), some negative side effects might occur. This is because consumers respond differently to celebrity endorsers as the perception of a celebrity might differ towards the negative. Thus, using a celebrity as a representative of the brand has shown to be a double-edged sword as not only the positive image of the celebrity, but also the negative image could affect the perception of the brand (Fong & Wyer, 2012). Knittel et al. (2016) have based their subcategory music on one example where the music in an advertisement would lead to annoyance, subsequently being a driver of brand avoidance:

*“I don't like advertising if it is just too stupid, or also too noisy, or just annoying. ... Yeah, if I just feel annoyed by the whole thing. It can be because it is very loud and noisy or through like the music.”* (p. 36)

As the interpretation of the marketing message is subjective, consumers respond differently to advertisements. According to Kotler et al. (2011), the advertisement response is known as the last stage of the marketing communication process, being reliant on the recipient of the message. Some people might respond positively to an advertisement while others react negatively, which might result in brand avoidance (Percy, 2008; Knittel et al., 2016). This subcategory is based upon the authors' interpretation of the respondents' “... *vague statements and descriptions...*” (p. 37) when they describe their dislike or avoidance for a brand due to advertising. Specifically, the findings reveal that the participants describe some advertisements as stupid, annoying or senseless, being the reason for brand avoidance. The authors do not elaborate these statements further.

## 2.7 Consumer Behaviour

When examining consumer behaviour connected to brand avoidance, the law of the lightest load proposed by Frijda (1988) might imply that brand avoidance occurs less frequently than its counterpart brand love. The law of the lightest load is an explanation of how consumers respond to unpleasant knowledge, meaning that consumers tend to avoid and deny this, and interpret a situation to maximise emotional gains (Frijda, 1988). Owing to this behaviour, one might argue that consumers are more prone to post-purchase behaviour that will increase contentment and decrease discontentment rather than the opposite, thus decreasing brand avoidance behaviour. This is particularly evident in Rosenbaum-Elliott et al.'s (2015) model of emotion-driven choice.

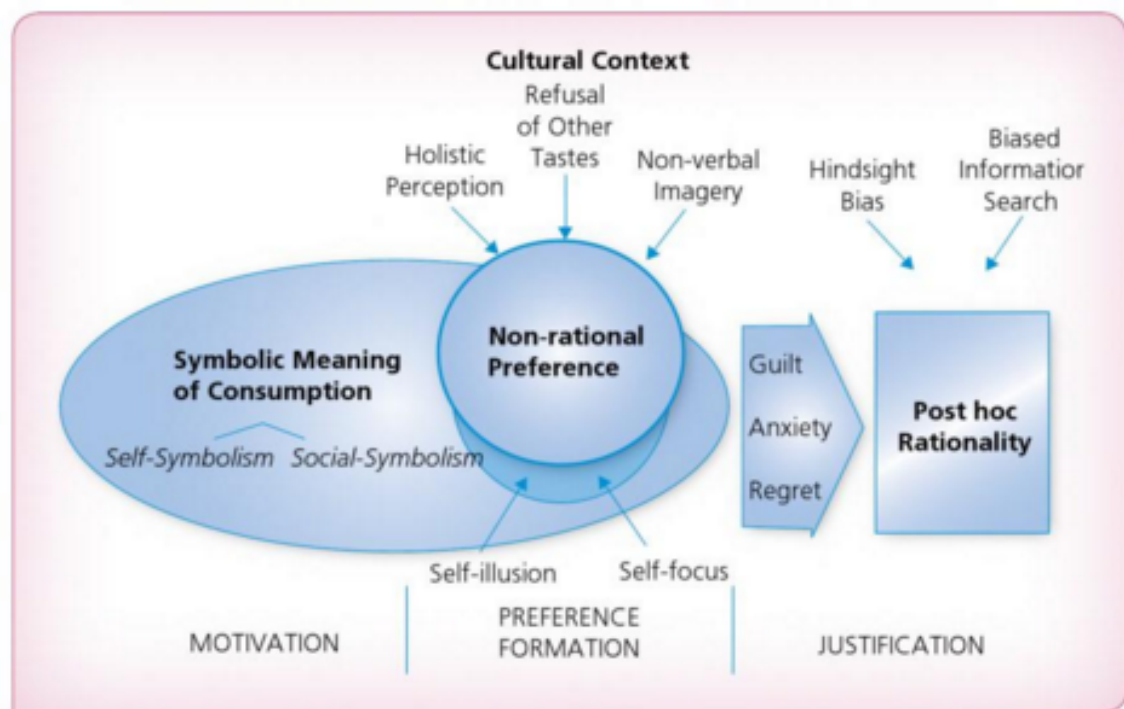


Figure 5 Model of Emotion-Driven Choice

Source: Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015, p. 31

This model explains that symbolic consumption is mostly due to non-rational preferences formed to express a consumer's individual self (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015). Since one cannot entirely articulate the individual self, the consumption of some goods enable consumers to display it (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015). Rosenbaum-Elliott et al. (2015) mean that consumers tend to look for rational justifications for their consumption behaviour; there are motivations to minimise guilt, anxiety and regret connected to an emotion-driven purchase. Therefore post-purchase behaviour tends to be biased, both in hindsight and in post-purchase information search (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015).

## 2.8 Word-of-Mouth

A majority of marketing executives suggest WoM to be one of the most effective forms of marketing (Whitler, 2014). This phenomenon is a part of the consumers' everyday life and occurs when friends for example are talking about their previous or future purchases (Kotler et al., 2011). The influence of it is usually unconscious, very natural and genuine (Kotler et al., 2011). According to Anderson (1998, p. 6), WoM is defined as *"...informal communication between private parties concerning evaluations of goods and services"*. WoM can assume either a positive or a negative form. Positive WoM may occur when a satisfied consumer conveys a favourable opinion to a friend, while negative WoM may arise when a consumer expresses unpleasant experiences to another consumer (Anderson, 1998).

As implied, WoM can greatly impact the purchasing behavior of consumers'. WoM will have a higher perceived credibility, thus a greater impact on the consumer's buying behavior if it stems from a friend, family member or a colleague than from a commercial source such as a salesperson (Kotler et al., 2011; Nielsen, 2007). However, negative WoM is often spread faster and farther than positive WoM (Kotler et al., 2011). Owing to the development of Internet, negative WoM can spread like wildfire amongst consumers, making it a critical concern for brand managers who have to be careful in their marketing communication (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015). Especially since it has been found that dissatisfied consumers seldom complain directly to the company (Chebat, Davidow & Codjovi, 2005; Kotler et al., 2011). Additionally, the



existence of social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, or Twitter, has further widened the possibility of spreading WoM (Hodza, Papadopoulou & Pavlidou, 2012).

One way of managing WoM is through influencing opinion leaders, usually acclaimed individuals that have the ability to affect other consumers' purchasing behaviour due to their personality, social influence or special skills. In other words, firms strive to firstly identify opinion leaders, and secondly target them through diverse marketing efforts (Fill, 2013; Kotler et al., 2011). For example, companies can recruit opinion leaders as brand ambassadors to spread positive WoM of the firm (Kotler et al., 2011). Based on the rationale above, the researchers expect to find that negative WoM is one of the drivers of brand avoidance.

### 3 Methodology

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*This chapter presents the methodology. Firstly, the research philosophy, research approach and research design is discussed and illustrated. Secondly, the method is outlined, including the data collection, the sampling method, the interviews conducted, and the method of analysis. Lastly, a discussion regarding trustworthiness, including limitations and ethics is presented.*

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#### 3.1 Research Philosophy

There are two main underlying research paradigms when conducting research: *positivism* and *interpretivism* (Collis & Hussey, 2014). These two paradigms are philosophies concerning the fundamentals about the nature of knowledge, reality and existence.

Positivism is often connected to research of natural sciences, including systematic methods of observations and experiments (Collis & Hussey, 2014). The research is conducted with logic and rigour to explain phenomena and anticipate their outcome due to causal relationships (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Thus, methods of data collection are mainly quantitative with larger samples. Interpretivism on the other hand has emerged as a criticism against positivism, meaning that social reality is not objective, but in fact highly subjective since reality is formed by our perceptions (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Therefore, a more qualitative approach is used, focusing on exploring and understanding social phenomena.

As mentioned, the research of brand avoidance is scarce. Therefore, the aim of this study is to expand this small area of knowledge and function as a springboard for generating further research of brand avoidance. A more qualitative approach is better suited, since the purpose is to investigate, and gain a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons of why consumers engage in brand avoidance within the Swedish cosmetics industry for women. Moreover, these reasons are subjective and a social phenomenon, thus an interpretivist research philosophy is more suitable. The authors argue that causal relationships of brand avoidance and the factors behind them are difficult to quantify, since the reasons might be intertwined, and together rather than individually, lead to brand avoidance.

#### 3.2 Research Approach

Given a *positivist* philosophy, a *deductive* approach is often used (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). A deductive approach begins with a set of premises leading to a conclusion, that is true if the premises are (Saunders et al., 2012). In practice, the research begins with theory, often from academic literature, that then is tested. Researchers with an *interpretivist* philosophy will in their research use an *inductive* approach, implemented when there is a knowledge gap between the premises and conclusions (Saunders et al., 2012). This approach begins with collecting data to explore a phenomenon that then generates a theory such as a conceptual framework.

Moreover, there is yet another common approach; the *abductive* approach. It begins with a peculiar finding that is the conclusion rather than a premise (Saunders et al., 2012). Based on this conclusion, possible sets of premises are investigated as explanations of this conclusion. Virtually, one collects data for exploring, analysing possible patterns and themes in a

phenomenon for generating a new theory or alternatively modify existing theory. Subsequently, the new or modified theory is tested through additional data collection. Essentially, this approach has elements of both a deductive and inductive approach, alternating between the methods interchangeably.

In this study, an abductive approach was used, not only for validating the previous research undergone, but also for exploring and finding additional elements to brand avoidance. A purely deductive approach was less suitable since the existing research of brand avoidance is sparse with frameworks that are relatively novel and not yet fully explored (Knittel et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b). Moreover, there seems to be no formally accepted existing framework of measuring and quantifying brand avoidance. On the other hand, a purely inductive approach would neither be suitable for this research, since the researchers could use the existing frameworks by Knittel et al. (2016), Lee et al. (2009a), and Lee et al. (2009b) and thus validate previous findings as well as further exploring this subject.

The abductive approach could be identified in several situations of this study. The interviewers asked questions of a deductive nature that were targeted and aimed at either confirming or disconfirming the framework of Knittel et al., (2016). Furthermore, the researchers posed questions of inductive nature when they asked open questions such as *“Are there any cosmetic brands you actively avoid?” together with follow-up questions such as “how come you avoid this brand?”*. The interviewers let the interviewees come up with their own reasons for brand avoidance, which could result in either confirmation or disconfirmation of the existing theory as well as new findings. Furthermore, the interviewers were flexible in their collection method of data, as they conducted follow-up interviews when particular interesting data was found: For example, two of the participants initially seemed to actively avoid brands they previously had been employed at. This is further elaborated in the findings section. Lastly, the abductive approach used is especially evident in the modified framework presented in section 6 where previous research is confirmed or disconfirmed, and new findings as well as the modifications of the framework is elaborated.

### 3.3 Research Design

As implied in the previous sections, a qualitative research design is used for this study. As the exploration of motives for brand avoidance is relatively new and require further research, clarifying the understanding of brand avoidance through open questions enables the researchers to in-depth probe questions such as why, how, and when it occurs. Thus, this study has an exploratory nature of the research. To examine brand avoidance in consumers' daily life and purchasing situations, a case study strategy has been used. Since the time horizon of producing this bachelor thesis is approximately four months, this study will be cross-sectional rather than longitudinal.

### 3.4 Method

#### 3.4.1 Data Collection

When creating the frame of reference of this study, data has been collected from physical as well as electronic sources. The physical sources have been obtained from the library of Jönköping University. The electronic sources used have been retrieved from the university database Primo, and Google Scholar. Primo includes extensive amounts of academic data, given the broad range of databases and journals. Due to similar reasons of using the database Primo, Google Scholar was used when producing the frame of reference.

Table 1 Visual Overview of the Data Collection Process

Source: Developed by the Authors

Frame of Reference	
Databases	Primo, Google Scholar
Main Theoretical Fields	Brand Avoidance & Cosmetics
Search Words	Advertising; Anti-Consumption; Boycott; Brand Attachment; Brand; Brand Avoidance; Brand Awareness; Brand Equity; Brand Love; Brand Loyalty; Brand Satisfaction; Consumer-Brand Relationships; Consumer Resistance; Cosmetics; Cosmetics Marketing; WoM; Word-of-Mouth
Type of Literature	Books, Industry Reports, Scientific Articles,
Criteria to Include an Article	Search word had to match the keywords, the abstract, the content or the title

The frame of reference began with examining previous research on brand avoidance and consumer resistance. Then, both positive and negative forms of consumer-brand relationships were explored in order to investigate whether brand avoidance had been indicated in this field of research. Additionally, a literature review of the cosmetics industry was implemented which led to the decision that this industry would be examined in connection to brand avoidance. The detailed implementation of the primary data collection process is elaborated below.

### 3.4.2 Sampling

Having established an interpretivist research philosophy, it was concluded that a more qualitative approach to sampling would be appropriate. This means that a non-probability sampling approach was used since the purpose is to explore factors behind brand avoidance (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Another reason for using non-probability sampling was because the researchers did not have the entire population of cosmetics consumers readily available for conducting a randomized sample; probability sampling overall was deemed too rigorous and time consuming for this type of study. Apart from time consuming, this sampling method was deemed too resource intensive in monetary terms, owing to the limited funding of this research.

The essence of qualitative studies is that sampling should be meaningful in order to best help the researcher understand the phenomenon explored (Creswell, 2014). Thus, the researchers used the non-probability sampling technique convenience sampling, also called natural sampling (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Hence, all interviewees stemmed from personal referees that were *purposely* selected due to their daily usage of cosmetics. Furthermore, the interviewees selected had to be women. The researchers wanted as many different segments as possible to be represented in the study in order to facilitate analysis of patterns, differences and similarities amongst different consumer segments. This in order to gain a more qualitative understanding of brand avoidance within the cosmetics industry. A convenience sampling approach gave much flexibility and autonomy in the sampling procedure, which is why it was used in this research. This enabled the researchers to put less emphasis on sampling, and more emphasis on analysing the findings, which is crucial given that the time frame for the study was approximately four months.

The sampling approach also incorporated the characteristics of snowball sampling or networking where the participants of the study were asked for referees to people suitable for the studies (Collis & Hussey, 2014). This is relevant for research of brand avoidance since it helps include consumers with experience of daily cosmetics usage (Collis & Hussey, 2014). When it comes to qualitative data, while some authors argue that there is no specific range of

participants recommended (Creswell, 2014), Saunders (2012) recommends a sample size of 5-25 participants for semi-structured or in-depth interviews. Furthermore, the approach of saturation provides some guidelines. It suggests that the data stops being collected when the categories or themes investigated are saturated; when collecting new data no longer provides new insights (Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2012). For this study, the researchers found that the answers provided by the participants were saturated at an amount of 18 participants. Here, less and less new findings had presented themselves to the point of repeated answers with no new contributions. Although, a possible new brand avoidance factor was found from participant 15 and 17 that both previously were employees of cosmetic brands, and now chose to avoid those brands. This was followed up by subsequent interviews that are elaborated in section 4.1.2 and 5.1. As the researchers were limited in accessibility constraints of previous employees of brands, further research of this newly found brand avoidance factor was not possible. Therefore, disregarding the new finding of a deficient employee-brand relationship, the findings from the interviews for this particular research were deemed saturated.

*Table 2 Table of Participants in the Interviews*

Source: Developed by the Authors

Date of the interview	Interview Length	Participant Number	Participant Age	Participant Occupation	Monthly Cosmetics Budget
2016-02-10	01:06:02	1	22	Student	300-500
2016-02-11	52:58	2	28	Business Lawyer	400-500
2016-02-12	(1) 05:51 (2) 26:17 (3) 06:58	3	55	Bank Director	800
2016-02-12	38:05	4	53	Regional Publishing Manager	50-100
2016-02-12	40:46	5	24	Student	250-300
2016-02-27	01:07:49	6	21	Freelancer	1000-3000
2016-02-29	(1) 01:22:11 (2) 00:22	7	22	Student	500
2016-03-03	01:35:05	8	20	-	3000-6000
2016-03-09	45:40	9	21	Student	100-300
2016-03-10	57:54	10	23	Student	300-500
2016-03-10	51:52	11	51	Assistant Principal/Preschool Director	200-1400
2016-03-28	(1) 45:36 (2) 13:44 (3) 02:11	12	27	Account Coordinator	800
2016-03-30	59:44	13	24	Student	200
2016-03-30	(1) 00:56 (2) 48:32	14	24	Student	1000 Before/ 100 Now
2016-03-31	41:24 Follow Up	15	58	Communications Strategist	500

	Interview: 03:31				
2016-03-31	59:08	16	22	Student	500
2016-04-05	(1) 21:14 (2) 27:33 Follow Up Interview: 03:34	17	34	Retail Education Manager	2000
2016-04-05	57:15	18	25	Student + Hostess	Gets everything for free through a contact for the value of approximately 1500

### 3.4.3 Interviews

When collecting qualitative data, methods such as interviews, focus groups, diaries, observation and protocol analysis could be used (Collis & Hussey, 2014). The two methods deemed most relevant for this research was focus groups and interviews. In focus groups, participants are encouraged by the focus group leader to discuss opinions and feelings and reactions of the topic given (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Owing to the group interaction, focus groups can stimulate all participants to voice their opinions (Collis & Hussey, 2014). However, sometimes a focus group might have problems such as one participant dominating the conversation, or a participant remaining silent (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Since this research study concerns brand avoidance, the discussion might naturally contain much critique of certain cosmetic brands, as well as controversial opinions, which makes focus groups less suitable for this purpose. If for example participant 1 expresses delight of one certain cosmetic brand, and participant 2 disagrees, participant 2 might not express her discontent with the brand for sparing participant 1's feelings, and avoiding conflict. Another issue pertaining to focus groups is obtaining volunteers. All participants have to agree on the same time and place of the discussion, which is more difficult to organise compared to in-depth interviews, which only concern one participant. Furthermore, the number of participants could create complications; too few would not generate sufficient data, and too many might be difficult to manage (Collis & Hussey, 2014). For these reasons, the researchers chose not to conduct focus groups, but instead implemented individual interviews.

Interviews are suited for exploratory studies to examine opinions and feelings, and probing previously scarce and strenuously comprehended research areas with its open-ended, rather than pre-coded questions (Collis & Hussey, 2014; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Interviews may be unstructured or structured (Collis & Hussey, 2014). When conducting unstructured interviews, no questions are prepared in advance; they are rather evolved and posed as the interview proceeds (Collis & Hussey, 2014). In contrast, when conducting semi-structured interviews, some questions are prepared in advance by the researchers (Collis & Hussey, 2014). This means that not all questions prepared might be necessary to pose during the interview, depending on whether the researcher judges the information provided to be sufficient or not. Thus, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews, providing some standard questions as well as creating flexibility for further probing during the interviews.

Two materials were provided during the interviews. Firstly, an information stencil was used to inform the participant of general terms and conditions of the interview, as well as an introductory of how it would be structured (appendix 2). Secondly, as direct brand recall from the consumer's mind in any product category is heavily limited in numbers (consumers typically remember approximately seven) (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015), a stencil with 53 different brands (appendix 1) was provided. This in order to rely less on brand recall directly from the consumer's mind, relying more on brand recognition, and also facilitate a more structured discussion as the brands were in alphabetical order. This showed to be especially helpful when interviewing, as it provided both participants and the interviewer with a logical order to discuss the brands in, and it also simplified transcription. The brands provided in the stencil (appendix

1) were selected for either their high ranking of reported earnings in Sweden (Kemiska-Tekniska Leverantörförbundet, 2015), their visibility on various cosmetic retailers' websites (Bangerhead.se, 2015; Kicks.se, 2016; Lyko.se, 2016; Åhlens.se, 2016), or the researchers' personal knowledge of the brand. As Bangerhead, Kicks, Lyko and Åhlens sell a wide range of cosmetic brands their websites were used as inspiration when selecting which brands to display in the stencil. Additionally, Lyko, Kicks and Bangerhead have high online visibility, whilst Åhlens and Kicks have high physical visibility with their retail stores in Sweden. When interviewing, the participants noted some brands that had not been included in the stencil, which subsequently were incorporated in some other interviews, illustrating another abductive aspect of this research.

Some general issues one needs to take into consideration when conducting interviews are; *obtaining trust* from the interviewee, using *appropriate language and attitude*, selecting an appropriate *location*, and *recording* (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Obtaining trust is important since failure to establish trust between the interviewer and the interviewee might lead to answers formulated to please the interviewee (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). To increase trust, all participants obtained the information stencil (appendix 2) before the interview begun, where the participant was informed that she would be anonymous. She also had the possibility of stopping the recording whenever she wanted to, and did not have to answer any questions she did not feel comfortable with. Appropriate language and attitude considerations include being humble and sensitive as an interviewer (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Moreover, being attentive, avoiding judgments as well as showing appreciation of the information, reflections and opinions of the interviewee is important. The interviews were conducted in Swedish, as all participants are Swedish, the results were thereafter transcribed and translated into English.

The location of the interview is another significant element when conducting an interview. It is recommended that settings are easy to access, comfortable (e.g. furniture and temperature), and characterised by low noise and distraction levels. A majority of the interviews were conducted in environments where the interviewee felt secure in expressing her personal opinions. The participants interviewed through Skype were also in a private location without distractions from other people.

Recording the interview is also important, since some interviewees might be concerned with the level of confidentiality. Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) suggest that the interviewee should be the one in control of the recording device. This was incorporated in the interview as all participants were informed that they could cancel the recording at any time (appendix 2). Recording enables the creation of accurate transcripts, as well as triangulation when interpreting the results (Collis & Hussey, 2014; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). According to Collis and Hussey (2014), one might use a mobile phone to record the interviews given that the sound quality is sufficient. After a brief sound check using a mobile phone and a tablet, the researchers considered the sound quality to be sufficient. Thus, mobile phones and tablets were used to record the interviews. However, the interview with P4, conducted in a coffee shop, had such high noise levels that the participant seemed disturbed by the noise and the fact that other people were around during the interview. Thus, the findings from P4 are excluded as the participant might have altered her answers. After this discovery, the researchers chose to exclude coffee shops as an acceptable interview setting.

Another issue concerning the implementation of the interviews is the choice of conducting them through telephone, online, or face-to-face. Initially the researchers only considered interviewing face-to-face since the non-verbal language was deemed as important to access as the verbal language. However, this method of interviewing was found to be not only time-consuming but also expensive, as some of the participants were not situated in Jönköping (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Therefore the researchers chose to also offer the option of conducting the interviews online through video conferencing via Skype. One limitation connected with this, is that it might affect the choice of sample, since the interviewees are required to have Internet access and knowledge of how to use Skype (Collis & Hussey, 2014). However, as the number of people with Internet access in Sweden as of 2015 was 93 per cent (Findahl & Davidsson, 2015), this limitation did not severely hinder the choice of sample. For the participants who did not have Internet access, the option of conducting face-to-face interviews existed. The various factors the researchers had to consider before, during, and after the interviews were consolidated into a

guideline stencil (appendix 3). An additional limitation with conducting the interviews via Skype was the fact that the Internet connection sometimes was weakened, resulting in worse sound quality (especially for P5, P7 and P14). However, the researchers could still understand the interviewee and if uncertainty occurred, they simply asked the interviewee to repeat herself. As for the interviewees, the lags and sometimes interrupted video calls did not seem to affect or disturb the participants significantly, as they seemed eager to continue the point they previously were making. Therefore, the lagging was not considered to be any major limitation of this study.

#### 3.4.4 Analysis of Qualitative Data

In a qualitative study, not all data might be used since it is so dense and rich (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the data deemed relevant is often aggregated into themes. These themes could be formed through hand-coding the data, or using a qualitative computer data analysis program assisting the data analysis. The data for this study was hand-coded into categories of brand avoidance factors since a computer data analysis program required full transcriptions of the interviews, something that is highly time-consuming. Hand-coding by listening to the recordings and transcribing only what is considered relevant is in this case deemed a more efficient approach of data analysis. However, this method has some issues connected to higher risk of bias in what is deemed relevant (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Therefore, in order to minimise bias of interpretation and increase credibility, triangulation in the transcription was implemented. This is the use of for example multiple researchers to investigate the same phenomenon in a study (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Thus, when analysing the data, the three researchers independently listened to, transcribed and highlighted the relevant parts in each interview and then compared these transcriptions to find a unilateral interpretation of the findings.

### 3.5 Trustworthiness

When conducting qualitative research, Meyrick (2006) argues that the criteria to interpret this form of research too often are of quantitative nature, something that might not be suitable given the qualitative nature of the research. Instead, Meyrick (2006) proposes two core principles of attaining superior quality in qualitative research: *transparency* and *systematicity*. As indicated by the extensive details surrounding the interviews conducted in this chapter, the researchers have strived towards the highest transparency possible. Furthermore, the interviews have been executed systematically, as explained in 3.4, and further illustrated through the appendices (appendix 1, 2, & 3) and table describing the participants in the interviews (table 2). Additionally, the use of triangulation in analysing the data collected further strengthens the systematicity of this study. By providing quotations from the participants in their original language (Swedish), later translated into English, transparency was further attained.

Saunders et al. (2012) mean that although the research is qualitative in nature, there is a need to overcome quality issues arisen owing to this. These issues are *reliability*, *interviewer and interviewee bias*, *generalizability* and *validity*. The flexible approach of semi-structured interviews has enabled in-depth exploration of the participants' opinions of the complex phenomena brand avoidance. As this is the strength of this research, concerns of reliability might be less relevant. For example, it might not be necessary to be able to repeat this study and attain the same results, as the opinions of the participants in this study reflected their reality at the time of data collection. As brand avoidance is highly subjective, and drivers might be different amongst different consumers, attempting to ensure replicability of this study would not be feasible without undermining the strength of this research approach.

Furthermore, interviewer and interviewee bias was decreased through measures taken in advance and during the interviews. Firstly, the stencil (appendix 3) set out some behavioural guidelines, such as open body language, curiosity, making the participant comfortable in expressing her feelings, thus lowering both interviewer and interviewee bias. Secondly, interviewee bias was minimised through showing appreciation of the participants' opinions. For example, in the beginning and end of the interviews, the interviewer expressed gratitude for participation, and when a participant articulated her opinions, it was encouraged by statements such as "*this was interesting*" in an enthusiastic manner. The approach of the questions were both close-ended and open ended together with follow-up questions, further showing the

interviewee interest and active listening. Leading questions were only used when repeating what the interviewee previously had stated as an assurance that the interviewer understood it correctly.

Addressing generalizability, the researchers are aware of the fact that this study might not be able to be representative of the whole population's drivers of brand avoidance. However, this is not the intention either, due to the differences in perceptions of this phenomenon. Moreover, the study did provide *some* generalizability as many of the previously found drivers of brand avoidance that were not industry specific, could be found in the cosmetics industry.

When examining the level of validity this study provides, one might argue that the validity is high. The purpose of this study was to investigate the drivers of brand avoidance amongst female Swedish cosmetic consumers, which was attained. For example, the sample includes only female Swedish cosmetic consumers, and as the questions posed during the interviews probe reasons for brand avoidance (appendix 2), this study has high levels of validity. Additionally, the use of triangulation in analysing the interviews furthermore strengthened validity as the three researchers together discussed the possible interpretations of the findings.

### 3.5.1 Limitations

As mentioned, a limitation important to acknowledge in this study is the ability to generalise from the sample amongst a population. Thus, although the method was qualitative in nature and deemed most suitable for the purpose of this study, the results cannot statistically represent the entire population. However, as mentioned, drivers of brand avoidance are highly individual, making them difficult to generalise.

Another limitation of this study concerns the different interview styles of the researchers. For example, some researchers used more close-ended questions than others. In order to minimize bias and develop the individual interview styles, the researchers should have provided each other with feedback after the first interview were conducted. Additionally, the in-depth interviews were conducted during a limited period of time, making it nearly impossible to detect any changes in brand avoidance drivers over time. Furthermore, the researcher solely utilised two databases when retrieving scientific articles for this study, which could have been extended to several databases to strengthen trustworthiness. However, as mentioned, both Google Scholar and Primo could be considered satisfactory sources as it offers an extensive selection of data.

### 3.5.2 Ethics

Saunders et al. (2012) provide a list of ethical principles one should use during the research. These ethical principles have been incorporated by firstly obtaining consent from the participants to interview, and secondly by establishing privacy in the interview setting for the participants. Moreover, the participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the interview and the option of not answering anything they felt uncomfortable with. They also attained information about the recording and asked for consent, being assured that they by default would be anonymous in the study.

## 4 Empirical findings

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*This section presents the findings of this study. The results are, in chronological order, presented in accordance to Knittel et al.'s (2016) framework.*

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### 4.1 Experiential Avoidance

The majority of the participants have expressed experience as one of the main factors behind their brand avoidance (P2; P6; P7; P8; P10; P12; P15; P16; P17; P18). This is especially evident in the case of P7, who avoid all smashbox products due to an initial product experience of *poor performance*:



*"Jag har testat det, och jag är inte alls nöjd. Det var en gel-eyeliner som inte var gel... Alls.. Och (den) trillade ner i ansiktet så man var helt svart i ansiktet..."*

*Translation: "I've tested it, and I'm not at all satisfied. It was a gel eyeliner that wasn't gel at all.. And (it) fell down on my face, so my face became all black..."*

(P7, age 22)

Other brand avoidance reasons connected to poor performance stem from cosmetics that did not moisturise enough (P2), that had insufficient pigmentation and bad quality (P6), or cosmetics that had increased instances of fallout, smudging or vanishing (P6; P10). Another poor performance factor is the perceived concentration. Some might avoid brands with products that are perceived as diluted (P7), which could be considered as uneconomical, thus leading to purchases of other brands.

*Hassle/inconvenience* did not indicate to have any impact on direct brand avoidance among the participants. P6 for example, describes below that despite the inconvenient customer service she experienced, she would still buy from the brand again, only avoiding the product category she had issues with:

*"Jag vet att jag aldrig kommer köpa en solskyddsfaktor från dem (Estée Lauder) igen, men om det är något fint, någon fin ögonskugga eller whatever, då kan det hända att jag köper den just för att de var ändå väl bemötande med det här och gav mig mina pengar tillbaka som de ska göra i och för sig enligt lag, men ändå...Men om de hade hanterat det på nåt annat sätt då och inte hjälpt mig alls, då hade jag aldrig verkligen aldrig köpt något av dem igen även om jag tycker att det vore bra, men det hade bara varit en principsak..."*

*Translation: "I know that I won't purchase a sunscreen from them (Estée Lauder) again, but if it's something nice, like a nice eyeshadow or whatever, then it could happen that I purchase it just because the treatment was good and they gave me my money back as they actually should do according to the law, but anyway... But if they'd handled the situation in any other way and not helped me at all, then I would never, really never, purchase anything from them again, even if I think that it would be good, but it would just have been a matter of principle..."*

(P6, age 21)

Store environment might be another reason for brand avoidance:

*"Jag tycker det är jobbigt att gå in i den affären (H&M), det är ljus och stimmigt och högt i musik..."*

*Translation: "I think that it's tedious to go into that store (H&M). It's light and bustling and the music is loud..."*

(P11, age 51)

As an indirect result of H&M's noisy environment, P11 also avoids cosmetic products from that brand. Another participant connected her brand avoidance to the store environment due to the negative feelings the entire store impression gave her:

*"...jag kan väl känna att apoteks environment... butiksmiljön är väl inte en miljö jag vill gå och testa smink i... Jag skulle inte gå dit för att köpa smink, det är för cleant... Det känns lite som att gå in i en operationssal... Det känns som det drar ner experience, alltså min upplevelse av att gå och köpa smink."*

*Translation: "...I might feel that pharmacy environment... like the boutique environment is not an environment that I want to try makeup in... I wouldn't go there to to buy makeup, it's too clean... It feels a little like going into an operation room... It feels like it degrades the experience, like my experience of buying makeup."*

(P18, age 25)

The perceived store environment image was found to be a factor behind brand avoidance:

*“Generellt sett så undviker jag märken som finns i matbutiker, inne på H&M... För mig så är det mer budget-varianter och jag tycker inte att de är lika bra och jag brukar också undvika apotekets egna produkter för att jag tycker det går åt så mycket när man använder deras produkter, så i slutändan kostar det lika mycket som att köpa en enligt mig bra produkt än att köpa deras.”*

*Translation: “Generally, I avoid brands that exist in food stores, at H&M... For me it is more budget versions and I don’t think they are as good and I use to avoid the pharmacy’s own products because I think you use a lot when using their products, so in the end it costs as much as buying an, according to me, good product than buying theirs.”*

(P7, age 22)

Furthermore, P8 states:

*“Isadora kan jag tänka mig att köpa nånting, men jag tror jag lite halvt undviker dem tre ändå (Wet n Wild, Viva la Diva och Isadora)... jag typ kollar inte åt det hållet, typ nu för tiden när jag går in (i affären) så går jag direkt till Chanel-hyllan, eller Dior-hyllan eller.. Asså, Saint Laurent-hyllan.. Asså deras (Chanel, Dior och YSL) display är jättesnygg, alla produkter är jättesnygga... det matar mitt öga... Man blir liksom mer exalterad...”*

*Translation: “Isadora is a brand that I could imagine to buy something from, but I still believe that I partly avoid those three (Wet n Wild, Viva la Diva and Isadora)... I don’t really look at that direction, like nowadays when I enter (a store) I go directly to the Chanel-shelf, or the Dior-shelf or.. Like the Saint Laurent-shelf.. Their (Chanel, Dior and YSL) displays are very good looking, all of their products are very good looking... it feeds my eyes... One becomes more excited...”*

(P8, age 20)

This statement indicates that P8, similarly to P7, avoids a brand due to the *store environment*.

#### 4.1.1 Product Attributes

It has been found that some cosmetics consumers avoid brands due to product attribute related reasons such as olfaction or haptics, namely scent or touch. One of the first new findings of this study was the level of importance the Swedish cosmetic consumers put into olfaction. Cosmetic brands whose products had perceived unpleasant or unappealing scents were in some instances avoided (P8; P12; P16). P8 illustrates this:

*“...deras produkter (Elizabeth Ardens) är jättebra, men den enda grejen är att jag inte står ut med den är att lukten är så jäkla hemsk... asså så starkt, asså typ ibland när jag har deras ansiktskräm, det typ rinner i ögonen, så starkt är det... Den här luktar typ.. Gammal... Asså man klarar det inte för lukten är så hemsk... ibland kan jag få såna prover från dem också, men de läggs åt sidan, för att det luktar så hemskt.”*

*Translation: “... their products (Elizabeth Arden’s) are really good, but the only thing that I can’t stand is that the smell is so damn horrible... like so strong, like sometimes when I have their facial cream, my eyes water, that’s how strong it is... This smells like.. Old... Like one can’t handle it because the smell is so horrible... sometimes I can get samples from them too, but they’re put aside, because it smells so horrible.”*

(P8, age 20)

Scent in combination with an unpleasant consistency were found to be a reason for some consumers to avoid certain cosmetic brands:

*"Jag skulle aldrig få för mig att köpa smink eller kosmetiska produkter från H&M, ALDRIG... För att de luktar... gummi typ... Man märker att det är dålig kvalitet. Det är något med lukten då och konsistensen."*

*Translation: "I would never even think of buying makeup or cosmetic products from H&M, NEVER... Because they smell... rubberish... One notices that it's bad quality. It's something with the smell and the consistency."*

(P12, age 27)

Similarly, when for example purchasing a foundation, P18 has a certain fixed perception of what the consistency of it ought to be: liquid. Therefore, she avoids brands with foundations that do not fulfil her expectation, such as IDUN Minerals, or bareMinerals. In her perception, they only provide powder foundations, thus she avoids them.

#### 4.1.2 Employee Brand Relationships

During the interviews it was found that P17 avoid the cosmetic brand Bioline as a result of a deficient employee-brand relationship.

*"... även det året jag jobbade med produkten så tyckte inte jag att det var några fantastiska produkter överhuvudtaget trots att jag jobbade med det (Bioline) och nu självklart skulle jag aldrig köpa där i och med att det påminner mig om den tiden."*

*Translation: "... even that year that I was working with the product I didn't think that it was any fantastic products at all even though I worked with it (Bioline) and now of course I would never buy there since it reminds me of that time."*

(P17, age 34)

In a follow-up interview, P17 further elaborated this deficient *employee-brand relationship*:

*"... jag jobbade för det företaget och kände att det... Stod inte helt i mina värderingar och hur jag såg på hudvård och så vidare... jag tycker väl kanske inte att de är så bra som de utlovar resultatmässigt... företaget i sig och jag var väldigt olika, vi hade väldigt olika syn på saker och ting och väldigt olika värderingar när det kommer till arbetsmoral och så vidare... och då även om det inte är Bioline som företag så drar det ju ner en viss produkt tyvärr."*

*Translation: "... I worked for that company and felt that it... did not align with my values and my view of skincare and so on... I might not think that they are as good as they promise in terms of results... the company and I were very different, we had very different views on things and very different values when it comes to work ethic and so on... and even though it's not Bioline as a company, it unfortunately drags a certain product down."*

(P17, age 34)

P15 was also interviewed a second time as she had expressed that she avoided two brands she previously was employed at. However, it was discovered that her reason behind brand avoidance towards the first brand was due to too strong scent of the products. Secondly it was due to her friend having severe allergic reactions to Clinique that market themselves as allergy tested.

## 4.2 Identity Avoidance

Regarding *negative reference groups*, the findings indicate that brands that are clearly connected to an unrelatable person or group are prone to brand avoidance. An example of this specific negative perception connected to a person is the brand Löwengrip Care & Color, owned by the Swedish blogger Isabella Löwengrip (aka Blondinbella):

*“Det är ingenting som intresserar mig... Någonting med henne ger inte någon seriös (image).. men det är väl hela sättet hon ser ut, som jag inte skulle vilja se ut så... hon kändes liksom naiv... Jag vill inte identifiera mig med henne, för det känns, det livet hon lever, känns väldigt långt ifrån verkligheten för många andra... det här, status-grejen, sådant intresserar inte mig överhuvudtaget... Jag skulle inte vilja köpa och gynna henne på det sättet... The Body Shop tycker jag ju är en bra grej för där känner jag att det står för något bra, det här med inga djurförsök och det, det här (pekar på Löwengrip's logga) tycker jag inte står för någonting bra.”*

*Translation: “It's nothing that interest me... Something with her doesn't give any serious (image).. But it's probably her whole looks that I wouldn't want to look like... she felt naive... I don't want to identify myself with her since it feels like the life she lives is very far away from ordinary people's reality... this status-thing, things like that don't interest me at all... I wouldn't wanna buy and support her in that way... I think that The Body Shop is a good thing because there I feel that it represents something good, not having animal testing and such, this (points at Löwengrip's logo) I don't think stands for anything good.”*

(P2, age 28)

Similarly, P9 would never even want to try Kylie Jenner's brand or the whole Kardashian-klan's brand regardless of whether it is cosmetics or other products. She argues:

*”Jag tycker inte om henne (Kylie Jenner) som person... hela familjen är lite too much och att jag kanske tycker att man kan fokusera på mer intelligenta saker i världen.”*

*Translation: “I don't like her (Kylie Jenner) as a person... the whole family is a little too much and I might think that one can focus on more intelligent things in this world.”*

(P9, age 21)

The study also confirms that brand avoidance due to negative reference groups connected to particular life stages exists (P2; P6; P9; P10; P12; P17):

*“Det var då, och det är mycket dofter, mycket fokus på det, jättemycket röriga förpackningar och det tilltalar inte mig idag.”*

*Translation: “That was then, and it's a lot of scents, much focus on that, many messy packages and it doesn't attract me today.”*

(P17, age 34)

Another motive for identity avoidance, *inauthenticity*, was found in this study (P2; P11; P18). P11 avoids H&M and Michael Kors, as she perceives the brands to mainly produce clothing. Thus, she perceives them as not having the right expertise for producing cosmetics, making her unwilling to purchase cosmetics from those brands. P18 avoids makeup from Marc Jacobs, thinking that they produce cosmetics as an excuse of earning more money. Additionally, she perceives their products as overpriced with insufficient quality. P2 and P7 do not buy brands whose selling strategy is personal selling at house parties. This is due to their negative perception of salespeople. As they describe it, salespeople are deceptive and do not have their best interest in mind. This concern together with the business model of house parties lead to them concluding that the brands do not have their best interest in mind:

*“Det känns såhär: Hur seriöst är ett företag som säljer smink på grund av det (deras affärskoncept; att bara sälja produkter på house parties)? Då är inte det för mitt bästa, utan för företagets bästa.”*

*Translation: “It feels like this: how serious can a company be that only sells make-up for that reason (their business concept; to only sell products at house parties)? It's not in my best interest, but in the company's best interest.”*

(P2, age 28)

The participants did not display any brand avoidance behaviours due to a feeling of *deindividuation*.

### 4.3 Moral Avoidance

There are tendencies of brand avoidance due to *anti-hegemony* reasons. P12 for example avoids Unilever due to the perception that their large size and their influence on society is extremely high. Otherwise, all other participants did not express any brand avoidance due to anti-hegemony. Similarly, with *country effects*, the participants do not avoid any cosmetic brands due to this factor.

#### 4.3.1 Ethical Concerns

This study indicates that perceived *unethical* activities such as child labour and animal testing may lead to brand avoidance (P2; P8; P9; P10; P11; P15). P15 would not purchase products from brands that use child labour. This is also supported by P10, that would rather not buy products from H&M due to the infamous child labor scandal.

P11 actively avoids Yves Rocher partly because she was informed that the brand engaged in animal testing. P2 and P9 both agree that cosmetics should not be tested on animals. As a result they would probably not purchase animal tested products. P8 has from negative WoM found out that Lime Crime uses animal testing, making her avoid the brand:

*"Asså jag är nog inte så duktig att göra research på allting, men... jag har hört att en annan (märke) till exempel Lime Crime att de använder det på djur, och jag har inte köpt nånting därifrån, vilket känns att jag inte heller vill köpa nånting därifrån... Sen så tänker man dock vill jag ju testa deras grejer, men sen bah: Uuugh, djuren överväger."*

*Translation: "I'm probably not that good at doing research on everything, but... I've heard that another (brand), for example Lime Crime use it on animals, and I've not bought anything from there, which feels like I don't want to buy anything from there either... Then one thinks that: I want to test their stuff, but then just: uugh, the animals outweigh."*

(P8, age 20)

P9 try to avoid companies that use animal testing, however this statement illustrates how her thinking and actions might differ:

*"Jag kan ju tänka typ att det här märket vill jag inte använda för jag vet att de har djurförsök, men sen kanske jag går en månad eller två månader senare in i butiken och köper en produkt för att det var en sådan produkt jag ville köpa, och så tänker jag inte på det... så det är inte så att när jag är i butiken att jag aktivt tänker att jag ska undvika (det). Jag tror att jag äger Isadora-produkter till exempel som jag kanske ångrar i efterhand, men att de fortfarande finns hemma... Jag kanske skäms lite när jag tänker på att jag har köpt nånting som har testats på djur."*

*Translation: "I might think that I don't want to use this brand because I know that they perform animal testing, but then maybe I walk into the store a month or two later and buy a product because it was the type of product that I wanted to buy, and then I don't think about it... so it's not like when I'm in the store that I'm actively thinking that I'll avoid (it). I think I own Isadora products for example that I might regret afterwards, but they're still at home... I might be embarrassed a little when I think that I've bought something that has been tested on animals."*

(P9, age 21)

*"... det är liksom så här kanske om man läser en tidningsartikel. Bah: a de här företagen använder sig utav djurförsök och då så läser man en lista på kanske 15 märken. Då tänker jag att nästa gång så ska jag inte välja något utav de märket, men 15 märken är ganska mycket att komma ihåg, och då kanske jag glömmer bort ett utav dem och så köper man ett..."*

*Translation: "... it's like if one reads a newspaper article. Like: these companies use animal testing and then one reads a list of maybe 15 brands. Then I think that next time I'll not choose anything from that brand, but 15 brands are quite much to remember, and then I might forget one of them and buy one..."*

(P9, age 21)

She (P9) concludes with stating that she tries to avoid companies using animal testing, but most often does not remember which brand that specifically uses it.

#### 4.4 Deficit-Value Avoidance

It was found that one of the participants avoided unfamiliar brands (P3):

*"Jag har ingen som helst relation till märket (Löwengrip Care & Color), jag vet inte om det är billigt, om det är dyrt, om det är bra eller inte bra, jag vet ingenting om märket, jag känner inte till det... Det gäller de andra (märkena) också (Skincare Formula 10.0.6 och Kiehls), jag känner inte till dem."*

*Translation: "I have no relationship whatsoever to the brand (Löwengrip Care & Color), I don't know if it's cheap, if it's expensive, if it's good or not, I don't know anything about the brand, I don't recognise it... This applies to the other (brands) too (Skincare Formula 10.0.6 and Kiehls), I don't recognise them."*

(P3, age 55)

Furthermore, one of the main themes found connected to *deficit-value* is the avoidance of budget brands due to the perception that they are deficit in terms of quality (P2; P6; P7; P9; P10). P7 and P9 illustrate this:

*"...jag tycker inte att de (budgetmärken) är lika bra."*

*Translation: "...I don't think that they (budget brands) are as good."*

(P7, age 22)

*"...de är billigare (Wet n Wild) och därför... känns det som att kvalitén inte är lika bra som en bättre, lite dyrare märke."*

*Translation: "...they (Wet n Wild) are cheaper and therefore... it feels like the quality isn't as good as a better, more expensive brand."*

(P9, age 21)

Contrastingly, some of the interviewees avoid expensive cosmetic brands due to the perception that they are overpriced and thus deficit in value (P7; P12; P15).

*"...Jag tycker också att de (Olay) är överprisade... Om jag skulle jämföra Nivea med Olay tycker jag personligen att det är i princip samma ingredienser i, men ändå tar de ju mycket mer betalt från Olay... Overrated"*

*Translation: "...I also think that they (Olay) are overpriced. If I'd compare Nivea with Olay, I personally think that it basically has the same ingredients, but Olay still charge a lot more... Overrated."*

(P12, age 27)

Another reason for *deficit-value* brand avoidance is *aesthetic insufficiency*, something that P3, P12, P16 and emphasise. In their opinion, ugly packaging could make them avoid certain brands. While the remaining participants do not mention any specific brand avoidance due to aesthetic insufficiency, P11 avoids Viva la Diva due to the childish logo:

*"...Inte bara för att den är billig, men jag gillar inte riktigt loggan... Jag tycker den ser ut som ett barn."*

*Translation: "...Not just because it's cheap, but I don't really like the logo. I think it looks like a child."*

(P11, age 51)

Another type of deficit-value brand avoidance that resembles the features of *food favoritism* has been found. For example, participants have expressed brand avoidance towards for example Viva la Diva or H&M due to various reasons, and would never buy skincare from these brands, but they are less prone to resist the brand in other product categories, such as colour cosmetics (P2; P6; P7; P10; P12; P15).

*"...läppglans och ögonskugga så här bara för att... om man går ut nån gång.. Då skulle jag kunna tänka mig (att köpa Wet n Wild eller Viva la Diva), men inte annars... skulle aldrig köpa Viva la Diva och Wet n Wild än annat än läppar."*

*Translation: "...lipgloss and eyeshadow just to... if one goes out sometime.. Then I might consider (buying Wet n Wild or Viva la Diva), but not otherwise... would never buy Viva la Diva and Wet n Wild other than for lips."*

(P2, age 28)

Similarly, P15 would not buy for example face cream from H&M as the brand is perceived to be more important in that case:

*"...krämen för huden känner jag är viktig. Inte eyeliner till exempel. Där köper jag H&M's för 29 spänn. Den sitter lika bra... där (när det gäller hudvård) är varumärket viktigt... Det är på nåt sätt att det är inbyggt att är det dyrare så är det bättre, och det är inte alls säkert att det är så såklart."*

*Translation: "... I feel like the facial cream is important. Not eyeliner for example. In that case, I purchase H&M's for 29 SEK. It's equally good... there (regarding skincare) the brand is important... It's in some way built in that if it's more expensive then it's better, and it's not at all certain that it is like that."*

(P15, age 58)

Although P15 avoids skincare products from H&M, she expresses above that she would purchase for example their eyeliner.

## 4.5 Advertising

Advertising avoidance could be recognised in this study (P6; P9; P10; P11; P12; P16; P17). However, none of the participants specifically expressed the sub-category *music* as a reason for avoiding a brand. Both P11 and P12 provide examples advertising avoidance:

*"men om du tänker dig den här reklamen (Maybelline)... de ser ut som som de har 15 lager mascara.. Aa men då bara tänker jag: så vill inte jag se ut. Och då blir jag såhär: nej nej då köper inte jag den."*

Translation: "But if you think of that commercial (Maybelline)... they look like they have 15 layers of mascara.. Then I think: I don't want to look like that. And then I become like: no no then I'm not buying that."

(P11, age 51)

"Maybelline skulle jag inte använda... och Max Factor, och Nivea... det är alltid sån överdrift på deras produkter, för att det är ju inte så i verkligheten... Det är som att du har fake eyelashes fast det är inte så. Det är väldigt orealistiskt."

Translation: "I wouldn't use Maybelline... and Max Factor and Nivea... it's always such an exaggeration of their products, because it's not like that in reality... Its like you have fake eyelashes even though it's not like that. It's very unrealistic."

(P12, age 28)

Some of the participants argue that they would avoid brands that in their advertisement is represented by a specific *celebrity* they dislike and do not want to be associated with (P6; P9; P10; P16). One participant gives an example of a possible future avoidance:

"Jag tycker kanske inte att hon Ida Östberg (deltagare i dokusåpan *Ex on the beach*, 2016), hon blonda tjejen du vet, är särskilt representativ, så skulle hon använda något smink skulle skulle jag inte vilja associeras med hennes profil."

Translation: "I might not think that Ida Östberg (participant from the reality show *Ex on the beach*) that blonde girl you know, is particularly representative, so if she would use any makeup I wouldn't want to be associated with her profile."

(P16, age 22)

"... i allmänhet blir jag lite anti utav såna märken som det är ett bloggarnamn på eller ett kändisnamn typ... sedan så har jag ju hört mycket goda saker om det att det ska va väldigt bra... Jag blir ändå inte intresserad av att köpa det själv... oftast brukar inte de grejerna vara speciellt bra, de (kändisarna) brukar bara sätta sitt ansikte på det (produkterna)."

Translation: "... in general I become a little anti of the kind of brands that have a blogger name on them or a celebrity name... I've also heard many good things of it, that it's supposed to be very good... I'm still not interested of buying it myself... usually those things are not especially good, they (celebrities) usually only put their face on it (the products)."

(P6, age 21)

Aggressive or outdated marketing are two reasons why P17 and P12 would avoid a brand:

"... jag tycker att deras utseende (Elizabeth Arden) eller hur de marknadsför sig idag känns för mycket 80-tal."

Translation: "... I think their appearance (Elizabeth Arden) or how they market themselves today feels too 80's."

(P17, age 34)

"Jag tycker inte om aggressiv marknadsföring. Det är nånting som jag också verkligen undviker, så det är därför jag inte gillar exempelvis Nivea, och Maybelline när det är alldeles för aggressiv marknadsföring.... och Max Factor... är för att jag tycker att de är för aggressiva, asså deras marknadsföring är så extremt aggressiv."



*Translation: "I don't like aggressive marketing. That's something that I really avoid, so that's why I don't like for example Nivea and Maybelline, when the marketing is too aggressive... And Max Factor... it's because I think they're too aggressive, like their marketing is extremely aggressive."*

(P12, age 28)

In clarification, when P12 describes aggressive marketing, she means that the distribution of the marketing efforts are highly intensive and extensive. Furthermore, in P12's perception, the new mascaras provided are heavily marketed and the benefits exaggerated, always introducing new better formulas that in reality does not make so much of a difference. As she knows that the cost of marketing is included in the final price of the product, she does not want to pay for this, rather paying for products that provide genuinely good results without extensive marketing efforts.

#### 4.5.1 Word-of-Mouth

This study found that *WoM* could be both positive and negative (P1; P2; P7; P10; P11; P12 P15; P16; P18). P11 actively avoids Yves Rocher as her skin therapist advised her to stay away from it. Contrastingly, P2 experienced positive *WoM*, and uses Dermalogica that her skin therapist praised. P15 also experienced positive *WoM*, using bareMinerals, that her daughter recommended her to try. In P7's case, her brand avoidance towards ACO's products and pharmacy cosmetics in general came originates in negative *WoM* from her mother:

*"Jag har köpt ACOs produkter på egen hand, när jag var yngre för att mina kompisar använde produkterna, men då när jag använde de produkterna så sa min mamma: Nej, du får inte använda dem, du ska använda Dermalogica. Så då slutade jag använda dem helt enkelt... Jag tror att delvis så ville hon väl att min hy skulle vara i bästa skick, men sen också för att hennes tankar av då de här billiga märkena då att de skulle förstöra huden på lång sikt också."*

*Translation: "I've purchased ACO's products on my own when I was younger because my friends used the products, but then when I used those products my mom told me: No, you may not use them, you shall use Dermalogica. So then I basically stopped using them... I partly believe that she wanted my skin to be in its best condition, but also because of her thoughts that these cheap brands would destroy the skin in the long run."*

(P7, age 22)

P3 expressed that she probably would avoid a brand owing to *WoM* if it was an unfamiliar brand that she did not have any emotional connection to. However, she also states that she would *not* avoid a brand owing to *WoM* if it was a product that suited her. P15 on the other hand, has used Clinique before, but now avoids the brand as a result of negative *WoM*, since her friend had a severe allergic reaction from using Clinique products.

#### 4.6 No Brand Avoidance

During the interviews, it was found that some participants did not display any brand avoidance behaviour. P1 for example does not avoid any specific brand:

*"Jag undviker nog inte liksom medvetet nåt märke egentligen, utan det är nog bara att man tänker att: det här är lite bättre..."*

*Translation: "I don't think I consciously avoid any brand really, but it's probably just that one thinks: this is a bit better..."*

(P1, age 22)

Similarly, P5 and P13 do not express any specific tendency towards brand avoidance as they speak positively of most brands.

## 5 Analysis and Interpretation

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*This chapter firstly presents an analysis of the new findings of this study. Subsequently, the analysis is structured by following each category in the brand avoidance framework.*

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### 5.1 New Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate, and gain a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons of why consumers engage in brand avoidance within the Swedish cosmetics industry for women. The study has not only been able to confirm and disconfirm drivers and motives from the existing framework, but also been able to contribute with new findings. Additionally, as the findings suggest, the reasons behind brand avoidance might intertwine, which presented a need for modifying the current framework that through the display of the boxes suggested that the drivers functioned in isolation rather than together. An example of when drivers intertwine is illuminated in the interview with P6 when the consumer avoids a brand due to poor product performance of their sun lotion, but only chooses to avoid that product category as opposed to all categories connected to the brand, which might be classified as favoritism.

As the researchers anticipated, the findings indicate that a deficient employee-brand relationship negatively affects consumers. P17 avoids the brand she was previously employed at, due to a belief of deficient value of the products as well as negative memories from her time employed there. It is recommended that this area of research is examined in future studies. Nevertheless, this instance of brand avoidance signifies the importance of employee branding, as this study has shown that unsatisfied employees might become a force against the brand, if not managed properly by companies.

Discussing the findings of WoM, as the researchers anticipated, consumers are affected by WoM. As P7, P11 and P15 illustrate, negative WoM can even make a consumer stop using a brand she has purchased. However, there is also an indication that WoM does not lead to brand avoidance if it is a brand that the consumer has confidence in. For example, P3 argues that if the product suits her, WoM would not negatively affect her. It seems though that it takes an expert or a close family member whose opinion is respected by the consumer for brand avoidance to occur. As negative WoM has shown to sometimes impact brand avoidance and sometimes not, it becomes evident that brands have to attain a strong relationship with their target consumers to minimise any risks that their purchasing patterns are affected by negative WoM. It is suggested that WoM is researched further to ensure validation of the findings. Additionally, the authors suggest that future research should focus on examining differences in brand avoidance due to WoM between various industries. Moreover, another question arised connected to WoM and brand avoidance. If the WoM comes from a digital medium, such as social media platforms, blogs, vlogs etc., the question is what the level of perceived trustworthiness is amongst consumers, and whether or not this could lead to brand avoidance. As this question is beyond the scope of this research purpose, it is suggested that future research examines the level of perceived trustworthiness of WoM in digital mediums to assess the level of impact on brand avoidance behaviour.

As the findings indicate, both passive and active forms of brand avoidance behaviour exist. When examining the findings of passive avoidance of brands, one might argue that for example in the case where pharmacies or certain retail stores are avoided, the brands within that store in turn suffer as a form of passive brand avoidance. Especially alarming could it be if these brands only exist in one type of store, such as the pharmacy's or the retail store's private brands. Moreover, since brand avoidance in nature is more difficult to measure than actual sales, brand managers of these brands might not realise why their brands have not become as successful as first expected. Therefore, the researchers suggest that these brands should exist at several retailers, or create an online presence in order to reach consumers who avoid certain stores or medium the brand currently is offered in. When it comes to active brand avoidance, one might argue that some brand avoidance is inevitable, and not necessarily needs managing. This would be evident in the case where the brand avoidance reason occurs due to *identity* brand avoidance, where the consumer does not feel as if the brand reflects her self-image. This might be a side

effect of effective targeting and positioning. If a brand for example decides to target a younger generation, the side effect might be alienating the older generations, resulting in their brand avoidance. However, as the brand targets itself against the younger generation, and not the older, it does not present any problems to the brand. It is rather when the target audience of the brand avoids it, that it becomes problematic. In these instances, the researchers highly encourage brand managers to reach out to the consumers of the target market, and in any means detect the source of brand avoidance. The framework produced within this research may act as a map to easier identify brand avoidance reasons for the specific target group that avoids the brand.

As the findings suggest, some participants did not show any signs of brand avoidance, which the researchers argue partly is due to the law of the lightest load, as mentioned in section 2.7. One might argue that the reason why brand avoidance does not occur in many cases could stem from the fact that consumers in their post-purchase behaviour strive towards minimisation of guilt, anxiety and regret. This becomes remarkably noticeable in the findings of WoM impact; consumers who already have purchased a product that they like, describe themselves as less susceptible to negative WoM of that brand. It seems to require an expert opinion as well as technical information of the product's inability to deliver that directly concerns the consumer, as in the case of P11, for the consumer to avoid a brand.

As of the reasons for brand avoidance within the framework, some could be confirmed, while some could not. This is further elaborated below.

## 5.2 Framework Specific Findings

### 5.2.1 Experience Avoidance

As shown in the findings, there is strong evidence of brand avoidance due to experience-related factors such as *poor performance*, *store environment*, and *product attributes*. However, *hassle/inconvenience* did not seem to be a driver of brand avoidance within the Swedish cosmetics industry, as none of the participants expressed any concerns regarding this. Returning to discussing *store environment* and *product attributes*, firstly, as mentioned, brands who only exist in one specific distribution channel, such as the pharmacy, might benefit from expanding to a number of different distribution channels, as some consumers indirectly might avoid brands as a result of environment avoidance. Secondly, as olfactory cues seemed important to consumers, and would in some instances even lead to brand avoidance, firms would benefit from reassessing whether their product scents are perceived as pleasant or not amongst their target segments. This notion becomes especially pressing in the case of cosmetics applied to the face, as the nose obviously is a part of it, thus any scented cosmetics for the face will be felt more strongly compared to applying the cosmetics on other parts of the body.

Suggestively, apart from ensuring the target segment likes the scent, brand managers should offer a scent free alternative of the product. Since the findings indicate that olfactory and haptic cues could be a reason for brand avoidance, a new subcategory, *product attributes*, has been included under *Experience Avoidance*.

### 5.2.2 Identity Avoidance

Beginning the discussion of identity-driven brand avoidance, one might argue that in the case where consumers avoid brands due to *negative reference groups*, it might be slightly difficult to manage. As consumers vary in their preferred reference groups, it becomes evident that a brand cannot please all. For example, regarding the Swedish blogger Blondinbella, one participant (P2) avoids Blondinbella's brand due to perceived differences between the two of them. Firms might manage this by in their branding practices choose spokespeople, or a brand identity that are more relatable and have the characteristics most consumers want to identify themselves with. In contrast, brand avoidance due to negative reference groups might not be problematic, as in the case where consumers resist a brand due to a perceived life stage they have reached. For example, it might not be problematic that the mature consumer actively avoids Viva la Diva, as the brand might target the younger generations. This illustrates the importance for brand managers to be aware of *which* consumers are avoiding the brand, only putting efforts in acquiring the target group consumers.

Discussing the findings of *inauthenticity*, they might at first sight seem contradictory. For example, H&M and Michael Kors are avoided due to the consumer perception that these brands mainly produce clothing or bags. In the participants' opinions, their cosmetics lines are seen as an inauthentic product line extension with the intention to generate additional profit rather than providing an authentically good product. In contrast, Chanel is also known for mainly producing clothing and bags, but in this case the findings suggest that consumers *do not* avoid its cosmetic brand. One possible explanation of this could be that H&M and Michael Kors might be perceived as budget brands, whilst Chanel may be seen as a luxury brand. This brand image might be transferred from the clothing and bags product category to the cosmetics. Moreover, as the cosmetics industry has shown to be primarily emotionally driven, consumers seemingly want cosmetics to be luxurious. From this rationale, one might argue that it makes more sense for consumers to avoid budget brands, as it does not adhere to their perception of what cosmetics should be for them, namely luxurious. This is something that needs further validation, as no participant distinctly expressed this. However, given that this discrepancy in authenticity exists, one might suggest that brands have to convince the consumer that the motives of product line extension are authentic.

A second aspect of brand avoidance due to perceived inauthenticity relates to the business model of for example personal selling through home-parties. Specifically, the findings suggest that brands associated with this type of selling approach are seen as having inauthentic motives of selling, as P2 for example believes they only try to deceive her. One might suggest that in these scenarios it is of great importance that the personal seller does not make the consumer perceive the selling style as pushy or cunning. On the contrary, one might argue that the personal seller could benefit from clearly emphasising that there is no obligation to buy, and focus more on the consumer's needs and wants as well as focusing on providing a pleasurable experience with the brand.

Continuing with discussing brand avoidance due to perceived *deindividuation*, the results did not find any evidence of this. The reason might be that in the case of cosmetics, the brand is not apparent when applied on the face, as P9 mentions. Additionally, the researchers argue that the results of applying cosmetics are highly individualisable. Therefore it is not deemed to reduce the consumer's individuality.

### 5.2.3 Moral Avoidance

This study did not show any strong evidence for moral avoidance due to *anti-hegemony* or *country effects*. However, there were indications that moral avoidance could be motivated through reasons such as animal testing and child labour, which would be considered a new contribution to the existing framework. Only a weak evidence of avoidance due to anti-hegemony was found. One participant (P12) avoids brands from Unilever due to the company's size, power and impact on society. The researchers argue that most consumers do not engage in avoidance due to anti-hegemony since there are many other aspects of brand avoidance that are considered more relevant within the cosmetics industry, such as animal testing or child labor. No indication of moral avoidance due to country effects were found. Within the cosmetics industry, brands seem to emphasise their marketing efforts on other aspects than country of origin. For example, Chanel primarily markets itself as a luxury brand rather than a French brand. This could be one reason why brand avoidance due to country effects is not mentioned among cosmetics consumers.

This study contributes with a new finding, suggesting *ethical concerns* as another reason for engaging in moral avoidance within the cosmetics industry. As mentioned, several of the participants expressed a concern for animal testing and/or child labour. For example, P8 has avoided Lime Crime since she was informed that it uses animal testing. Thus, ethical concerns have been incorporated as a subcategory of Moral Avoidance. Although the participants argue that they would avoid a brand that engages in unethical activities, this study shows an indication that there is a difference between thinking and acting. For example, P9 argue that it is more difficult to remember a list of brands that engage in animal testing, than if only one brand is distinguished. Furthermore, P9 exemplifies that even though she intends to avoid brands using animal testing, she might forget this consideration in a purchase situation. The researchers

argue that this could be due to the previously mentioned emotional purchasing motive underlying cosmetics consumption. For example, P3 would rather prioritise her looks and image, overlooking such unethical information.

#### 5.2.4 Deficit-Value Avoidance

When examining the findings of brand avoidance connected to *deficit-value*, several of the participants argued that budget brands are deficient in quality, thus they avoid these brands. Other participants avoid expensive cosmetic brands as they argue that these brands are overrated. In terms of the price-quality consideration, the researchers argue that budget brands need to convince consumers that despite the low price, the quality is adequate enough. Similarly, the same applies to the premium brands, but they should focus on convincing the consumer that the price is justified in value added.

The findings confirm previous research as it was found that one participant (P3) avoids some *unfamiliar* brands. However, brand avoidance due to unfamiliarity might be more common than found in the interviews. This could be validated in future research, focusing on unfamiliarity. However, the small notion of unfamiliar brands being avoided aligns with previous literature that suggests a higher perceived risk in purchasing them, especially when considering product price. The findings additionally suggest, that the lower the price, the less susceptible the consumers are towards avoidance due to unfamiliarity. Therefore, it could be advantageous for relatively unfamiliar, or new brands, especially if highly priced, to offer product samples. These could for example be inserted in magazines, or be available in retail stores with promotions to decrease the level of perceived risk. P3's statement illustrates the importance of the unfamiliar brands to approach her for initiating a possible brand-consumer relationship by, as mentioned, being visible and available. It is also recommended that brand managers ensure that positive WoM is used to overcome any unfamiliarity. This is further elaborated below.

Although *aesthetic* considerations, such as product packaging were considered important by three participants as it *could* lead to brand avoidance, the majority did not display any actual brand avoidance due to this. As P11 perceives Viva La Diva to have a childish logo, she illustrates and strengthens the notion that brand avoidance drivers are interconnected, since the avoidance stem from aesthetic insufficiency as well as a negative reference group. As indicated in the findings, the purpose of cosmetics is partly to keep the skin in a good condition as well as enhance the appearance. Therefore, provided that the product functions according to its purpose, consumers seem to be less concerned with avoiding aesthetic insufficient brands.

From the findings, it is evident that *food favoritism* also could be applied to the cosmetics industry as some consumers avoided H&M's skincare line, but not their makeup line. As shown, the consumers perceive skincare to be of greater importance than colour cosmetics. From these results, the researchers suggest that budget brands such as H&M should focus less on providing skincare, and more on makeup. Therefore, food favoritism is in the modified framework renamed *favouritism* to underline that it is applicable to various product categories and not only to food.

#### 5.2.5 Advertising

*Content* and *response* are two factors that are difficult to distinguish as they are highly interrelated. The content of an advertisement usually results in an individual response: either the consumer likes the commercial, or not. For example, when P11 discuss a mascara commercial, the content includes a description of many layers of mascara, resulting in a negative response, as she does not want to look like this. Therefore, the researchers argue that content and response are so closely related that they are inseparable. Generally, the findings indicate that exaggeration in cosmetic commercials are less popular, even leading to brand avoidance.

When evaluating Knittel et al.'s (2016) framework, the subcategory *music* is based on solely one participant's example, that vaguely indicated brand avoidance due to loud or noisy music in the

advertisement. This study could not confirm their finding, as none of the participants expressed music as a reason for engaging in brand avoidance. Within the cosmetics industry, music alone has not implied any impact on consumers to the extent that they would avoid a brand, therefore it does not display any significance in brand avoidance. Thus, existing evidence of music's impact on brand avoidance could be considered uncertain. It is suggested that further research investigate this to further confirm or disconfirm this finding.

When examining brand avoidance due to a specific *celebrity endorser*, some of the participants have expressed unwillingness to identify themselves with a certain celebrity. This illustrates that drivers of brand avoidance are related, as the celebrity endorser are most likely selected due to their specific image, which makes the brands vulnerable to identity avoidance. The researchers suggest that the brand should be endorsed by celebrities that are clearly related to its core industry. A cosmetics brand could for example use a celebrity endorser that has knowledge within this field or is an opinion leader rather than using for example a reality star with no connection to the industry.

As mentioned, the researchers expected *negative WoM* to be a motive for brand avoidance, which was validated in this study. It was also validated that people with higher levels of proximity to the consumers or expertise within the area had more influence of the consumers' purchasing patterns. This showed to be applicable for both purchasing patterns and avoidance behaviour. As negative WoM was found to be a driver for brand avoidance, the researchers chose to rearrange the advertising category by making it a subcategory of a new main driver called *Communication Avoidance*. Negative WoM would not fit into the advertising category, as it is *personal communication* between consumers rather than communication from a brand to consumers. By including the new category communication avoidance, both advertising and negative WoM fit as subcategories under communication avoidance. Although content, celebrity endorser, music, and response now are not visible in the framework, they are still inherent in the subcategory advertising.

## 6 Conclusion

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*This chapter presents the conclusion of this study including the modified framework of brand avoidance.*

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The purpose of this study was to investigate, and gain a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons of why consumers engage in brand avoidance within the Swedish cosmetics industry for women. Throughout the research, a main notion of brand avoidance has been found. The underlying reasons could be interrelated, occur simultaneously and in combination with each other. Thus, the reasons are highly individual and differ amongst consumers, making it difficult to generalise.

The study has been able to confirm the main drivers for brand avoidance: *Experiential*-, *Identity*-, *Moral*-, *Deficit-Value Avoidance* and *Advertising*. Beginning with the findings of *Experience Avoidance*, all subcategories within this main driver were confirmed except for Hassle/Inconvenience. Moreover, two new subcategories were found:

- Product Attributes - E.g. olfactory cues or haptic cues
- Employee-Brand Relationship - Deficient employee-brand relationship

Product Attributes refers to the sensory information the consumer registers such as scent, consistency, and perceived concentration vs. dilution. Many consumers interviewed perceived scent as one of the most important factors behind their brand avoidance behaviour, as they would avoid brands with products that smell artificial, repelling, or too much. Moreover, it was found that a deficient employment period for a company could negatively affect the employee-brand relationship in the form of brand avoidance. The interviewee (P17) referred to incompatible perceptions of work ethics between the organisation and herself. Owing to this new finding, further research is recommended, as the researchers found one instance of this. Continuing with *Identity Avoidance*, all subcategories were confirmed except Deindividuation. Within *Moral Avoidance*, neither Anti-Hegemony, nor Country Effects could be confirmed. However, a new subcategory was found:

- Ethical Concerns - E.g. animal testing or child labour

While some participants expressed no concern for animal testing, others perceived this as an important factor, and even a driver of brand avoidance. However, as the findings suggest, although some consumers in theory avoid brands using animal testing, this might be forgotten in an actual purchasing situation. It is therefore recommended that brands that do *not* execute animal testing use this information in their marketing to gain a competitive advantage. If the trend in the cosmetics industry goes towards no animal testing, and an increasing amount of brands market themselves as not animal tested, consumers in the future might expect this from all brands. Consequently, if it becomes a norm, brands who do not terminate animal testing might suffer from brand avoidance.

All subcategories of Deficit-Value Avoidance, were confirmed, and as Food Favoritism was found to apply not only to food products, but also to certain cosmetic products, the subcategory was renamed Favouritism. Lastly, the main driver *Advertising* was confirmed, and became a subcategory to the new main motive *Communication Avoidance* that the newly found subcategory Negative WoM also is included in.

- Negative WoM - E.g. rumours or exhortations

Negative WoM in the form of rumours or exhortations have shown to affect consumers towards brand avoidance. In accordance with previously found research of WoM, close family and

friends as well as experts such as skin therapist seemed to have higher influence towards initiating brand avoidance than other sources or negative WoM. However, it was found that unfamiliar brands were more prone to brand avoidance due to negative WoM than brands the consumer already had a good relationship with. Therefore, it is crucial for brand managers to manage negative WoM proactively rather than reactively.

The model presented below represents the modified framework of drivers of brand avoidance based on Knittel et al.'s (2016) framework:

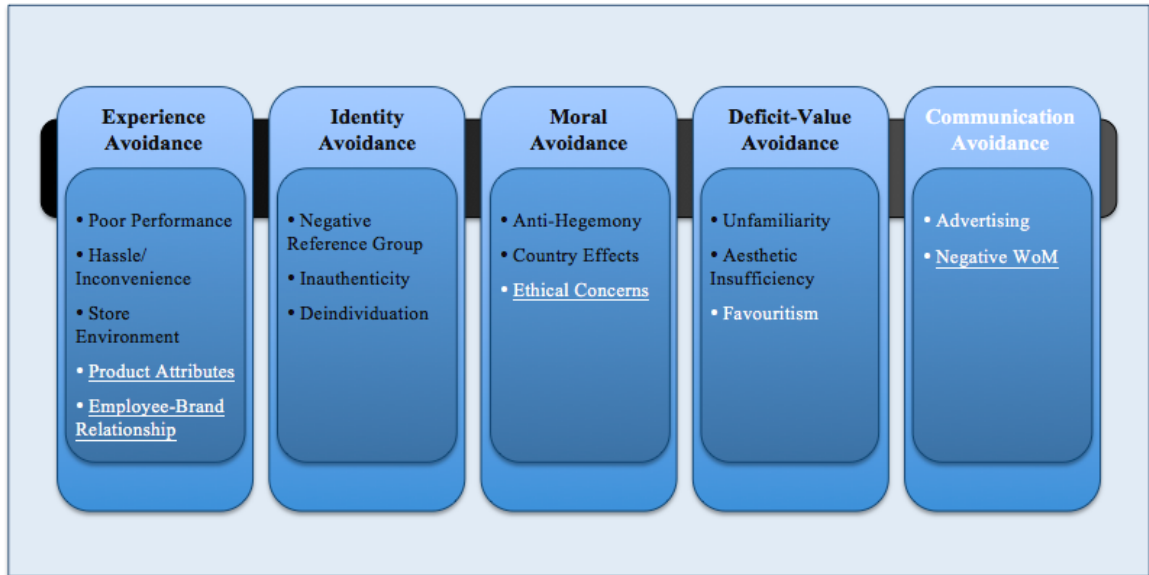


Figure 6 Modified Framework of Drivers of Brand Avoidance

Source: Developed by the Authors

As mentioned, drivers of brand avoidance have been found to intertwine, which has been clarified through firstly integrating the subcategories into the same box, and secondly through the black line behind the five main drivers of brand avoidance. The framework shows existing main drivers together with subcategories in accordance with Knittel et al.'s (2016) framework (black), the newly found drivers (white and underlined), as well as the adapted sections (white).



## 7 Suggested Research

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*This chapter presents suggestions for future studies within brand avoidance.*

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Since brand avoidance is a newly found phenomenon, it is a subject that needs further investigation. To enhance the understanding of the drivers for brand avoidance, it is suggested that future research should study the topic from another industry perspective, as the findings from this type of research has shown to be rich and in-depth. Also, to enable detection of brand avoidance reasons existing in other cultures, further research should be conducted in countries other than Sweden. When the cosmetics industry for men has matured, it is also recommended that further research is implemented to understand drivers for brand avoidance of this consumer segment.

As the researchers did not have access to more participants who were previously employed at cosmetic brands, further research should focus on investigating brand avoidance from this aspect, as it has been found that a deficient employee-brand relationship can lead to brand avoidance.

The newly found subcategory of Communication Avoidance, WoM, could also be investigated further in several manners. For example, the difference between who and where the WoM stems from should be studied. Researchers could also investigate whether brand avoidance due to WoM is more or less frequent depending on low- or high-involvement product categories.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Cosmetic Brands Stencil



MAC MAKE UP STORE™

MARY KAY® MAXFACTOR  
THE MAKE-UP OF MAKE-UP ARTISTS

MAYBELLINE NEW YORK  MICHAEL KORS 

NYX OLAY®  ORIFLAME  
SWEDEN

REVLON®  RIMMEL LONDON SENSAI



SHISEIDO 

smashbox



TOM FORD

 Too Faced COSMETICS VICHY VIVA la DIVA  
LABORATOIRES Absolutely fabulous make up!

 YVES ROCHER  YVES SAINT LAURENT wet n wild®  
ALL ACCESS BEAUTY los angeles

ÅHLÉNS

## Informationsblad för deltagare

Hej och tack för att du tar dig tid att diskutera dina åsikter med oss. Vi kommer under denna diskussion fokusera på din åsikt gällande kosmetik, särskilt gällande ansiktsvård och färgkosmetik såsom smink. Syftet med den här diskussionen är att förstå mer djupgående vad du tycker om vissa varumärken. Därför är det viktigt för oss att du svarar så öppet och ärligt som möjligt.

Informationen som vi får från din intervju kommer att användas till vårt examensarbete, och du kommer där vara anonym, ditt namn kommer alltså inte synas. För att bättre kunna dokumentera vår diskussion kommer den spelas in via ljudinspelning. Om det är något som du inte vill ska bli inspelat kan du när som helst säga till oss så kommer vi stänga av inspelningen.

Du kommer först få fylla i lite bakgrundsfakta om dig själv och sedan börjar vi diskussionen. För att underlätta diskussionen kommer vi förse dig med exempel på kosmetiska varumärken som finns. Det är mycket uppmuntrat att även prata om varumärken som inte finns som exempel.

Tack för din medverkan!  
//Anna, Joanna och Amy

**Translation:**

## Information sheet for participants

Hi, and thank you for taking the time to discuss your opinions with us. We will during this discussion focus on your opinion regarding cosmetics, especially regarding facial skincare and colour cosmetics such as makeup. The purpose of this discussion is to understand more in depth what you think of some brands. Therefore it is important to us that you answer as openly and honestly as possible.

The information we get from your interview will be used for our bachelor thesis, and you will be anonymous there, thus your name will not be visible. To better be able to document our discussion it will be recorded through sound recording. If there is anything you don't want recorded you can tell us anytime and we will stop recording.

You will firstly fill in some background facts about yourself and then we will begin the discussion. To ease the discussion we will provide you with examples of existing cosmetic brands. It is highly encouraged to talk about brands that do not exist as examples.

Thank you for your participation!  
//Anna, Joanna and Amy

## Appendix 3 Guidelines for Semi-Structured Interviews

### Guidelines for Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews

- Start with giving the information stencil and ask the participant to read it.
- Get recorded consent that the participant agrees to being recorded, that the participant knows he/she can stop the recording anytime and that he/she should answer honestly to all questions
- Always do a sound check before the actual recording and make sure the recording device has enough battery for the entire interview.
- Remember to take the participant's background information. Suggestively in the beginning of the interview.
- Show the stencil with all examples of cosmetic brands and ask the participant to mark the ones she/he recognises.
- Ask the participant to mark (in a different manner) the cosmetic brands she/he has had experience of.
- Going in alphabetical order when discussing the cosmetic brands gives some structure to the interview.
- Ask in the end of the interview if the participant consents to answering other questions in case the researchers find other questions needed answering.
- Be open and have an open body language as well as a curious attitude.
- Make sure the interviewing location has low distraction levels, low noise levels, makes the participant comfortable and facilitates the participant to talk freely.

#### Examples of questions to pose during the Semi-structured interview:

	Examples
<b>Close-ended questions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finns det några kosmetikamärken du undviker? (Are there any cosmetic brands you avoid?)</li> <li>• Vilka kosmetikamärken använder du? (Which cosmetic brands do you use?)</li> <li>• Vilka kosmetikamärken skulle du inte vilja köpa? (Which cosmetic brands would you not want to buy?)</li> <li>• Har en reklam eller annons någonsin fått dig att inte vilja köpa något kosmetikamärke? (Has any commercial or advertisement ever made you not want to buy any cosmetic brand?)</li> <li>• Har en negativ kommentar eller avrådan fått dig att inte köpa ett visst kosmetikamärke? (Has a negative comment or dissuasion made you not buy a specific cosmetic brand?)</li> </ul>
<b>Open-ended questions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varför undviker du kosmetikamärke x? (Why do you avoid cosmetic brand x?)</li> <li>• Vad skulle kunna få dig att inte köpa från ett märke? (What would made you not buy from a brand?)</li> <li>• Varför köper du de(m) kosmetikamärke(n) som du gör? (Why do you buy the cosmetic brand(s) that you do?)</li> <li>• Varför köper du inte de andra kosmetikamärkena som du har markerat? (Why do you not buy the other cosmetic brands you have marked?)</li> </ul>
<b>Probing questions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vad känner du när du tänker på kosmetikamärke x? (What do you feel when you think of cosmetic brand x?)</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4 Interview Recordings

Available on request.