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Brand avoidance investigation of fast fashion brands with

anti-consumption approach

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Doctoral dissertation

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1. INTRODUCTION

The majority of relevant research studies investigating consumer behaviour and branding focus on the reasons behind choosing different products and brands. Research related to anti-consumption emphasize the opposite, aiming is to explore reasons behind the rejection of different products, brands, or even consumption as such. The relevance of this issue is not negligible: knowing what consumers do not want (and why) is at least as important as knowing what the consumers want (and why).

Under anti-consumption behaviour different behaviours are belonging, thus the motivations behind behaviours are multiple (Iyer & Muncy, 2009). The present study aims to investigate the significance of brand avoidance behaviour, which is a special type of anti-consumption behaviour. Despite the fact, that brand avoidance is a relatively new research field, behaviour can be derived from two theories: one line of theories defines brand avoidance as a type of anti-consumption, the other line defines the phrase as a relationship between consumer and brand. The representatives of the first theory emphasize the determination of the reasons behind brand avoidance. The representatives of the second theory mainly focus on defining different consumer behaviours under the influence of negative emotions about the brand, one of which is brand avoidance.

After the review of the anti-consumption literature, it can be concluded, that the motivations behind brand avoidance behaviour vary from industry to industry, and even depend on the development of the analysed country. It is inevitable to examine brand avoidance behaviour at the indusry level (Khan & Lee, 2014; Khan & Ashraf, 2019).

Taking into account the above mentioned facts, I selected the investigation of clothing industry - which is mainly dominated by fast fashion brands – to analyse the brand avoidance behaviour in the case of fast fashion brands. The activities of these companies are suitable for brand aviodance behaviour investigation in case of Generation Z based on the application of the extended model of Knittel et al. (2016). Fast fashion brands – besides making fashionable products available to many consumers at affordable prices - have a number of other features that can give members

of this generation a reason to avoid the fast fashion brands. The quality of these items are questionable, however we can get fashionable clothing at an accessible price point. Members of Gen Z – besides mobile communications – pay special attention to their clothing (Nógrádi-Szabó & Neulinger, 2017). Global presence of the fast fashion brands makes it questionable, whether they can come up with products, that allow members of the Gen Z to express their personalities.

It is also known, that different environmental and social problems are connected to fast fashion companies. As mentioned above, the reasons behind brand avoidance behaviour are well defined, however, the connections between the reasons and their effect on brand avoidance behaviour are not identified. During the research fast fashion buyers and fast fashion avoiders were also questioned, the research study also attempts to identify the differences in attitudes between the two consumer groups.

Despite the fact, that Knittel et al.'s (2016) extended brand avoidance model is very complex, the category of experiential brand avoidance can only be interpreted for the offline environment. During the pandemic - companies are forced to strengthen their online presence without other options - it is crucial to be aware of the reasons, that lead to brand avoidance as a result of the consumers' online shopping experience. In the related literature those aspects were identified - which influence consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the online shopping environment - but so far these aspects has not even been mentioned as the reasons behind brand avoidance behaviour.

The objective and the structure of the dissertation

The research direction – besides personal interest - is supported by the following facts:
- relatively few, but significantly increasing number of brand avoidance studies,
- the market leaders are fast fashion companies,
- comprehensive brand avoidance research has not yet been carried out for fast fashion brands.

The theoretical framework focused on the literature of branding, brand value, brand loyalty and brand avoidance. Based on the literature focusing on branding, two main directions of brand definitions can be identified in the dissertation: the corporate-based and consumer-based approach. In the study all the definitions are presented, that are relevant from the point of view of brand avoidance.

Among the company-based definitions of brand, the symbolic meaning of the concept and the fact that the brand allows consumers to associate the product with a particular manufacturer are of great importance. In the consumer-based approach, brand promise and the sum of previous brand experiences stand out among the elements of the definitions.

In accordance with the brand value literature, brand loyalty is the most important dimension of the brand value (Saritas & Penez, 2017). This fact is important from the perspective of brand avoidance, because the phrase brand avoidance were firstly defined as an opposite of brand loyalty (Oliva et al., 1992). In the dissertation the "quality-satisfaction-loyalty chain" of the loyalty literature is empasized, special attention is paid to the relationship between consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

Chapter 3 of the thesis summarises the theoretical framework of the two main directions of brand avoidance. Although the roots of anti-consumption go back to the 17th century, there is no consensus in the literature on what types of behaviour can be considered anti-consumption. Among the theories, I accept the broader definition of anti-consumption: the concept does not only refer to the rejection of consumption as a whole, but can also be applied to the rejection of certain brands and products.

Despite the fact, that the literature on brand avoidance dates back just over 10 years, the motivations for brand avoidance are already covered in one of the first works, the comprehensive model by Lee et al (2009b). This model has provided the starting point for a number of brand avoidance studies (Knittel et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2013; Rindell et al., 2014; Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014; Berndt et al., 2019; Jayasimha et al., 2017; Odoom, 2019, Lin et al., 2020). Several extended versions of the model have been developed, and in this paper I use the extended model of Knittel et al.'s (2016) as the basis for the study of brand avoidance behaviour.

The other line of brand avoidance interprets the concept as the relationship between the consumer and the brand: the theoretical framework is related to Fetscherin & Heinrich (2014). According to this theory, negative feelings towards the brand and a weak brand relationship lead to brand avoidance. The negative emotions towards the brand and the brand avoidance behaviour associated with these emotions are presented in detail in this chapter.

The aim of the Chapter 4 is to introduce the milestones in the clothing industry, that have contributed to the explosion of fast fashion companies. There are several definitions of fast fashion, with scholars focusing on different aspects of its essence. In this chapter, I will also categorise these definitions, which has not been done in the literature on fast fashion. Fast fashion companies are associated with a number of industry innovations, and in this section of the thesis I will present those innovations, that are linked to brand avoidance: the acceleration of the product life cycle has led to a decline in the quality of fast fashion products, and the outsourcing of production to developing countries raises a number of environmental and social issues.

In this chapter, I will also pay close attention to presenting a comprehensive overview of brand avoidance behaviour related to fast fashion products, linked to a specific brand avoidance category. The focus on consumer behaviour related to experiential brand avoidance is based on the literature focus on the quality issues of these products. Clothing, what we wear have symbolic meanings, several research findings indicate the importance of brand avoidance linked to consumer identity. In this chapter, I analyse in more detail the environmental and social problems associated with fast fashion companies, which can be described as specific to the clothing industry.

The next chapter of the thesis begins with a description of the research questions and hypotheses and the introduction of empirical research. In Chapter 5, the results of the research are presented in detail. Chapter 6 focuses on a summary of the main findings of the research and concludes with the limitations of the research and future research directions.

2. APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF BRAND FROM BRAND AVOIDANCE PERSPECTIVE

The main topic of the dissertation is brand avoidance, the phenomena requires an overview of the main concepts and theories related to the brand, branding, brand value and brand loyalty.

2.1 Corporate-based perspective of the brand

On the corporate side, the most widespread brand definition is provided by the American Marketing Association, which can be found in a number of brand-related research and literature (Kotler et al., 1999; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Erdem et al., 2006; Fan, 2006; Keller et al. , 2008; Hanna-Rowley, 2008; Davis, 2010; Keller, 2013; Kasapi & Cela, 2017, Hunt, 2019, etc.): brand is „a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or combination of them which is intented to identify the goods and services of one seller and to differentiate them from those of competitors"(Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, p. 502). The differentation of the product is ensured by the multidimensional nature of the brand, which can be rational and tangible or symbolic, emotional and intangible. Its intangible character is related what the brand represents (Keller, 2013, p.3). Beverland's brand definition also emphasize the brand's intanglible and symbolic content: brand is „an intagible, symbolic marketplace resource, imbued with meaning by stakeholders and the broader context in which it is embedded that enables users to project their identity goal(s) to one or more audiences (Beverland, 2021, p. 11). The product is part of a brand (Okonkwo, 2007, p. 9), to the effect that the brand beyong product functionality increases the value of the product (Farquhar, 1989, p. 24-25). West et al. (2018) divide the brand into functional and non-functional parts. The functional part of the brand is considered as an easily replicable part of the brand, while the non-functional part is considered as a source of differentiation (West et al., 2018, p. 322).

Connected to the above mentioned brand definition of the American Marketing Association, Bauer et al. (2014) put emphasize on the symbols and the differentation from competitors. According to them „the brand is a set of symbols and components, which aim is to identify products and services with specific manufacturer, distributor

and at the same time to distinguish them from other products (Bauer et al., 2014, p. 176).

Definition of Aaker (1991) also highlights the brand's protective function to consumers and manufacturers. A brand is an offering from a known source (Kotler, 2000, p. 6.). The phrase known source refers to the fact, that there are number of mass products on the market, which do not have a brand, so its manufacturer is not known either.

Kapferer (2008) interprets the concept of brand on three levels:

a) a consumer-level approach,

b) as conditional asset,

(c) in a legal perspective.

Kapferer's (2008) consumer-level approach will be explained in detail as a part of consumer-based perspective of the brand. During the definition of the brand as a conditional asset, Kapferer (2008) refers to the brand firstly as an intangible asset, secondly as a conditional asset. The latter means that in order to deliver the brand's benefits, it needs to work in conjuction with other material assets, such as production facilities. It was not specified, what kind of benefits Kapferer (2008) means by this definition, as the brand ensures benefits both for consumers and companies (Kapferer, 2008; Caspar et al., 2002, cited by Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2007, p. 359). Henceforward the main focus will be on the business to consumer market benefits.

Legal perspective refers to the internationally accepted definition of the brand, in which the signs and the set of signs has exceptional importance. The signs or the set of signs ensures several functions: firstly it certifies the origin of the product, secondly it distinguishes the product from the competition (Kapferer, 2008, p.10). The aim of the branding is to increase the brand's net value through designing and managing. Branding involves a well-organized process with clear stages, the complexity of the process depends mainly on the size of the organization (Budac & Batlador, 2013, p. 444-445).

Branding also encourages companies to produce high-quality products, as they can charge a higher price for these products, thus indirectly expecting higher profits (Hunt, 2019).

Branding is more just adding a brand name: it requires a corporate long-term involvement, a high level of resources and skills (Kapferer, 2008, p. 31). In the case of corporate-based perspective few researchers define brand as a resource and the benefits of the brand also identify based on this viewpoint. According to Olins (2009) if the launch and the support of the brand is effective, the brand is a major corporate resource, in some cases it can become the most valuable asset of the organisation (Olins, 2009; cited by Budac & Baltador, 2013, p. 444).

According to Farhana (1991) the most relevant resources of the corporation are intaglible, the brand is also belongs to these resources. Defining a brand as a resource can be traced back to resource-based theory. Strategic management's fundamental question is how firms achieve and sustain competitive advantage (Kapás, 1999; Teece et al., 1997, p. 510). According to Kapás (1999), resource-based theory "considers a company as a set of strategic resources, abilities, and competencies" (Kapás, 1999, p. 38). Kenesei & Gyulavári (2012) refer to the resource-based approach, which "emphasize the importance of internal, organizational factors in strategy making process and competitiveness creation" (Kenesei & Gyulavári 2012, p. 72). Attila Chikán (2006), one of the main domestic representatives of competitiveness research also considers the resource-based theory as the starting point for the definition of corporate competitiveness. Wernerfelt (1984) defines brand name as a resource, Harangozó (2012) consider brand as an intangible resource and Kapás (1999) consider brand name as a strategic resource – based on strategic asset properties determined by Amit & Schoemaker (1993). Companies have few strategic assets and resources to gain a long-term corporate competitive advantage, one of them is the brand (Kapferer, 2008; Dunn & Davis, 2004). The competitive advantage for firms provided by the brand can be determined in terms of growing profit (Wood, 2000, p. 666).

The advantages of strong brands based on Keller (2013), Cromie & Ewing (2008) and Chakraborty & Bhat (2018) can be summarized as follows:

- Better perception of brand performance,
- Less sensitivity to competitor's marketing campaigns,

- Less sensitivity to marketing crises,
- Greater loyalty,
- Larger margins,
- More inelastic consumer response to price increases,
- More elastic consumer response to price decreases,
- Greater trade cooperation and support,
- The effectiveness of marketing communication increases,
- Possible licencing opportunities,
- Brand extention opportunities,
- Facilitates the introduction and repurchase of products,
- Supports premium pricing and enables market segmentation (Keller, 2013; Cromie & Ewing, 2008).

The above mentioned facts are important for companies and some of them is significant from the brand avidance perspective. One of the advantages of the stong brands, that consumers tent to evaluate the products with strong brands better. One motivation of brand avoidance is connected product performance, poor performance can be a reason for brand avoidance. Due to the perceived better performance of products under strong brands consumers may be less likely to avoid these products. Greater loyalty is also among the advantages of strong brands. According to the first definition brand avoidance is the opposite of brand loyalty. Due to greater brand loyalty towards strong brands consumers may also be less likely to avoid these brands.

Bauer and Kolos (2016) describe benefits provided by the brand to the company as functional and emotional benefits. Functional benefit is the higher price, better planning, the possibility of segmentation and the support of marketing campaigns. Emotional benefits include consumer and investor trust, and employee satisfaction. Brands basically ensures identification for consumers and corporations. On corporate level it means, that brands simplify product handling and tracing and also provides legal protection for the unique characteristics of products. Keller (2008) refers to the brand name, the manufacturing process, and the packaging of products as intellectual property rights. These rights ensure, that the firm can safely invest in the brand and reap the benefits of a valuable asset (Keller, 2008, p.7).

2.2 Consumer-based perspective of the brand

The definition of the American Marketing Association has been the subject of several criticisms for being too product-oriented, and consumer-based perspective of the brand has become conspicuous.

According to the consumer-based approach brand is:

- *A promise* (Dunn & Davis, 2004; Knapp, 2000; cited by Kotler és Pfoertsch p. 358; Pearson, 2006, Beverland, 2021). The brand symbolizes the guarantee and authenticity for consumers, that this promise will be fulfilled during the shopping process (Okonkwo, 2007, p. 9). This is equalent to Kapferer's guarentee and continuity function.

- *The totality of perceptions,* everything, we see, hear, read, know, feel, think etc. – about the product, service or business (Dunn & Davis, 2004; Okonkwo, 2007; Knapp, 2000; cited by Kotler & Pfoertsch, p. 358).

- Based on the *previous experiences, associations and future expectations* brand holds distrintice position in consumer's mind (Dunn & Davis, 2004; Okonkwo, 2007; Knapp 2000; cited by Kotler és Pfoertsch p. 358).

These perceptions has to be unique, strong and positive (Kapferer, 2008, p. 10). Connected to previous experiences and associations it has to be mentioned, if they are not positive, brand can be avoided (Lee et al., 2012).

The functions of the brand for the consumers summarized in 1. Table. Keller (2013) – similarly to Kapferer (2008) - mentions the functions of brands for consumers. In the company-based perspective several authors suggest that the origin of a product can be identified by the brand, allowing consumers to link responsibility directly to the manufacturer. This is equalent to Kapferer's ethical function. Thank to the brands consumers based on their previous experiences know, which brand satisfies their needs the most, as a result the choice of the product has become easier, because the brand ensures the same quality during every shopping process (Hunt, 2019). Brands also reduce consumer's search cost on internal (regarding to thinking) and on external level (regarding to the whole searching process). Connected to Kapferer's badge function Keller (2013) argues that symbolic function is also manifested in the fact, that certain

brands are associated with certain people, thus reflecting different values and characteristics.

1. Table: The functions of the brand for the consumer

Function	Consumer benefit
Identification	The product is easily noticeable and recognisable
Practicality	Through repurchase and brand loyalty, the consumer saves time and energy
Guarantee	Regardless of the place and time of the purchase, the consumer receives the same quality
Optimisation	Within the given product category consumer buys the best product, the best performer for a particular purpose.
Badge	Confirmation of the self-image or the image, which is presented to others.
Continuity	Satisfaction created by a relationship of familiarity and intimacy with the brand, which is consumed for for years
Hedonistic	The enchantment, which is connected to brand's attractiveness, logo and communication.
Ethical	The satisfaction, which is connected the corporation's responsive behaviour (for example: envorinmental protection, employment or nonshocking advertising).

Source: Kapferer 2008, p. 22.

On the consumer's side among functional advantages of the brand belongs the guaranteed quality, which is equalent to Kapferer's continuity function. Emotional benefits include lower functional, financial, social risk and easier choice (Bauer & Kolos, 2016). Kapferer (2008) also mentions lower risk arguing that the brand exists as long as the perceived risk in product selection is present in the consumer's decision process. Keller (2008) related to strong brands mention the reduction perceived risk: strong brands facilitate the decision-making process of consumers by reducing perceived risk and increasing expectations.

2.3 Brand equity

According to Aaker (1991) brand equity is a „set of assets such as name awareness, loyal customers, perceived quality, and associations that are linked to the brand (its name or symbol) and add (or subtract) value to the product or service being offered"

(Aaker, 1991, p. 18). Rahman et al. (2018) also refer brand equity as a most important group of assets, that serve as a source of the company's competitiveness. In general, brand value is a sales effect, which can individually connected to brand as a consequence (Keller, 1993).

Budac & Baltador (2013) similarly define the phrase, they argue that brand equity is a set of assets and liabilities, which is connected to the brand, to brand name or to symbols, contrary to Aaker (1991) they highligh the added value. They divide the assets and liabilities into the following groups:

- brand loyalty,
- name recognition,
- perceived quality,
- brand associations,
- other brand assets, such as patents and trademarks.

Foroudi et al. (2018) based on Delassus and Descotes's (2012) clasification identify brand image, perceived quality, brand associations and brand awareness as a symbolic elements of brand equity.

Based on different approaches and definitions, Feldwick (1996, cited by Wood 2000, p. 662) interprets brand equity as follows:

- The total value of the brand as a separable asset, when the brand is sold, or the value included in the company balance sheet. According to Wood (2000) this is a definition accepted by financial accountants.
- A measure of the strength of consumers' attachment to a brand. Wood (2000) defines this concept as a brand strength and uses brand loyalty as a synonym.
- Associations and beliefs the consumers has about the brand. According to Wood (2000), this could be defined as brand image.

According to Kotler (2000) in the case high brand value company can enjoy several benefits:

- Due to high brand awareness and brand loyalty the marketing costs are reduced.
- Ensures better bargaining position agaïnts distributors and wholesalers.
- The company can set a higher price for a higher perceived quality.

- Allows the firm to more easily launch extensions because the brand has high credibility.

Kang et at. (2015) completed benefits expressed by Kotler (2000) with positive word of mouth.

Farquhar (1989) classifies the benefits of brand equity into 3 main categories. Two of them related to the company and one is related to trade:

- It provides a company incremental cash flow by helping companies to make a financial return in the long run (Foroudi et al., 2018), due to the higher price and lower promotion costs mentioned by Kotler (2000).
- It serves as a platform for the introduction of new products and licensing (this was classified by Keller (2013) as the marketing advantage of strong brands), and
- ensures resiliency in crisis situations, for example when consumers tastes shifts. Dominant brand name also can be a barrier to entry in some markets.
- From the trade's perspective brand equity can be measured in brand leverage over other products in the market. This can be originated from easier acceptance and wider distribution of a strong brand.

Chow et al. (2017) phrase the benefits of brand equity similarly to Farquhar (1989), adding that brand equity provides a distinction from competitors, which is an important element of the brand definitions presented earlier. According to Chevalier & Mazzalovo (2012) the brand equity is originated in the following elements:

a) A mythical value: It includes the reason the brand existence.
b) An exchange value: It refers to the best value for money, that includes the mythical elements mentioned above.
c) An emotional value, which is connected to emotions and impressions.
d) An ethical value: it can be linked to social responsibility and the way the company reacts in the marketplace.
e) Identity value: indicates that brand can be used by consumers to communicate something about themselves (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012, p. 97.).

These elements are important in brand avoidance behaviour in some cases, when the mythical value is not equalent to experienced value or when the identity value does not match the individual's self-image.

2.4 Brand loyalty and brand avoidance

A brief review of brand loyalty is necessary to examine brand avoidance, as the first literature related to brand avoidance (at least what most researchers refer to as the first literature) has defined brand avoidance as the opposite of brand loyalty (Oliva et al., 1992). Brand loyalty can be examined from several perspectives; in the present dissertation it is interpreted as the output of consumer expectations and consumer satisfaction.

Despite the fact, that the field of brand loyalty has been widely researched, the phrase does not have uniformly accepted definition. Prónay (2011) and Li et al. (2010) identify three approaches to loyalty based on the definitions found in the literature:

- Behavioral approach: the representatives of this approach interpret loyalty as a repurchase, which expresses how often the consumer returns to the object of loyalty. The object of loyalty can be a store, a brand, or even an entire chain store (Dörnyei & Gyulavári, 2011; Prónay, 2011).

- Attitudinal approach: the representatives of the approach interpret loyalty as an attitude. Dörnyei and Gyulavári (2011) assume the existence of an emotional relationship in this approach.

- Composite approach: combination of behavioral and attitudinal approach (Prónay, 2011, p. 86).

Brand loyalty is one of the most relevant dimensions of brand equity. This statement reflects Saritas and Penez's (2017) viewpoint, who argue that as the level of consumer loyalty increases, so does the brand equity. The definition of Sarinas & Penez belongs to the composite approach: brand loyalty is defined as positive attitude of customers towards a brand and customers' desire to purchase a single brand in the future. Loyal customers increase the company's profitability through their repurchases and create value for the company through positive word of mouth (Aksoy et al., 2013; Prónay, 2011; Hetesi, 2003; Casteran et al., 2019).

According to Oliver (1999) loyalty is „deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, whereas overcoming obstacles is analogous to rebuying despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" (Oliver, 1999, p. 36). Those consumer can be

considered as loyal, if he likes the products and services of the given company, regularly purchases or uses these products and services, or feel that the products or services of the given company performs better than the competitors' products and services. The characteristics of the product or service meet the expectations of the consumer, he considers the price of the product or service to be acceptable, and the company's products and services is recommended by to other consumers (Hetesi, 2007, p. 5).

Examples of differentiating loyalty levels can also be found in the literature. Kenesei et al. (2000) define four levels of brand loyalty:

- *fully loyal consumer:* exclusively buys the given product;
- *consumer, who's loyalty is limited*: if the product is unavailable, then consumer buys an unusual product;
- *less loyal comsumer*: as a consequence of price reduction chooses the competitor's product.
- *disloyal consumer:* always buys another product (Kenesei et al., 2000, p. 12).

Baldinger & Rubinson (1996) identified three behavioral loyalty groups based on the repurchase frequency:

- *high loyals to the brand* – those having over a 50 percent probability of purchasing the brand;
- *moderate loyals to the brand* – those having a 10 percent to 50 percent probability of purchasing the brand;
- in the case of *low loyals* the probability of purchasing the brand is between 0 and 9 percent.

Oliver (1999) distinguishes four stages of loyalty, which is interpreted as a developmental process:

- *cognitive loyalty:* the consumer evaluate the performance of the brand;
- *affective loyalty:* it is levelled to brand liking;
- *conative loyalty:* the repurchase desire is manifested;
- *action loyalty:* as a basis for repurchasing a brand is the commitment that appears in Oliver's loyalty definition.

From the viewpoint of brand avoidance the cognitive loyalty is relevant, which is the first stage of the loyatly process. For all states of loyalty can be stated, that the existence of the previous one is necessary for the consumer to be able to move to the next stage of loyalty. According to Oliver (1999), the peak of loyalty is when the consumer maintains his intention to repurchase in all circumstances, even at the cost of sacrifices (Hetesi, 2003). The basis of the cognitive loyalty is the information connected to brand attributes, the consumer according to this evaluate the brand and the attrtites indicate that the evaluated brand is preferable to its alternatives (Oliver, 1999, Akroush & Mahadin, 2019). This loyalty based on brand beliefs only (Oliver, 1999).

An individual's expectations is originated from brand promise: if their expectations are met, brand satisfaction develops. From the point of view of the dissertation, those loyalty connected research are relevant, which focuses on the "quality-satisfaction-loyalty chain" (Hetesi, 2003). This approach assumes that quality has an impact on customer satisfaction, which has an impact on loyalty, which can also be interpreted from the perspective of brand loyalty and brand avoidance. The analysis of the chain from the brand avoidance point of view will be explained during the introduction of brand avoidance literature. This chapter focuses on the connection of brand loyalty, where has to be highligted that high quality and consumer satisfaction are not equal to consumer loyalty. Loyal consumer is satisfied, but not all satisfied consumers are loyal (Oliver, 1999; Tamasits & Prónay, 2018; Hetesi, 2003). According to this, consumer satisfaction is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for consumer loyalty. Similarly to brand loyalty, consumer satisfaction does not have one accepted definition.

Giese & Cote (2000) identified the common points of the definitions:

- consumer satisfaction is an emotional or cognitive response.
- response pertains to a particular focus (expectations, product, consumption experience) (Giese & Cote, 2000, p. 1). Pearson (2006) refers to the management of the consumer experience as one of the cornerstones of building brand loyalty.
- The response occurs at a particular time, for example after consumption or after choice (Giese & Cote, 2000; p.1).

Simay (2012) interprets consumer satisfaction as a process: "consumer satisfaction is a precondition for consumer loyalty, in which the consumer compares his expectations with perceived performance and reflects on perceived benefits" (Simay, 2012, p. 49). Accordingly, brand loyalty is also affected by the ongoing evaluation of the quality of products and services purchased by consumers (Rather & Camilleri, 2019). This approach is correspond with expectation confirmation theory (ECT). In the theory the *desire to purchase* and *repurchase intention* have a significant role.

In the field of marketing the theory is often become conspicuous during the analysis of consumer satisfaction and repurchase intention. The model is visible in 1. Figure.
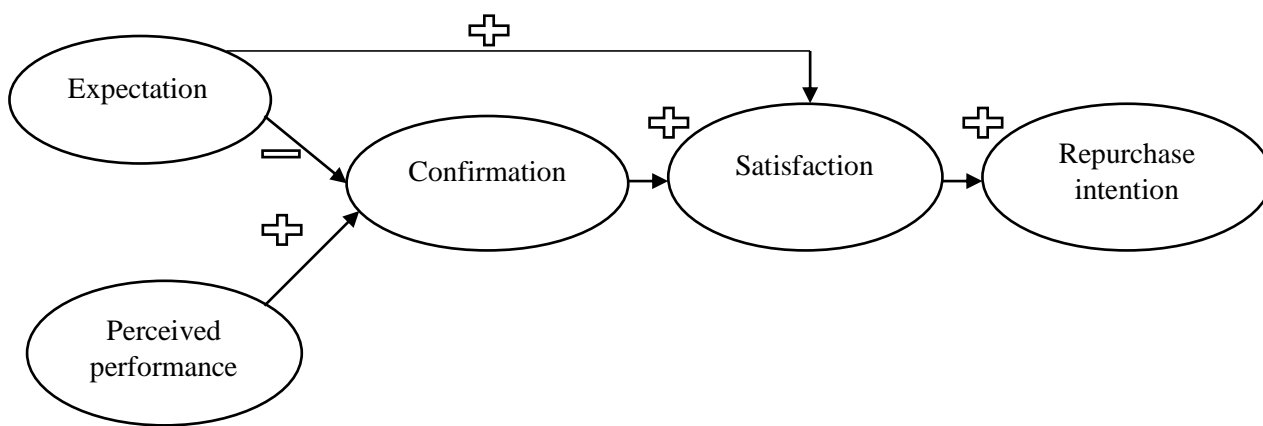
1. Figure: Model of expectation confirmation theory

Source: Based on Guo et al. 2015, p. 3. own construction

The ECT model follows the process through three separate stages:

- purchase stage,
- disconfirmation/confirmation stage,
- response/feedback stage.

The first stage is considered as a pre-consumption variable, while the remaining stages of the model are considered a post-consumption variable. The consumer before purchase has initial expectations related to product or service. According to Grönroos (2006), consumer expectations can be originated from brand promise. A brand promise is a statement made by the corporation, which includes what consumers can expect from their products and services (Jibril et al., 2019). After the comsumption consumers

compare the expected performance with the perceived performance to determine if their expectations have been met. This determines the level of consumer satisfaction. If the expectations are confirmed, the result is consumer satisfaction and as a consequence repurchase intention is the positive answer (Kim et al., 2009; Guo et al., 2015; Lee & Kim, 2020). If the expectations are not confirmed, the result is consumer dissatisfaction (Kim et al., 2009; Guo et al., 2015). The first consequence of the consumer dissatisfaction is comsumer complaint and the second is that kinf of brand avoidance, whereupon the literature refers as experiential brand avoidance (Grégoire et al., 2009; Guo et al., 2015).

3. BRAND AVOIDANCE LITERATURE

Despite the fact, that brand avoidance is a relatively new research field, brand avoidance literature can be derived from two theories: one line of theories defines brand avoidance as a type of anti-consumption, the other line defines the phrase as a relationship between consumer and brand.

3.1. Anti-consumption

The field of anti-consumption is becoming preffered research area mainly in the field of marketing, consumer behaviour and related to environmental and social problems: knowing what consumers do not want (and why) is at least as important as knowing what they do want (and why) (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Knittel et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2009a; Englis & Solomon, 1997, Oral & Thurner, 2019, Lee et al., 2020, Makri et al., 2020). The phenomena anti-consumption is originating in the 17th century. According to some views, anti-consumer movements are common in societies, where a culture of mass consumption and brand mania is present (Iyer & Muncy, 2009; Close & Zinkman, 2009, Iyer & Muncy, 2020, Klein, 2000). This can be explained by the fact, that several forms of anti-consumption attitudes are known, one of which is the rejection of material consumption (Zavestoski, 2002).

According to its macro-level interpretation the concept of anti-consumption, is against consumption. Anti-consumption is "resistance to, distance of, or even resentment of consumption" (Zavestoski, 2002, p.121). According to researchers some behaviours, which are not necessarily are against the consumption or which aim is to reduce the consumption are also included in the concept of anti-consumption, such as non-consumption, boycott, brand avoidance, ethical consumption and sharing economy (Cherrier et al., 2010; Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010; Hogg et al., 2009).

Bryson & Atwal (2019) define anti-consumption as a behaviour. The term refers to the intentional and deliberate rejection or avoidance of brands, as well as the forms of behaviour that express rejection, such as blogging, expressing negative emotions, or boycotting.

Defining anti-consumption is also challenging, because it can be interpreted as a behaviour, attitude, consumer response and group of motivations (Makri et al., 2020, Lee, 2000; Kavaliauské & Simanavičiuté, 2015, Bryson & Atwal, 2019).

Hogg et al. (2009) distinguish active and passive forms of anti-consumption. Boycott, ethical consumption and voluntary simplification are interpreted as active behaviour, while product and brand avoidance is defined as a passive form of anti-consumption. Anti-consumption refers to a continuum of responses, that consumers have towards traditionally marketed products (Lee, 2006, p. 73).

This response can be manifested in variety of forms:

- avoidance of brand or product category,
- avoidance of a retailer,
- avoidance of the whole market (Lee, 2006; Agarwal, 2013). The aim of the resistance can also be organisations, nations and countries. (García-de-Frutos et al., 2018, Lee et al., 2020, Makri et al., 2020). In the dissertation I adopt this approach.

Non-consumption – as one type of anti-consumption - is classified as follows (Cherrier et al. 2011):

- intentional non-consumption: resulting from the decision not to consume something,

- incidental non-consumption: when one brand is preferred to another, but consumption itself is not rejected,

- ineligible non-consumption: when the consumer does not belong to the target group of the brand.

Lee and Chatzikadis (2013), García-de-Frutos et al. (2018) and Makri et al. (2020) have sharply criticized the cases of non-consumption described above: according to them neccesary conditions of anti-consumption are intention and consciousness, in this matter incidental and ineligible non-consumption and inappropriate non-consumption cannot be considered as a form anti-consumption, just intentional non-consumption. Lee and Chatzikadis (2013) distinguish anti-consumption and causes of consumption, which do not result the same behaviour and do not necessarily contrast each other. To illustrate, we can buy a brand because of its excellent quality. The opposite is

avoidance due to poor brand performance. However, the rejection may be due to child labour connected to brand, while as the promotion of child labour as a consumption reason is unlikely.

Lee & Fernandez (2009) and Makri et al. (2020) argue that anti-consumption is not equal to alternative, conscientious or green consumption, which are types of prosocial consumption. On the contrary, anti-consumption involves the reasons why consumers avoid certain brands and products. They state that some consumers express their anti-consumption attitudes via non-conform or specific lifestyle choice, for example by purchasing environmentally friendly products, although anti-consumption primarily focuses on the reasons against consumption, unlike to prosocial movements. The authors regard alternative, conscientious, or sustainable consumption as ways of prosocial consumption.

Makri et al. (2020) also point out, that in contrast with Hogg et al. (2009) and Bryson & Atwal (2019) do not consider boycott as a form of anti-consumption, as the reason of boycotting ends, consumer may come back to consume the boycotted company's products, however in the case of anti-consumption it cannot be accured, but it has to be highlighted, that the causes of boycott and anti-consumption may be the same.

There is no consensus in the literature, whether anti-consumption is part of a sustainable lifestyle. To clarify the issue, it is necessary to examine the motivations of anti-consumers.

Several typologies of anti-consumption are known: one typology is related to Cromie and Ewing (2008), but the most anti-consumption literature follows the typology of Iyer and Muncy (2009) (Agarwal, 2013; Nepomuceno et al., 2017; Oral & Thurner, 2019; Garcia-de-Frutos et al, 2018, Muncy & Iyer, 2021). I has to be mentioned, that there are only differences in naming between the two typologies, the motivations for anti-consumption are the same.

In the dissertation the types of anti-consumers will be introduced based on typology of Iyer & Muncy (2009) (2. Table).

2. Table: Types of anti-consumers

		Reason behind anti-consumption	
		Social concerns	*Personal concerns*
Object of anti-consumption	*General*	Global impact consumers	Simplifiers
	Specific	Market activists	Anti-loyal consumers

Source: Based on Yyer és Muncy 2009, p. 161. own construction

One of the main goals of the humanity from the very beginning has been the raise of the material standard of living, the realization of consequences have become conspicuous in the last 50-60 years. The drastic growth of the population, interweaved with the growing needs of humanity has become increasingly energy intensive. With increasing production and consumption, the regenerative capacity of the biosphere is unable to keep pace and the unsustainable consumption patterns places one of the heaviest burdens on the environment (Kerekes, 2007; Kropfeld et al., 2018). From the point of view of sustainability, in addition to population regulation and cleaner production consumption reduction also plays a key role in reducing environmental impact, given that green or ethical consumption does not necessarily mean less ecological consumption (Kocsis 2001; Csutora & Zsóka, 2018, García-de- Frutos et al., 2018). Consumers, who voluntarily reduce their consumption fit into the concept of sustainable consumption (Csutora & Zsóka, 2018). Two groups of anti-consumers meet this requirement: global impact consumers and simplifiers. All anti-consumer groups can be characterized by certain beliefs, that explain their anti-consumption behaviour (Muncy & Iyer, 2020; Iyer & Muncy, 2009).

Globalization, corporate social irresponsibility and as a consequence the resulted environmental and social problems are reaching more and more sections of society, which can generate multiple consumer responses beyond anti-consumption, as Klein (2000) points out (Klein, 2000; Soper, 2008). The motivations behind the changed consumption patterns can be originated in concerns about the environmental and social problems as well as in the different focus on consumption from the European-

American lifestyle, putting the source of human pleasure in new context and considering the consumption differently (Soper, 2008).

Global impact consumers aim to reduce their general consumption for the sake of the society and the planet. These consumers believe that overconsumption is currently on that level, wherewith the ecosystem is unable to cope with, they reduce their consumption to protect society and the planet (Iyer & Muncy, 2009, Nepomuceno et al., 2017, Hutter & Hoffmann , 2013).

In line with Iyer & Muncy (2009) Zavestoski (2002) also considers the concept of voluntary simplifiers and the related movement as a form of anti-consumption. Voluntary simplifiers represent a simpler, less consumption-oriented and stress-free lifestyle and are critical of a materialistic society (Lee, 2016; Kocsis, 2001; Chowdhury, 2018). The representatives of the movement do not deny the importance of tangible goods, however, they also attach great importance to intangible goods, the motivations behind their behaviour can be personal and social (Kocsis, 2001, Lee, 2019). The core values of the movement include environmental awareness, which goes beyond the conservation of the Earth's resources and includes social responsibility (Kocsis, 2001).

In the case of these groups of consumers can be concluded, that their anti-consumption behaviour is a part of their sustainable lifestyle and their goal is to deliberately reduce their overall level of consumption. However, in the case of the two remaining consumer groups, the purpose of the intentional behaviour is not to reduce total consumption, but specifically the consumption of a brand or product. As the researchers of the field did not concretize the aim of the anti-consumption behaviour – whether the aim is the reduction of the overall consumption or specific consumption – market activists and anti-loyal consumers can be consudered as anti-consumers.

Market activists avoid certain products and brands because they feel that the avoided brands are causing specific social problem: their market practices are not socially or environmentally responsible. Market activists blame avoided brands for environmental degradation. This group of consumers is often targeted with publications that inform them about what brands and companies are the objects of avoiding (Iyer & Muncy, 2009; Nepomuceno et al., 2017; Klein, 2000).

The last group is the group of non-loyal consumers, who can be characterized as the opposite of loyal consumers and whose anti-consumption behaviour is connected to a particular brand or product (Iyer & Muncy, 2009; De Bernardi & Tirabeni, 2018). Iyer and Muncy (2009) interpret the opposite of loyalty based on Lee et al.'s definition (2009b): the phrase refers to the avoidance, which is originated from personal experience related to perceived bad quality or negative experience.

The creation of the anti-consumption framework is connected to Makri et al.'s (2020). They identify the reasons and the consequences of anti-consumption behaviour as well as they distinguish individual and collective andecedents behind this behaviour, which were previously identified in the brand avoidance literature. It has to be mentioned, that the social and individual concerns behind the anti-consumption behaviour can be mixed, however the typology can help to determine the dominated ones.

3.2 Brand avoidance as a type of anti-consumption

As it was mentioned earlier, the first brand avoidance related research is connected to Oliva et al. (1992), who define the phrase as the opposite of brand loyalty. Only few research mention Huefner and Hunt's (1992) research, despite the fact, that the first detailed, exploratory research, which identifies the reasons behind of brand avoidance is attributed to their name.

3.2.1 Huefner and Hunt's brand and store avoidance theory

Huefner and Hunt (1992) use the phenomenon brand and store avoidance as a synonym for each other, and avoidance is determined as intentional (Aron & Kultgen, 2019). The framework, in which the phenomenon is interpreted is Exit, voice and loyalty theory, which is considered in the Hungarian literature as Kivonulás, tiltakotás és hűség theory or concept and as Hirshmann trilemma. The exit, voice and loyalty theory introduces what kind of consumer response may come to a deterioration in the quality of a company's products or services (Markos-Kujbus & Csordás, 2016).

The first consumer response is the exit, which Huefner and Hunt (1994) later modify to avoidance. In this case of exit the consumer response to the consumer dissatisfaction due to quality deterioration is the cessation of the purchase of a product or the use of a service (Hirschman, 1970; Szabó 2013; Huefner & Hunt, 1994). Aron and Kultgen (2019) refer to this behaviour as dysfunctional consumer behaviour. In this case, consumers express their dissatisfaction directly through demand and try to persuade management to change and produce better quality products (Hirschman, 1970; Szabó 2013).

The second consumer response is voice, when the consumer explicitly expresses the perceived deterioration in quality (Hirschman, 1970; Markos-Kujbus & Csordás 2016; Szabó, 2012). Several platforms are suitable for the expression of consumer's opinion, such as corporate complaint books, product evaluation forums or product evaluation pages, but dissatisfied consumers can share their opinions with friends and family members as well. By the second response the aim is to force company to produce better quality products (Markos-Kujbus, 2016; Kavaliauské & Simanavičiuté, 2015; Khan & Ashraf, 2019).

The last consumer response is loyalty. In that case the consumer remain loyal despite of the quality deterioration. Huefner and Hunt (1992), based on Hirschman's (1970) initial theory interpret avoidance as a persisting exit, which is characterized as non-extreme with low emotional involvement, emotions are moderated and have no dominant motivational influence in avoidance. According to authors exit sometimes is co-occurring with voice, but also can occur independently.

Based on consumer stories, Huefner and Hunt (1992) identify the following categories for brand and store avoidance:

a) Product quality – related to product quality and its performance, that differs from expectations.

b) Repair - problems related to product repair, such as refusal to repair, slow, or defective repair are included.

c) Return – this category describes problems related to return, for example when the retailer refuse returns. The situation can also be classified to this category, when the product itself was replaced, but the product did not work as expected even after the replacement.

d) Atmosphere – the category includes problems related to store atmosphere, such as the lack of cleanliness.

e) The category Personnel describes problems with personnel, namely their inappropriate behaviour.

f) Service – describes the characteristics of the service, such as its slowness.

g) The category Price/Payment includes problems related to price, such as the lack of price tags or misleading price information.

h) Self-caused - The research also shows that problems caused primarily by consumers can lead to avoidance. The researchers did not provide examples to support this type of brand and store avoidance. This type of brand avoidance has been linked to unintentional product pushing due to over-shelving of products, which can also cause a sense of shame in the consumer.

i) Misc – the last identified category is reffered as a mixed group. The group includes problems related to environment, foreign manufacturers and untruthful ads.

The above mentioned reasons were mainly mentioned in the stories in the case of department stores, restaurants, grocery and automotive shops. In terms of product categories, most brand and store avoidance stories were related to packaged and takeaway products. Consumer stories also include feedbacks related for womenswear, menswear and children's clothing, providing a more in-depth understanding of brand and shop avoidance behaviour. Based on stories about women's and men's clothing, there is a significant difference in the reasons for avoidance. For men's clothing the majority (59%) of the problems is related to the Personnel, in the case of women's clothing this percentage is 29%. In the case of women's clothing the most predominant reason for avoidance in women's is related to the quality of the product (65%). For both men's and women's clothing, there are categories that did not function as a reason for avoidance. The category Repair does not play a role in brand and store avoidance in either case; nor do reasons classified in a Misc group for men's clothing. For womenswear, the other reasons all play a role in brand avoidance behaviour. This theory was the first, which examined in depth the phenomenon of brand and/or shop avoidance and which identified the reasons behind the behaviour.

3.2.2 Lee et al.'s brand avoidance model

Most of the research on brand avoidance (Kim et al., 2013; Knittel et al., 2016; Rindell et al., 2014; Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014; Berndt et al., 2019; Jayasimha et al., 2017; Odoom, 2019; Lin et al., 2020; Islam et al., 2020) use Lee et al.'s model (2009a, 2009b) as a starting point for investigating brand avoidance. The effects of brand avoidance can affect a company on several levels: it can generate negative word of mouth, thus affecting the company's reputation, it can lead to a decrease in sales, and it can also negatively affect brand equity (Berndt et al., 2019; Kavaliauske & Simanavičiute, 2015; Abid & Khattak, 2017, Makri et al., 2020, Huefner & Hunt, 1994).

Lee et al. (2009a) use literature of consumer dissatisfaction, undesired self and self-concept incongruity, organizational disidentification, boycotting and consumer resistance to interpret brand avoidance. Lee et al. (2009b) define brand avoidance as a special form of anti-consumption, considering brand avoidance as incidents, in which consumers intentionally decide to avoid certain brands, albeit the products are accessible, the consumers could afford them financially and they have the ability to purchase. It means that Lee et al. (2009b) consider brand avoidance as an active rejection of the brand. The presence of these factors is necessary for brand avoidance and ensures that the phenomenon can be examined within the framework of anti-consumption (Makri et al., 2020). Lee et al. (2009b) define brand as a multidimensional constellation, implying that several reasons may exist behind avoiding brands. First three (Lee et al. 2009a), then four (Lee et al. 2009b) types of brand avoidance were distinguished. Knittel et al. (2016) used this model of Lee et al. (2009b) in their research, adding one more category to the initial model, which is related to marketing communication, to be more precise to advertising. In the following the extended model will be introduced (2. Figure).

Experiential brand avoidance assumes interaction with the company, while the other brand avoidance categories do not. Lee et al. (2009b) also identify subcategories within the main categories, which according to their research shows to be the most important contributors to brand avoidance (Figure 2).

a) *Experiential avoidance*

Experiential avoidance can be originated in an important component of brand equity, brand promise (Lee et al, 2009b). Traditionally, the focus of branding has been on external communication, brand promotion, defining and delivering brand promise (Tosti & Stotz, 2001). The importance of band promise is highlighted by several researchers (Kapferer, 2008; Bauer & Kolos 2016; Majerova & Kliestik, 2015).

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │        Main categories of brand avoidance    │
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Experiential brand avoidance

Unmet expectations

1.Poor performance

2. Hassle factor

3.Store environment

Identity avoidance

Undesired self

1.Negative
    reference group

2. Inauthenticity

3.Deindividuation

Moral brand avoidance

Country effect

1.Animosity

2.Financial
    patriotism

Anti-hegemony

1.Monopoly
    resistance

2.Impersonalisation

3.Corporate
    irresponsibility

Deficit value avoidance

Unacceptable trade-off

1.Unfamiliarity

2.Aesthetic
    insufficiency

3.Food favoritism

Advertising

1.Content

2.Celebrity
    endorser

3.Music

4. Response

2. Figure: The model of Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b), extended by the research of Knittel et al. (2016)

Source: Based on Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b), Knittel et al. (2016) own construction

Majerova and Kliestik (2015) consider brand promise as a racional component, expressing what the brand provides to the consumer. Experiential brand avoidance is associated with negative product or service experiences (Bernd et al., 2019), inconvenience and discomfort from product returns, and unpleasant store environment. Törőcsik (1995) identifies the physical environment of shopping, including the atmosphere of stores as one of the sources of shopping experience.

The store environment and its characteristics play a key role in the purchase process (Mowrey et al., 2018). Certain aspects can be particularly irritating the shopping experience and thus can be the source of brand avoidance. Following Baker (1986), d'Astous (2000) identified a total of 18 such aspects in the store environment (3. Table). According to the research, the most irritating aspect is when the sales team puts a lot of pressure on the customer during the buying process (High-pressure selling). The least irritating aspect was the Finding his/her way in a large shopping center. Among the main categories, the most irritating aspects were the environmental and social ones. It is important to note, that not all aspects can be tested for each brand's store. The No mirror in the dressing room aspect is reasonable in the case of clothing store, but unnecessary for a mechanic store. Bohl (2012) has identified not only hot, but also cold temperatures can be a reason for avoidance.

3. Table: Irrirating aspects of the shopping environment

Category	Irritating aspects
Ambient	Bad smell in the store.
	The store is not clean.
	Too hot in the store or in the shopping center.
	The music is too loud in the stora.
Design	Unable to find what one needs.
	Arrangement of the store items has been changed.
	The store is too small.
	The directions within the store are inadequate.
	No mirror in the dressing room.
	Finding his/her way in a large shopping center.
Social	The shop is crowded/ too many people.
	Turbulent kind around.
	Being deceived by a salesperson.
	Indifference of the sales personnel.
	High-pressure selling.
	Negative attitude of the sales personnel.
	Sales personnel not listening to client's needs.
	Unavailability of the sales personnel.

Source: Based on d'Astous (2000, p. 153.) own construction

One deficiency of Lee et al.s' (2009a, 2009b) model, that the experiential brand avoidance category do not include the potential problems associated with online shopping. The inconvenience of returning the product can be interpreted as a return to the physical store according to the initial research of Lee et al.'s (2009a, 2009b). As more and more brands are offering their products in webshops, discomfort may also arise from the return of products purchased through this sales channel.

Last but not least, in relation to consumer satisfaction Simay (2012) points out, that when consumer satisfaction is understood as a process, consumer expectations are not unified; expectations are influenced by consumers' personal needs and/or past experiences. In terms of brand avoidance, research has focused more on consumer dissatisfaction as a consequence, rather than on the examination of consumers' personal needs.

b) Identity avoidance

The next brand avoidance is connected to identity. According to Richins (1994) an object possessed by an individual has an expressive value, enabling the individual to express his or her identity and distinguish him or herself from others. Lee et al (2009a) argue that consumers can protect their self-image by avoiding brands that move them closer towards their undesired selves. This is in line with Grubb and Grathwohl's (1987) statement, who argue that individuals have a self-concept, they value their self-concept and in their consumer behaviour they will support and reinforce their self-concept. Lee et al. (2009a) does not define the phrase self-concept, in the disseration Rosenberg's definition is adopted: self-concept is the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings with reference to [the] self as an object (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 7).

According to Khan and Lee (2014), the undesired self is the most important factor in brand avoidance behaviour. On the contrary, Odoom et al. (2019) and Kavaliauské & Simanavičiuté (2015) argue, it depends on the industry, which brand avoidance motivation is more prevalent. Further shading the analysis of this phenomenon, brand avoidance reasons differ across countries for the same product categories and is also depends on the fact, whether the focus of the analysis is on the brand avoidance attitudes of people from developed or from developing countries (Khan-Ashraf, 2019).

This topic is introduced more deeply in the research of Kavaliauské and Simanavičiuté (2015), which will be discussed in more detail in other chapter. Sirgy in an article written in 1982, provides a comprehensive summary of the literature on the self-image, identifying four of them in total.

All the identified self-images play a role in brand avoidance behaviour: actual self-image (how the individual sees him/herself), the ide ideal self-image (how the individual would like to see him/herself), social self-image (has been defined as the image that one believes other holds) and the ideal self-image (the image that the individual would like others to hold). Based on Epstein (1980) the effect of self-concept on consumption can be originated in two motives - self-esteem and self-consistency, which motives are discussed in more detail in Sirgy's (1982) research (Tamasits & Prónay, 2018). According to Sirgy's (1982) perspective, individuals seek to act in ways that are consistent with their self-concept (self-consistency) and seek experiences that protect and enhance their self-concept (self-esteem). Sirgy's (1982) related theory the self-congruence theory, the Hungarian literature (Gyulavári & Malota, 2014; Tamasits & Prónay, 2018; Kazár, 2014) refers to this theory as „énképilleszkedési elmélet". According to the theory different self-image/product-image congruity will influence purchase motivation differently: the consumer compares his or her self-image with the product image, and the comparison has an impact on consumption through self-esteem or self-consistency.

In the theory, Sirgy (1982) identified four types of self-congruities:

1. Positive self-congruity: in the case of positive self-congruity the individuals self-image belief and product-image perception is positive, the purchase is supported by self-esteem and self-consistency.

2. Positive self-incongruity: self-image is negative, while product image is positive. In the case of a positive self-incongruity, self-esteem supports purchasing, as product image is positive and contributes to maintaining a positive self-image. In contrast, self-consistency is against purchase because product image is not congruent with her self-image belief, thus creating a conflict in the consumer.

3. In the case of a negative self-congruity, the self-image and the product image are also negative. Accordingly, self-esteem does not support purchasing,

self-consistency on the other hand, does support purchase, as negative product image is congruent with one's negative self-image. The conflict between self-esteem and self-consistency creates further conflict in the consumer.

4. In the case of negative self-incongruity the self-image of the individual is positive and the product image is negative. Neither self-esteem, nor self-consistency support purchasing.

In relation to Sirgy's (1982) theory this type of brand avoidance occurs, when the brand represents the consumer's undesirable self, when the consumer perceive centain brand as inauthentic and feels that by wearing or using the brand's products he or she is losing individuality (deindividualization), and when the brand is associated with negative reference group (Lee et al, 2009b; English & Solomon, 1995; Hogg and Banister, 2001; Dalli et al. 2006). Examples of the latter include the Fila bag or the Levi's T-shirt with batwing logo. For these brands, brand avoidance motivated by negative reference group was observed.

c) *Moral avoidance*

The next brand avoidance category is linked to the ecological thinking and supports the focus on social sensitivity (Törőcsik, 2016). Anti-consumption similarly to brand avoidance can be related to ethical and moral reasons (Muncy & Iyer, 2021). Unlike the other three types, which express how the brand promise directly influences the well-being of the individual, moral avoidance relates to the wider society, moral brand avoidance concerns the perception of the brand at the ideological level and the influence of this ideology on society (Lee et al. 2009b). The impact of a brand is twofold: while some stakeholders can identify with the values represented by a brand, for some brands the opposite is true: the brand is incompatible with the moral values and beliefs of consumers, which includes an ethical component (Scholz & Smith, 2019). Behind the ethical component is the belief, that the right thing to do is to avoid certain brands. This brand avoidance can also be originated in the belief, that a particular brand is harmful to the environment (Lee et al., 2009b; Berndt et al., 2019).

According to the initial research, the target of the attacks are usually the larger and more successful brands, which try to create a more positive image of themselves through social responsibility, even by using communication tools such as sustainability

reporting (Zsóka & Vajkai, 2018; Klein, 2000). However, research by Truong et al. (2011) shows, that brand avoidance is more than twice as common for small brands (18%) than for large brands (8%). So the fact, that big brands are often attacked does not mean, that they are avoided by consumers. This can partly be explained by the phenomenon, that if a brand is strong enough, consumers will not avoid it even if they are not satisfied with it.

In the case of moral brand avoidance, researchers have identified two subcategories of brand avoidance, which are also referred to as brand avoidance reasons:
(a) country effects,
(b) anti-hegemony.

Thanks to globalisation, there are products and brands from many countries to choose from. Product's country-of-origin has been shown to influence consumer choice (Papp-Váry 2004; Malota, 2004; Rai, 2017; Ortega Egea & García de Frutos, 2015, Foroudi et al., 2018, Diamantopoulos et al., 2020, Hien et al., 2020). In terms of brand avoidance, I adopt Hassan & Samli's (1994) definition, who define the effect of country of origin as the influence that the manufacturer country has on the positive or negative consumer judgment (Hassan & Samli, 1994 p. 99). However, the term „manufacturer country" is not entirely appropriate in the definition. The phenomena is more relevant to the country to which consumers attribute the product; this is not necessarily the same as the manufacturer country (Berács, 2002; Papp-Váry, 2003). Country information can affect consumers' purchasing behaviour at three levels:

   a) country,
   b) product/brand
   c) product or service attributes (Ortega Egea & García-de-Frutos, 2015).

Within the topic of country effects, animosity - as a country-specific construct (Klein, 1998) - plays a key role in brand avoidance: certain brands are so associated with their country of origin, that sometimes consumer's dislike also transfers to the iconic brand of those countries (in a form of assocation) and thus avoid it (Russel & Russel, 2010; Lee et al., 2009a).

According to Russel and Russel (2010) when there is a strong stereotypical association between the country and the brand, this leads to a direct prejudice in the form of

negative attitudes towards the brand. If there is no strong stereotypical association, the attitude towards the brand depends on the degree of stereotypical association. Antipathy towards a country can be motivated by war and economic motives, political, cultural, religious and social concerns, but from any other ideological opposition (Berndt et al. 2019, Ortega Egea & Garsía de Frutos, 2015).

The second subcategory of the country effect is related to patriotism[1], which is one dimension of consumer ethnocentrism[2] (Malota & Berács, 2007). Lee et al. (2009b) refer to consumers as financial patriarchs, where the rejection of a brand is based on the belief, that the brand does not contribute to the economic development of the consumer's country and the well-being of the country.

d) Deficit-value avoidance

I will refer to the following main category of brand avoidance in Hungarian language as „Feltételezett értéktelenség miatti márkaelkerülés" as translated by Tamasits (2020). This subcategory of brand avoidance has been interpreted by researchers as research related to price and quality (Lee et al., 2009b). For consumers, quality can be measured by a variety of indicators, such as brand popularity, advertising, or the price of a product (Gerstner, 1985). This type of brand avoidance occurs when consumers use price as an indicator of quality to judge the quality of a product and therefore do not buy the product. The role of price in the perception of quality depends on the individual characteristics of consumers, the purchase situation and the nature of the product (Rekettye, 2012). Deficit-value can also occur with more expensive products if consumers feel they are not getting added value for the higher price (Abid & Khattak, 2017). Researchers have also included in this category aesthetic insufficiency, which is based on the fact that some consumers draw conclusions about the functionality of a product based on its appearance and packaging (Lee et al. 2009a, 2009b).

Packaging was originally used to protect the product, but nowadays it has become an important component of marketing and is often referred to as the 'silent salesman' in

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[1] Patriotism means "attachment to one's homeland" (Malota & Berács, 2007, p. 30).
[2] Ethnocentrism involves consumers' beliefs about the appropriateness of buying foreign products (Shimp & Sharma, 1987, cited in Malota & Berács 2007, p. 29)

the related literature (Shekhar & Raveendran, 2015; Shekhar & Raveendran, 2017; Dörnyei & Gyulavári, 2012; Wakefield et al., 2013; Bell, 2020).

The role of packaging is to attract the consumer's attention and willingness to buy, to provide information, to gain the consumer's trust and to help with identifiability (Dörnyei et al. 2013; Dörnyei, 2010). Opinions on the role of packaging during the selling process are different, with some suggesting that packaging plays a 15-30% role in the product evaluation process, while others argue, that the products are very similar in terms of functionality, as a consequence consumers make decisions based on packaging rather than product attributes (Dörnyei, 2010; Grundey, 2010). Another approach nuances the latter view: consumers are more likely to make a buying decision based on the packaging of a product if they have no prior experience of it (Dörnyei & Gyulavári, 2012).

It can be concluded, that product packaging plays an important role in the purchase decision and according to the initial model some consumers may avoid a brand due to aesthetic insufficiency. In the case of chocolate, research by Shekhar & Raveendran (2013) has shown, that packaging of the chocolate has a negative impact on the purchase of the product. The final subcategory of brand avoidance, which means that some consumers avoid brands, that they are not familiar with or that are cheaper.

Comparing the initial model of Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b) with the results of Huefner and Hunt (1992), Huefner and Hunt (1992) discuss experiential brand avoidance in much more detail; however, the creation of the brand avoidance framework is undoubtedly due to Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b). In the mixed category of Huefner and Hunt (1992), we can also discover reasons such as environmental concerns, advertising-related problems, or effects of country-of-origin, which appear as separate categories in the model of Lee et al.'s (2009a, 2009b) or in the extended model of Knittel et al. (2016). This can be explained by the fact, that the elements of the previously mixed category have become, or are becoming increasingly important factors individually as well.

e) **Advertising related brand avoidance**

One sub-category of advertising related brand avoidance relates to the content of the advertisement, more specifically the message and storyline of the advertisement. The next subcategory refers to the provocative nature of the advertisement (Knittel et al., 2016). Consumers may react in different ways to the appearance of taboo topics in advertisements, a reaction can be undoubtedly brand avoidance. An example of this is Coca-Cola's 2019 Love is Love campaign: some consumers expressed on social media platforms that they would avoid the Coca-Cola brand in the future because of this campaign. The third sub-category related to advertising focuses on the endorser of the product or service. A celebrity can give a symbolic meaning to a product or service, and whether consumers react positively or negatively to an advertisement can depend to a large extent on the celebrity, who appears in the advertisement. The music in the advertisement and the response to the advertisement can also lead to brand avoidance. The latter cannot be explained rationally, researchers suggest that it is based on consumers' subjective evaluation and emotional response to the advertisement (Knittel et al., 2016).

Lee et al. (2009a) also described the factors, which can function as a barrier of brand avoidance: lack of alternatives and switching costs, or low consumer interest (Lee et al. 2009a; Dörnyei & Gyulavári, 2011). According to Khan and Lee (2014), the literature on anti-consumption focuses on consumers in developed countries, but the phenomenon of brand avoidance can also be identified in developing countries, despite the fact, that in these countries the number of alternatives and thus the choice is lower. To conclude this subsection, Table 4 summarises the brand functions and brand definitions, that can related to the brand avoidance categories.

4. Table: Brand definition elements and brand functions relevant for brand avoidance

Brand definition elements and brand functions	Brand avoidance category and its appearance
Brand defined as promise (Pearson, 2006).	Experiential brand avoidance - through consumer dissatisfaction.
The symbol as a brand function and a common element of corporate brand definitions (Kapferer, 2008; Bauer et al., 2014).	Identity brand avoidance - through the link between brand and consumer's undesirable self.
Identification of the brand with a specific manufacturer (Kotler, 2000).	Moral brand avoidance - brand attachment to a particular country and through the feeling animosity towards a country.
Ethical as brand function (Kapferer, 2008).	Moral brand avoidance - through immoral corporate practices

Source: Based on the literature own construction

3.3 Summary of research related to the initial model of brand avoidance

The comprehensive model of brand avoidance developed by Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b) has encouraged researchers to pay more attention to understanding the phenomenon of brand avoidance. The research can be grouped as (a) research, that explores Lee et al.s' (2009b) brand avoidance categories in more depth, (b) research, that supports the renaming of the category of advertising related brand avoidance, (c) research, that identifies aspects, that influence brand avoidance before the purchase process, and (d) brand avoidance research, which were conducted in Hungary.

a) Research, that explores Lee et al.'s (2009b) brand avoidance categories in more depth

Rindell et al. (2014) have contributed to the brand avoidance literature by identifying new subcategories of moral brand avoidance. The added value of the research among ethical consumers is that they used a different brand definition than Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b), thus giving a time dimension to brand avoidance. In their interpretation, brand

is a consumer's perception and experiences of the brand over time, which express the impact of negative news about a company's activities at a given time on brand avoidance (Rindell et al. 2014, p. 115). They interpret their results along two dimensions: the time dimension and the extent to which brand avoidance behaviour is expressed. They thus identify four types of brand avoidance among customers with strong moral values (5. Table).

Manifest brand avoidance is linked to the consumer's previous experience of the company. The causes of this brand avoidance are originated in the company's past irresponsible behaviour, which has an impact on the consumer's current consumer behaviour.

Transient brand avoidance can be occured, if a discrepancy is discovered between corporate communication and action on the subject of moral concern. This type of brand avoidance may also exist when the company's actions contradict what the consumer has assumed on the basis of the company's identity.

5. Table: The dimensions and categories of brand avoidance

Persistent

	Manifest brand avoidance	Ambiguous brand avoidance	
Explicit			Latent
	Transient brand avoidance	Vague brand avoidance	

Temporary

Souce: Based on Rindell et al.'s (2014), p. 118. own costruction

Ambiguous brand avoidance occurs, when there are multiple factors of moral concern, but no one brand can be the solution to all the concerns that arise. In this case, the consumer prioritises his concerns and makes his purchase decision on this basis.

Although *vague brand avoidance* is part of the matrix of Rindell et al. (2014), the existence of this brand avoidance behaviour is not empirically proven. At the theoretical level, this category is explained by researchers as a category of situations,

in which brand avoidance occurs, but the brand avoider is unable to specify the exact reason behind the brand avoidance behaviour.

Consumer dissatisfaction can be linked to experiential brand avoidance based on the expectation-confirmation theory. With the rise of the Internet, consumers have endless opportunities to voice their experiences, whether positive or negative. Consumer's changed opportunities for information consumption in the digital space are visible in 3. Figure (Markos-Kujbus, 2016). Negative word-of-mouth – besides its contribution to brand avoidance – can reduce brand credibility and affect sales (Markos-Kujbus, 2016; Rui, 2013; Jayasimha et al. 2017; Markos-Kujbus & Gerencsér, 2016). The creators of negative online word of mouth can be classified into several groups based on their purpose of their opinion expression and who they want to address (Markos-Kujbus & Csordás, 2016).

What?	When?	Where?	How?
- information received from the company and - information received from users (from consumers or an independent third-party organisation and - content shaped by the consumers themselves and - content created by the consumer themselves	- immediate - delayed - deliberately retrieved	- The organisation's own platforms and - paid-for platforms and - channels generated by independent third-parties or consumers	- interpersonal communication and - during information search and - through participation in communities, during communication

3. Figure: Consumer's changed opportunities for information consumption in the digital space

Source: Based on Markos-Kujbus (2016, p. 54) own construction

In the study of brand avoidance, the focus is on current consumers, who have had a negative experience with a particular product or service; in addition to sharing negative experiences, their goal is to help other consumers make purchasing decisions.

Jayasimha et al. (2017) refer to this type of negative word-of-mouth as consumer advocacy, which encourages brand avoidance.

One extreme outcome of consumer dissatisfaction is the creation of an anti-brand site, where dissatisfied consumers' aim is to create a negative online identity for the chosen brand. To create a negative online identity, the creators of the site use socially irresponsible activities and questionnable business practices associated with the brand. Anti-brand sites are characterised by visual expressions, memorable domain names and critical language. Krishnamurthy & Kucuk (2009) link the process of anti-branding to two antecedents: consumer empowerment, which they refer to as a precondition, and customer dissatisfaction, which they refer to as a trigger (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009).

The authors interpret customer dissatisfaction at three levels:
(a) transactional-,
b) market-,
c) ideological dissatisfaction.
Transactional dissatisfaction may be linked to retailers and their provision of a service that does not meet prior expectations. This corresponds most closely to experiential brand avoidance, based on the results of Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b). Market dissatisfaction expresses dissatisfaction with the brand or irresponsible business practices and can thus be associated with moral brand avoidance (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009).

Ideological dissatisfaction is understood by researchers as dissatisfaction with the economic system, and therefore, despite the name's suggestion, it is not appropriate to link it to moral avoidance. One important added value of the research is that it distinguishes between complaint sites, product review sites and anti-brand sites. The main purpose of complaint sites is to allow customers to complain about some specific commercial transaction, while the focus of product review sites is on the evaluation of a product or service. In contrast, anti-brand sites also address a broader range of issues - be it cultural, technological, political or legal - which can be a good source of information for consumers and can lead to moral brand avoidance based on this information.

Between the research of Krishnamurthy és Kucuk (2009) and the initial model can be identified overlaps in terms of the types of consumer dissatisfaction, however the authors focus on the outcomes of brand dissatisfaction, not on the reasons behind anti-branding and brand avoidance, therefore Lee et al.'s (2009a, 2009b) model is more suitable for understanding the reasons behind brand avoidance behaviour.

The creation of the general scale for brand avoidance can be related to Odoom et al.'s (2019). The scale includes statements related to experiential, identity, moral, deficit-value and advertising related brand avoidance.

b) Research, that supports the renaming of the category of advertising related brand avoidance

The model of Lee et al (2009a, 2009b) not only suitable for the brand avoidance analysis of products, but also for the analysis of services (Berndt et al., 2019). Based on their empirical results, Berndt et al. (2019) modified the category of advertising related brand avoidance to communication brand avoidance (4. Figure), which includes all communications connected to brand.

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │   Brand avoidance   │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              │
          ┌───────────────────┤
          │         ┌─────────────────────┐
          │         │     Experiential    │
          ├─────────│      avoidance      │
          │         └─────────────────────┘
          │
          │         ┌─────────────────────┐
          ├─────────│   Identity avoidance│
          │         └─────────────────────┘
          │
          │         ┌─────────────────────┐
          ├─────────│    Moral avoidance  │
          │         └─────────────────────┘
          │
          │         ┌─────────────────────┐
          │         │    Deficit-value    │
          ├─────────│      avoidance      │
          │         └─────────────────────┘
          │
          │         ┌─────────────────────┐
          │         │    Communication    │
          └─────────│      avoidance      │
                    └─────────────────────┘
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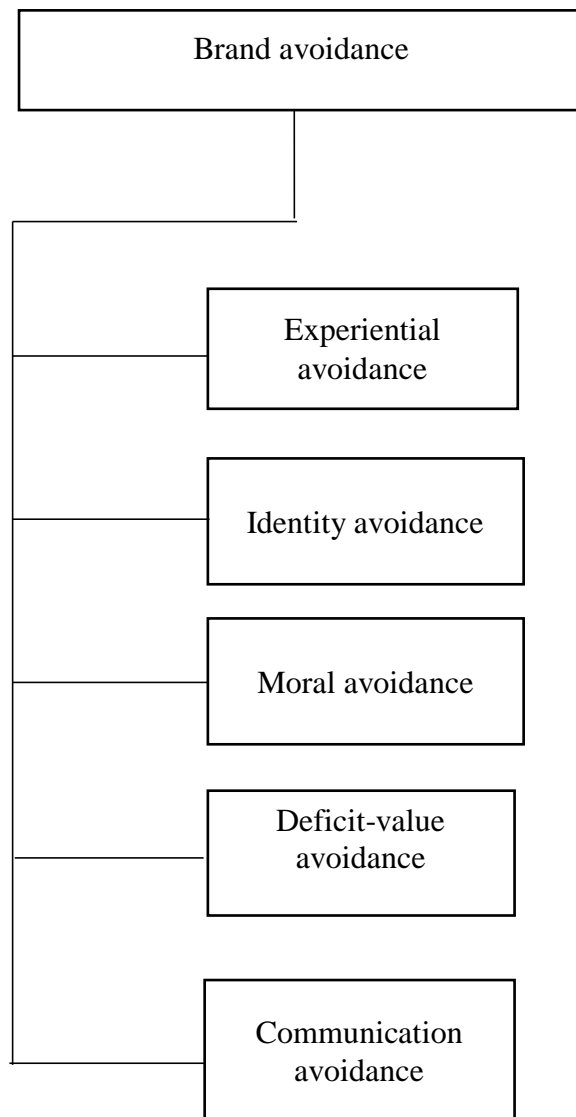
4. *Figure:* The modified categories of brand avoidance

*Sources***:** Based on Berndt et al. 2019 own construction

The research by Berndt et al. (2019) is exploratory; the diversity of services may result in different patterns of brand avoidance behaviour.

The modification of advertising-related brand avoidance into communication brand avoidance is also supported by the results of the authors Munichor and Steinhart (2016). The researchers examined the impact of arrogant brands on brand avoidance using six studies. Their results suggest, that self-perception plays a key role in how brand arrogance influences an individual's brand avoidance. According to the

researchers, arrogance has a double meaning: it can be positive, for example, when it means superior quality.

In negative meaning arrogant brand communication compromises the self-perception of the individual by making the consumer feel inferior. Respondents, who question their self-perception because of arrogant brand communication are more likely to avoid these brands. Although the research showed, that brand avoiders rated arrogant brands positively and described them as high quality, the feeling of inferiority was enough to make them avoid the brands. Examining this type of brand avoidance is specific and not relevant for all brands: firstly, arrogant brand communication is necessary, on the other hand, consumers' sensitivity to arrogant communication are also necessary. Among the literature on brand avoidance, this is the only study, in which the researchers discuss the potential impact of each of the main categories of brand avoidance on each other.

c) Research, that identifies aspects, that influence brand avoidance before the purchase process

Another relevant aspect of the analysis of brand avoidance is what factors may influence brand avoidance before purchase, and whether differences can be identified between developed and developing countries. Khan and Lee's (2014) research on Pakistani consumers focuses on undesired self, negative social influence, perceived animosity, and perceived risk. The underlying assumption of this research is that consumers' brand avoidance attitudes are positively related to their brand avoidance intentions.

In developing countries, negative social influence, i.e. previous negative experiences of family and friends have different effects on lower and higher income consumers. For lower income consumers, there is a significant and positive relationship between negative social influence and brand avoidance attitudes (Khan & Lee, 2014). There is an interesting contrast related to the effect of social influence between the research of Khan and Lee (2014) and a later study by Khan and Ashraf (2019). Khan and Ashraf (2019) - among other things – analysed the effect of negative social influence in New Zealand (developed country) and Pakistan (developing country), and this time there

was no detectable income-based segregation among Pakistani respondents. For both countries, negative social influence has a significant effect on brand avoidance, thus predicting brand avoidance behaviour. For both developing and developed countries, it is true that perceived animosity towards the country-of-origin reinforces brand avoidance attitudes. For both developed and developing countries, knowledge of a product's country of origin strengthens the relationship between animosity and brand avoidance behaviour (Khan & Lee, 2004; Khan & Ashraf, 2019). The results of Khan and Lee (2014) do not support, that perceived risk positively influences brand avoidance attitudes. In their study, Pakistani consumers were interviewed (the country is referred to as a developing country). The lower perceived risk among consumers may be partly explained by the fact, that consumers in developing countries associate higher quality with foreign brands (Wu & Fu 2007; Raju, 1995). Khan and Ashraf (2019) also analyse the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on brand avoidance attitudes and intentions, which has not been studied in the brand avoidance literature. In the case of developed countries, consumer ethnocentrism has a direct and positive effect on brand avoidance attitudes, whereas this relationship does not hold for consumers from the analysed developing country.

According to Ajzen and Fishbein's (1969) Theory of Reasoned Action, avoidance attitudes affect avoidance intention (Khan & Lee, 2014). With the exception of perceived animosity, consumer ethnocentrism, undesirable self, and negative social influence indirectly affect avoidance intention through brand avoidance attitudes in developing countries. For developed countries, undesired self has a direct effect on avoidance intention, whereas beyond consumer ethnocentrism, negative social influence, perceived animosity, and undesired self also have an indirect effect on brand avoidance intention through brand avoidance attitudes, which is consistent with Ajzen and Fishbein's (1969) theory (Khan & Ashraf, 2019).

d) Brand avoidance research, which were conducted in Hungary

Relatively few research has been conducted on the brand avoidance behaviour of Hungarian consumers, which supports the relevance of the chosen research topic. One of them is the exploratory research of Tamasits (2019), who identifies experiential,

identity and advertising-related brand avoidance. The other is by the authors Kovács Vajkai and Zsóka (2020), whose results are discussed in detail in the empirical research section of this dissertation.

3.4 Interpreting brand avoidance in relation to the relationship between the consumer and the brand

Brand relationship focuses on thoughts and feelings about the brand (Ghani, 2016). According to the brand connection matrix by Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014), depending on the consumer's emotional or functional needs four types of brand relationships can be identified (5. Figure).

	Low emotional connection	*High emotional connection*
High functional connection	Functionally invested	Fully invested
Low functional connection	Un-invested	Emotionally invested

5. Figure: Brand connection matrix

Source: Based on Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014, p. 368. own construction

Functionally invested brand relationship: the consumer sees the brand as a colleague. The brand satisfies the consumer's functional needs, which leads to consumer satisfaction, but the relationship lacks emotional connection. Consumers are not overly price sensitive, but if there is a better deal in terms of value proposition, they have the willingness to switch (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014).

In a fully invested brand relationship, the consumer sees the brand as a member of the family, which satisfies both the functional and emotional needs of the consumer. Such consumers often are extremely loyal and generate extremely positive word of mouth

for the brand. A further characteristic of the relationship is that the consumers are less price-sensitive and have a higher brand forgiveness (Fetscherin & Heilmann, 2015).

In the case of an un-invested brand relationship, the relationship between brand and consumer can be described as acquaintance, neither functional nor emotional needs being satisfied. These consumers are price-sensitive and disloyal (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014).

In an emotionally invested relationship the consumer sees the brand as a friend. The brand relationship is emotionally based and consumers' functional needs are not highly satisfied (Fetscherin & Heilmann, 2015).

From the view of brand avoidance the emotional dimension is important. According to Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014), brand-related emotions depend on two factors:
(a) the strength of the brand relationship,
b) brand-related emotions.
Taking these two aspects into account brand feeling matrix was created (6. Figure).

		Strengths of brand relationship	
		Weak	Strong
Feeling towards Brands	Positive	Brand satisfaction	Brand love
	Negative	Brand avoidance	Brand hate

6. Figure: Brand feeling matrix

Source: Based on Tamasits és Prónay (2017) own construction

In the case of brand satisfaction the emotions about the brand are positive, but the strength of the relationship is weak. Brand satisfaction can support brand trust and brand loyalty. If brand emotions are positive and the strenght of brand relationship is strong, it can be considered as brand love. According to Tamasits and Prónay (2017) behind this kind of brand relationship lies a deep-rooted loyalty (Tamasits & Prónay 2017, p. 124).

If brand emotions are negative and the strenght of the brand relationship is strong, it can be considered as brand hate. In tha case of brand avoidance the brand emotions are negative and the strength of the brand relationship is weak. However, Festcherin and Heinrich (2014) do not mention which emotions are considered to be negative. Fetscherin et at. (2019) later refined this matrix, but not by defining negative emotions. In their study, they defined the strength of the brand relationship connected to the level of passion, and they also modified some of the names of the matrix elements (brand satisfaction as brand liking, while brand avoidance was renamed brand disliking), but apart from the differences in naming, this is the same brand feeling matrix as the one created by Festcherin and Heinrich in 2014 (Fetscherin et al., 2019).

Brand hate, as the most intense negative emotion, is a relatively new, but increasingly prominent area of research in marketing, playing a dominant role in both general avoidance behaviour and brand avoidance behaviour (Veloutsou & Guzmán, 2017; Zarantonello et al., 2016; Zarantonello et al., 2018; Grégoire et al., 2009; Hegner et al., 2017, Curina et al., 2020, Kucuk, 2018).

The first research related to brand hate and avoidance is connected to Grégoire et al. (2009), in which the desire to avoid is associated with service failure. According to the authors' perspective, hate generates the desire for consumer revenge or avoidance (Zarantonello et al., 2016). The research also examines the evolution of the desire to avoid over time (7. Figure). Their theory suggests that not all service failures generates public complaints. The basic hypothesis of Grégoire et al, (2009) is that, over time, the desire to avoid the service provider company increases.
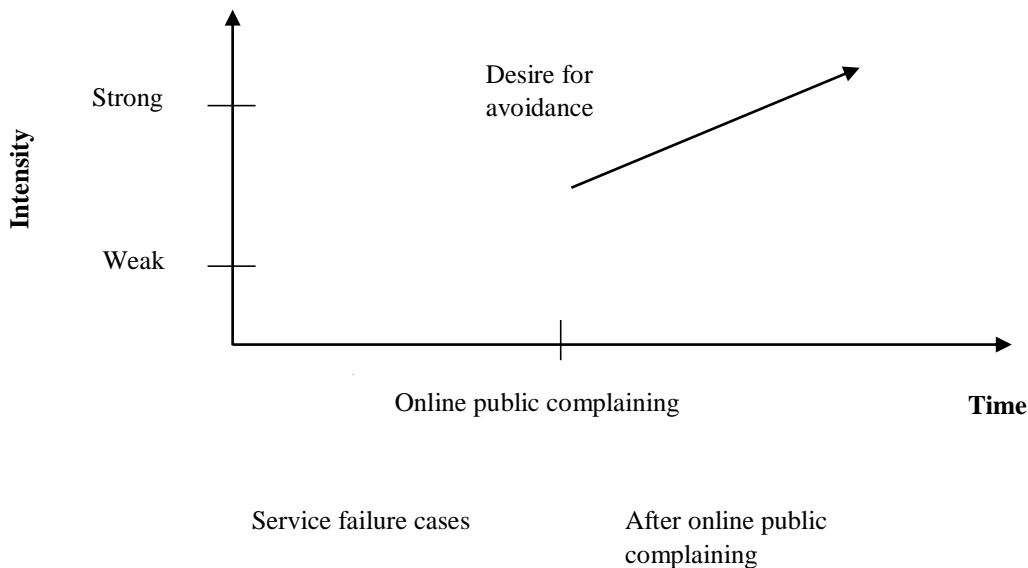
7. *Figure*: The evolution of avoidance over time

Source: According to Grégoire et al. 2009, p. 20. own construction

The evolution of avoidance over time can be explained by two reasons: on the one hand, after the complaint has been made, even though the consumer has stopped buying products or services from the company, customer may keep interacting with the firm to find a solution. Once this does not happen, total avoidance of the company occurs. On the other hand, dissatisfaction leads the complaining consumer to start looking for new alternatives, which is time-consuming. In this case, once the right alternative is found, the complete avoidance of the company occurs.

Zarantonello et al. (2016) treat hate as a complex emotion, rather than a separate emotion and based on psychological foundations they point out, that its presence leads to multiple outcomes. One of these outcomes is distancing oneself from the object of hate, which the authors call an avoidance strategy. The other outcome is that people start attacking the object of hatred (attack strategy). As a third outcome, consumers may confront the target of the hate (approach strategy). These outputs, as understood in psychology, can also be interpreted in terms of brand hate.

Adapting psychological principles, the researchers identified three behavioural outcomes:

- Avoidance-like behaviour is a reduction or cessation of purchase.
- Approach-like behaviour involves consumer complaints and protests.

- Attack-like behaviour refers to negative word of mouth (Zarantonello et al. 2018).

The authors classify the negative emotions of respondents towards brands into a total of six factors: the factors that lead to brand hate are contempt and disgust, fear, disappointment, anger, shame and dehumanization (Zarantonello et at., 2018).

The interpretation of brand hate as a component of several negative emotions (disgust, contempt and anger) is supported by the research findings of Fetscherin (2019) and Kucuk (2018). Kucuk (2018) identified irresponsible corporate behaviour and the performance of the product or service purchased or used that does not meet expectations as the trigger for brand hate. Zarantonello et al. (2016) find that the reasons for brand hate lead to different behaviours. Corporate misbehaviour - covering immoral corporate actions and policies – through brand hate leads to negative word of mouth, reduced or discontinued purchases, consumer complaints and protests. Unmet expectations, which originated in negative experience with the company, through brand hate leads to negative word of mouth, consumer complaints and protests. The taste system, which refers to negative perceptions of the brand and the buyers of the brand, through brand hate leads to a decrease or discontinuation of purchases (Zarantonello et al., 2016).

According to Kavaliauske & Simanavičiute (2015), brand avoidance requires negative emotions about the brand, they link brand avoidance motivations and brand-related emotions. According to their theory, brand avoidance behaviour occurs independently of brand promise, but for this behaviour it is not enough to have negative emotions about the brand, it is necessary that these negative attitudes, beliefs and emotions become strong. Negative emotions about a brand can come from multiple sources and have an impact regardless of whether the consumer has ever been in contact with the brand (Kavaliauske & Simanavičiute, 2015).

The sources of negative emotions can be ogirinated in the causes identified by Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b):

- unmet expectations: experiential brand avoidance
- symbolic incongruence: identity brand avoidance
- unacceptable trade-off: deficit-value brand avoidance

- ideological incompatibility: moral brand avoidance (Kavaliauske & Simanavičiute, 2015).

Brand avoidance related to advertising, as identified by Knittel et al. (2016), was not included in the research due to time constraints, but there are findings in the literature that show that advertising - and more specifically its message - can also trigger brand dislike (Dalli et al. 2006).

Kavaliauske & Simanavičiute (2015), using the NEB (negative emotions towards brands) scale of Romani et al. (2012), examined four types of negative emotions related to brand avoidance:

- dislike – this factor in Romani et al's (2012) research includes emotions such as hate, contempt and revulsion,
- anger,
- worry,
- embarassment.

The main research findings of Kavaliauske & Simanavičiute (2015) can be summarized as follows:

- There is a weak, but positive relationship between unmet expectations and brand dislike and anger.
- The relationship between symbolic incongruence and brand dislike, worry and embarrasment is positive, but weak.
- The relationship between unacceptable trade-off and brand dislike and anger is positive, but weak.
- The relationship between ideological incompability and all the negative emotions examined is positive, but of varying strength: on average, the relationship between brand dislike and ideological incompability is strong, while for the other two emotions the relationship is weak (anger) or very weak (embarassment).

The main added value of the research is that only brand dislike has been shown to affect brand avoidance - the relationship between the variables is significant, but weak.

Hegner et al (2017) believe that brand hate is a much more intense emotional response than brand dislike, and therefore they examine brand hate and its impact on brand avoidance behaviour separately. The reasons identified by Hegner et al. (2017) coincide with the corporate misbehaviour, unmet expectations and taste system (the term refers to symbolic incongruity) identified by Zarantonello et al. (2016), yet these reasons through brand hate led to different results, than in Zarantonello et al.'s (2016) study. Negative experience leads to revenge, symbolic incongruity leads to brand avoidance, while the combination of the identified reasons leads to negative word of mouth.

Taking into account, that the extended model of Knittel et al.'s (2016) is general and considering, that the brand avoidance reasons differ across countries and vary from industry to industry, during the dissertation I will focus on brand avoidance in the clothing industry.

3.5. The evolution of the brand avoidance literature

The main groups of literature on brand avoidance are summarized in 6. Table.

6. Table: The evolution of the brand avoidance literature

The evolution of brand avoidance literature	Author/Authors
First definition of the phrase brand avoidance	- Oliva et al. (1992) - Huefner & Hunt (1992) - Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b)
Research identifying the reasons of brand avoidance	- Huefner & Hunt (1992) - Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b)
Research, that explores Lee et al.'s(2009b) brand avoidance categories in depth	- Rindell et al. (2014) - Jayasimha et al. (2017) - Krishnamurthy & Kucuk (2009) - Odoom et al. (2019) - Knittel et al. (2016)
Research, that supports the renaming of the category of advertising related brand avoidance	- Munichor & Steingart (2016) - Berndt & szerzőtársai (2019)
Interpreting brand avoidance in relation to the relationship between the consumer and the brand	- Grégoire et al. (2009) - Fetscherin & Heinrich (2014) - Kavaliauske & Simanavičiute (2015) - Zarantonello et al. (2016) - Zarantonello et al. (2018) - Hegner et al. (2017)

Research, that identifies aspects, that influence brand avoidance before the purchase process	- Khan & Lee (2014) - Khan & Ashraf (2019)
Brand avoidance research in the clothing industry	- Kim és szerzőtársai (2013) - Lin és szerzőtársai (2020) - Kovács Vajkai és Zsóka (2020)
Brand avoidance research, which were conducted in Hungary	- Tamasits (2020) - Kovács Vajkai & Zsóka (2020)

Source: Own construction

The first literature on brand avoidance identified the concept as the opposite of loyalty (Oliva et al. 1992). In the same year Huefner and Hunt (1992) discussed in detail reasons, which later have become the reasons behind experiential brand avoidance in particular. For comprehensive model of brand avoidance had to wait until 2009, the model referred to in most brand avoidance literature. Two approaches have emerged in the brand avoidance literature: the extension and testing of Lee et al.'s (2009a, 2009b) model, and the interpretation of brand avoidance in relation to the relationship between the consumer and the brand. Researchers as the representatives of the latter approach mention brand hate as an emotion that triggers brand avoidance in their research.

3.6. The characteristics of the online space from experiential avoidance aspect

3.6.1 The characteristics of the online space

The internet offers many opportunities for both consumers and businesses. On the consumer side, consumers can access relevant information, navigate, relax by watching movies and series, buy products and services, and the internet also provides a platform for interaction between consumers and companies (Childers et al., 2001, Shanthi & Kannaiah, 2015).

Online shopping offers many advantages for the consumer:

- convenience and time savings for the consumer,

- it reduces the cost of searching, while at the same time offering a wider choice of products,

- better price information thanks to transparency,
- lower prices,
- 24/7 availability,
- easier comparison of the options,
- the ordering process is simple,
- gives a sense of self-service and control,
- search functionality on the website increases shopping efficiency,
- avoids the need to collect and return products (Chang, 1970; Saprikis et al., 2010; Kemény & Simon, 2015; Yang et al., 2010; Sun & Lin, 2009; Su & Huang, 2011; Chang et al., 2005; Shanthi & Kannaiah, 2015; Kemény, 2017).

While in the early days of the Internet, a web presence and the right price of products were considered sufficient for business success, today the provision of adequate information on the web interface, the timely response to customer enquiries, the properdelivery of products as promised or the quality of e-service are considered as relevant indicators of quality (Kemény & Simon, 2015; Lee & Lin, 2005).

3.6.2 The presence of experiential avoidance in online space

Due to the characteristics of the online space, the related reasons for consumer satisfaction or even the reasons of brand avoidance are somewhat different from offline brand avoidance reasons. In the online space, the literature has so far identified satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors that influence online shopping. He and Bach (2014) identify several sets of aspects that influence the outcome of online shopping. The first set of aspects they identified is called perceived risk. Perceived risk and its types influence purchase outcomes in both online and offline spaces (Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972; Manikandan, 2020; Bhukya & Singh, 2015; Rehman et al., 2020). He and Bach (2014) list aspects here as a secure website or credit card payment, the lack of these aspectsmay discourage consumers from shopping online. The researchers the above mentioned lower price consider as purchase motivator. Considering that online shops have a different, more favourable cost structure (shop rent is not a part of the cost structure) and thus have the possibility to offer the same product at a lower price.

The authors also consider the fact that online shops can make newly launched products available to consumers more quickly than physical shops as a purchase motivator.

The third aspect they identify is the online shopping experience. They cite accessibility of the website and the ability to shop without a salesperson as factors influencing consumer satisfaction, when shopping online. Considering that research by d'Astous (2000), the most irritating aspect is when the sales team puts a lot of pressure on the customer during the buying process, the possibility of shopping without salespeople can be considered as one of the advantages of the online shopping space. Accessibility to product and price information and the availability of the website on multiple platforms are also part of this aspect.

The authors also include a choice of payment methods also classify here, arguing that offline there are several payment methods to choose from, while online shops only allow payment by card. However, this is not necessarily true, as many websites offer the possibility to pay by cash on delivery with an additional surcharge.

The fifth aspect is referred to as service quality (He & Bach, 2014). This factor also include the ability to easily compare products and to provide information about products in sufficient depth, which is also cited by Shanthi and Kannaiah (2015) as an important aspect influencing online shopping. According to He and Bach (2014), pre-sales and after-sales service are also part of this aspect. In their view, online shops cannot always provide pre-sales service, product information or assistance in the same way that in-store sales staff can. They ague, that during the shopping process in a physical shop it is easier to ask for help from the sales staff. However, with adequate customer service it is not necessarily the case that online shops cannot help their customers with pre-sales advice. The role of customer service in providing after-sales services, including the return of products, is also crucial. In addition to these aspects, the outcome of an online purchase is also influenced by the nature of the product purchased (Perea Y Monsuwé et al., 2004).

Shanthi and Kannaiah (2015) go beyond identifying the factors that influence online shopping and prioritise the relevant factors. Most of their results can be interpreted for products, that are purchased in the online space and consumed in the offline space, as in the case of clothing or books. Their results show that the most relevant factors in

online shopping are lower prices, favourable warranty and guarantee conditions and fast delivery times.

Consumers visit webshops with clearly defined goals and expectations: some of these are related to already identified benefits of online shopping, such as time savings or quick access, and some are related to brand promises (Román & Riquelme, 2014). The brand remains the same regardless of the sales channel through which it is sold, but an important difference between the online and offline space is how the brand promise is delivered. The realisation of brand promise in the online space can be controlled by examining several factors (Chernatony & Christodoulides, 2004).

According to Chernatony and Christodoulides (2004), in addition to its online presence, a brand must ensure that consumers can find the brand's website, for example through search engine optimisation. For some products, for which downloading is a condition of consumption, download speed is also a key factor. The consumer's first impression of the website is also a key factor in deciding whether to stay on the brand's website, and ease of navigation is also essential. The language used on the site should be appropriate to the target market and brand communication, and the colours used on the site should be consistent across all parts of the website. Helpful customer service, whether via email or the website chat, increases trust in the brand.

Chernatony & Christodoulides (2004) identify delivery and return as the last factor that can also be used to test brand promise. According to the authors, some brands pay a lot of attention to the design of their website, but the choice of the courier company for delivery is sometimes neglected, despite the fact that working with an unsatisfactory courier service can affect brand judgement.

Kemény (2017) argues, that although there are common characteristics of products and services purchased online, shopping in the online space should be seen as a heterogeneous field. The nature of the product and service purchased in the online space affects not only the outcome of the purchase, but also the aspects that influence consumer satisfaction (Kemény & Simon, 2015; Francis &White, 2004). In interpreting the research findings, it is necessary to examine the categories of online commerce separately by mode of delivery and by type of product (Table 7) (Kemény & Simon, 2015; Francis &White, 2004).

7. Table: Fulfillment-product classification scheme

Product	Teljesítés módja	
	Offline	Online
Goods	Offline-Goods	Electronic-Goods
Service	Offline-Services	Electronic-Services

Source: Based on Francis & White, 2004, p. 227 own construction

For offline-goods, consumers place or pay for their order online via the website. The product is delivered to the consumer offline, for example when ordering a book or clothing. For offline-services, the consumer books and pays for the service online, but in order to receive the service, the consumer has to travel to the service provider or the service provider has to travel to the consumer. Offline services can be for example accommodation in a hotel or participation in an exhibition. In the case of electronic-goods, the purchase process takes place via the website, and the consumer can use the product after downloading it, for example when buying software. For electronic-services, the consumer usually needs to create a user account in the online space, for example for e-banking, in order to use the service (Francis & White, 2004).

Shopping in the online space has several sub-processes, yet consumer evaluation is not only reduced to the transaction and its effectiveness and efficiency, but also includes information search, consumer interaction, customer service, delivery in the case of offline-goods, possible refunds and problem handling (Kemény, 2017; Lee & Lin, 2005; Parasuraman et al, The literature refers to the consumer evaluation and critique of the entire process listed above as e-service quality (Santos, 2003; Kemény, 2017; Kemény & Simon, 2015; Lee & Lin, 2005). Considering that the literature on e-service quality is extensive, the focus will now be on the satisfaction aspects, that influence the online purchase of products, which are referred to as offline-goods by the authors Francis & White (2004), and are relevant to brand avoidance (7. Table).

When shopping in the online space, factors such as web design, website security/reliability, payment methods, quality of the received product, product range, responsiveness to customer needs, and home delivery opportunity/delivery performance have a positive impact on consumer satisfaction, when shopping offline-

goods (Guo et al., 2012; Alam & Yasin, 2010; Lee & Lin, 2005). The lack of these factors can lead to customer dissatisfaction and, in extreme cases, to avoidance of the website. In a study by Kemény and Simon (2015), perceptions of the quality of customer service among product buyers were found to be more relevant. Liu et al (2008) identified late delivery as a source of consumer dissatisfaction.

Cho et al. (2003) also interpret consumer dissatisfaction with online shopping along product categories. The categorisation of products, that can be purchased online is based on the importance of our sense organs during the purchase decision process. For clothing products, where touch and sight play an important role in the selection process, one of the key factors in consumer satisfaction is the quality of information, that consumers can find about the product they are buying online.

Providing inadequate information for these types of products can lead to consumer complaints. Cho et al. (2003) based on their research argue, that companies should also focus on post-purchase complaint handling. According to the differences in products, different aspects play a role in consumer satisfaction, and hence consumer dissatisfaction (Cho et al., 2003).

*8. **Table:** Satisfaction factors affecting the purchase of offline-goods in the online space*

Webdesign	It refers to the quality of the web design and the navigability or visual appearance of the website.
Website security/reliability	It includes protection of personal data, easy ordering and prompt delivery.
Payment methods	In addition to the protection of personal data, it also refers to the secure payment method
Quality of the received product	When shopping online, consumers do not have the opportunity to touch the products, the consumer's expectations of quality are based on the text on the website.

Home delivery opportunity/delivery performance	It refers to the efficiency of delivery.
Responsiveness to customer needs	It expresses the company's willingness to assist the customer and provide immediate service.
Product range	It refers to the wider range of products available in the online space.
Appropriate depth of information	It may refer to describing the quality of the product or to informing the consumer during the purchase process, for example about delivery.
Customer service	It is a perception of the quality of customer service.
After-sales complaint handling	It covers possible refunds and problem handling.

Source: Guo et al., 2012; Lee & Lin (2005); Alam & Yasin, 2010; Cho et al., 2003;

Becser, 2005; Kemény, 2017; Cho et al., 2003

4. LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.1 Characterisation of the chosen industry for the empirical research

The aim of this chapter is to present the relevant developmental milestones in the clothing industry, that have contributed to the proliferation of fast fashion companies. The chapter pays great attention to the definition of fast fashion. The selected clothing industry is suitable to examine all categories of brand avoidance, thanks to the innovation of fast fashion companies (quality degradation due to the acceleration of the supply chain and the outsourcing of production to developing countries), the symbolic meaning of clothing products and the advertising activities of these companies.

4.1.1 The evolution of the clothing industry

The industry under the study will be referred to as the clothing industry (the term is used to define the industry, as some research has used the term fashion industry, apparel or clothing industry (Black, 2012). The use of the term clothing industry is best explained by Kovács (2012), who defines fashion in both a narrow and a broad sense. In the narrow sense, the term refers to clothing or accessories such as jewellery or bags. In the broader sense, the term can cover anything: furniture, furnishings, cars, toys, or even leisure activities (Kovács, 2012). The cult of fashion dates back to ancient civilisations. In the Roman Empire, the role of clothing as a reflection of social class was so predominant, that a special law was created to determine which social group could wear which colour and style of shoes. In addition to determining social affiliation, fashion also influenced issues such as politics, economics, education and the arts (Okonkwo, 2007). In the Middle Ages, clothing was the privilege of the rich because of its high prices, the garments became a symbol of wealth during this period. In the 18th century, however, the spread of democracy allowed people to wear what they wanted (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). The rapid industrialisation and economic boom of the 19th century transformed the clothing industry. The spread of sewing machines and pattern making supported the development of the ready-to-wear industry and the

spread of mass production. Thanks to mass production, fashion products became cheaper and thus more accessible to the masses. Since the 1960s, consumers have also been able to express their personality through the clothing they wear.

The rapid growth of the mass fashion sector in the 1990s led to the emergence of brands such as H&M, Zara, GAP and TopShop, which are referred to in the literature as fast fashion companies (Okonkwo, 2007). Ertekin and Atik (2015) attribute the increase in demand for new clothing to higher disposable incomes in addition to the favourable prices of the products. The relevance of the topic is underlined by the fact, that fast fashion brands dominate the clothing industry globally, in Europe and in Hungary, according to Marketline research in 2013, 2014 and 2015. The popularity of fast fashion brands is unbroken, with the biggest fast fashion brands, such as Zara and H&M, continuing to lead the market (Merritt, 2021; Statista 2021).

4.1.2 Defining fast fashion

Definitions of fast fashion in the literature vary according to the authors' perception of the essence of the concept. Most definitions capture the concept as a strategy/business strategy, but there are also authors who have introduced the concept as a business model, based on product characteristics, or as a low-cost version of luxury products. We consider it essential to mention that fast fashion is also commonly referred to as another fashion trend alongside slow fashion[3] (Kelemen-Erdős & Kőszegi, 2017).

Kim et al. (2013) and Taplin (2014) define the concept as a business model: Fast fashion has become the most well-recognized business model in the fashion industry due to its impressive performance in the global market during recent years (Kim et al., 2013, p. 243).

Based on a business-driven approach, fast fashion companies combine the following elements:

a) Fashionable products, which are mostly targeted consumers under 40.
b) The products are reasonably priced.

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[3] There are several definitions of slow fashion in the literature, the one I have adopted is by Kate Fletcher (2010): slow fashion is a vision of sustainability with classic styles that can be worn for many years, longer production times and more durable quality.

c) Quick response, which refers to a shorter lead time between production and distribution.

d) Dynamic and regular replacement of the assortment. The last two elements are the pillars of the value proposition of fast fashion companies (Caro & de Albéniz 2014a, Gabrielli et al. 2013).

According to Barnes & Lea-Greenwood (2016) „the company using improved and more efficient supply chains to be more responsive to changing trends and consumer demand (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood 2010, p. 760) Choi et al. (2010) argue, that „fast fashion is the strategy that retailers adopt in order to reflect current and emerging trends quickly and effectively in current merchandise assortments. Fast fashion can also adapt to the newest fashion trend, and produce products in a small quantity to satisfy the teenage and young ladies" (Choi et al., 2010, p. 473.). Small quantity in this definition refers to fashion products at the top end of the fashion triangle, which will be discussed later.

Sull &Turconi (2008) approach the concept from the same strategic perspective, adding that "fast fashion democratizes couture and makes trendy and affordable products available to the masses" (Sull-Turconi 2008, p. 5). Caro & de Albéniz (2014b), Sull & Turconi (2008), Runfola & Guercini (2013), Joung (2014) and Watson-Yan (2013) also interpret the concept from a strategic perspective.

Hu & Shiau (2015) use Byun and Sternquist's 2008 definition. According to this definition, fast fashion - named after the concept of fast food - quickly updating products with a short renewal cycle and speedy delivery of goods.

 Lang et al (2013) also capture the essence of fast fashion based on product characteristics. By their definition, the term refers to retailers producing lower quality products that last for a shorter period of time (Lang et al. 2013, p. 707).

Pookulangara & Shephard (2013) use Wood's (2009) definition: fast fashion is a cheap version of the styles, that appeared on the catwalks of Milan and Paris (Pookulangara & Shephard 2013, p. 200).

Miller (2013) summarizes the essence of fast fashion in a similar way, albeit based on earlier definitions: „copied couture being sold as fast fashion, where the objective is to

meet consumer demand by quickly designing, producing and delivering highly fashionable garments in the shortest possible time" (Miller, 2013, p. 160.).

Cortez et al. (2014) argue, that fast fashion refers" to designs that move swiftly from runway to stores in order to capture the latest trends" (Miller, 2013, p.160)

In my opinion, all the above definitions together describe the essence of fast fashion, i.e. fast fashion:

- A business model based on two pillars, rapid response and dynamic assortment,

- fashionable products, styled to reflect trends on the catwalks,

- products that are affordable and therefore accessible to a wider audience, but of lower quality.

The categorisation presented above has been used to divide the literature on fast fashion into categories according to our own approach, which is summarized in 9. Table for better clarity.

9. *Table*: Categorisation of the concept fast fashion

Category	*Representatives*	*Definitions*
Business modell based approach	▪ Taplin (2014) ▪ Kim et al. (2013)	"Fast fashion is the best known business model in the apparel industry" due to the supply chain management, used sales techniques and retailer technology (Kim et al., 2013, p. 243).

Strategy/Business strategy approach	- Caro & de Albéniz (2014b) - Joung (2014) - Runfola & Guercini (2013) - Watson & Yan (2013) - Choi et al. (2010) - Sull & Turconi (2008)	„Fast fashion is the strategy that retailers adopt in order to reflect current and emerging trends quickly and effectively in current merchandise assortments" (Choi et al, 2010, p. 473.)
Product attribute-based approach	- Based on Byun & Sternquist (2008) Hu-Shiau (2015) - Lang et al. (2013)	Fast fashion is nothing more than quickly upgraded products with short renewal cycles and fast delivery (Hu & Shiau, 2015 based on Byun and Sternquist, 2008), or lower quality products that last for a shorter period of time (Lang et al., 2013)
Cheap version of luxury brands approach	- Abeles (2014) - Carey& Cervellon (2014) - Cortez et al. (2014) - Miller (2013) - Based on Wood (2009) Pookulangara & Shephard (2013)	Fast fashion is a cheap version of the styles on the catwalks of Milan and Paris (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013), copying catwalk trends (Carey & Cervellon, 2014), copying luxury products (Miller, 2013)

Source: Own construction

All the approaches presented above can be linked to the main categories of brand avoidance. The business model based and the strategy/business strategy approach definitions point out, that fast fashion companies have reformed the clothing industry and have speeded up the whole industry, contributing to environmental and social problems, that can be the basis for moral brand avoidance. A product attribute-based approach focuses on the quality of fast fashion products. Quality problems can lead to consumer dissatisfaction and thus to experiential brand avoidance. A cheap version of the concept of luxury brands implies the fact that fast fashion brands are not unique. For those consumers, who value the expression of their uniqueness, identity brand avoidance may occur.

4.1.3 Fast fashion companies' innovations, which lead to brand avoidance

Fast fashion companies have generated significant industry and behavioural changes. A number of innovations are associated with these companies, and the following is a description of those innovations, whose results are associated with brand avoidance (experiential brand avoidance through quality degradation and moral brand avoidance through outsourcing). According to Taplin (2014), the clothing industry is a labour-intensive sector, where firms can gain competitive advantage in two ways:

a) by increasing efficiency,

b) or by outsourcing production.

In the 1980s and 1990s, higher-income countries started to outsource production. In parallel, there was a high concentration of retailers, especially in the US and the UK. Higher concentration also meant better bargaining power, putting more pressure on their suppliers (Taplin, 2014). These pressures have led to innovations in the clothing industry such as the rapid response system mentioned by Caro & de Albéniz (2014b) or lean retailing to support dynamic supply.

To understand the rapid response system, it is necessary to understand how traditional and fast fashion companies operate, the summary of the key differences is presented in 10. Table.

10. Table: The clothing production process for a traditional and a fast fashion company

	Traditional company	*Fast fashion company*
Design	- Designing a collection takes time, on average more than a year - Products are also designed digitally before production starts	- It does not operate at collection level, but at item level, leaving the wholesalers out of the supply chain. The main aim is to respond as quickly as possible to emerging demand.

	- Some companies work with wholesalers, their approval is required	- Approval is much faster than this business model because: ➢ the raw materials are available, so the ordering is faster, ➢ design iterations are limited, ➢ standard methods and materials are used.
Production	- The next step in the design process is to contact the suppliers and place your order, which will follow the production steps below: ➢ the raw material undergoes various treatments, such as washing or sample printing, ➢ according to the the designs the raw materials are cut into pieces and sewn together ➢ the last step is the packaging and delivery of the products - The lead time for the manufacturing operation can be up to 6 months depending on the supplier.	- The item-based operation allows to speed up lead times. - More efficient use of resources. - Products are manufactured close to the target market.

Distribution	- Once the goods arrive to the warehouse, delivery to the stores must be arranged. - At the beginning of the season, shops are full of large quantities of goods. The shelves are then restocked in small quantities, and the sale begins in order to find a place to store the new collection.	The fact, that distribution is decided at the last minute allows stock to be sent to where it is most needed. This makes QR a source of competitiveness.

Source: Caro & de Albéniz, 2014b

In the clothing industry, lean retailing (a retail strategy that focused on minimising stock) has allowed the traditional 2-4 seasons per year of clothing to be replaced by the model of keeping clothes for 4-6 week (Taplin 2014). However, the fast lead time is not the case for all product categories shown in the fashion triangle (8. Figure), but only for fashion products at the top of the triangle, and the comparison presented in 10. Table is therefore valid for these products.
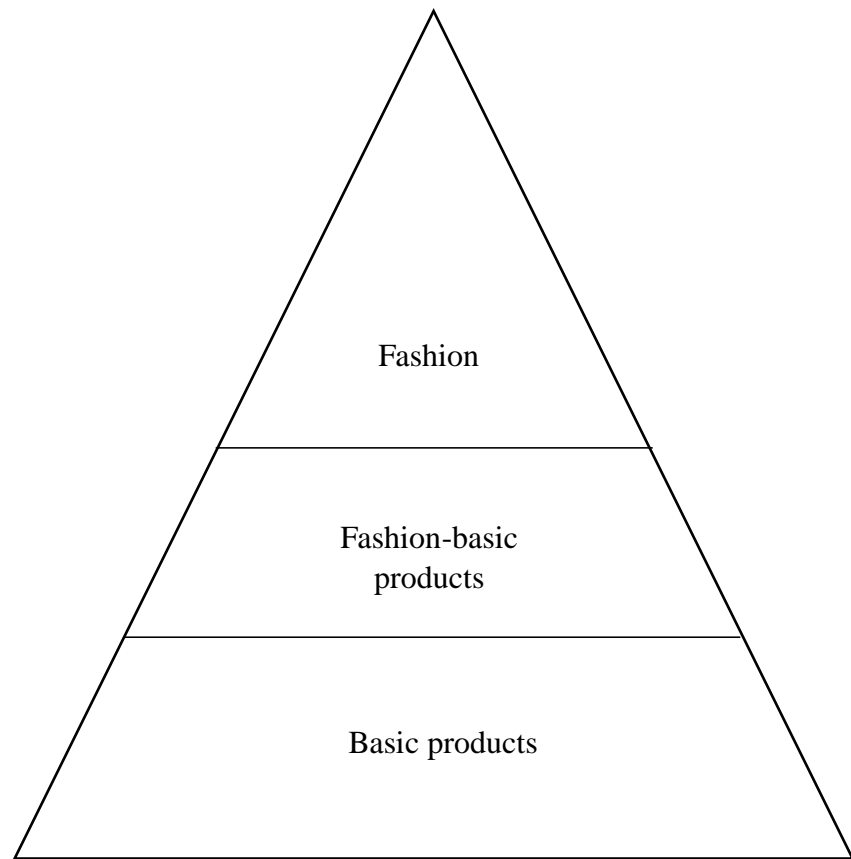
8. Figure: *Fashion triangle*

Source: Abernathy et al. (1999), cited by Caro & de Albéniz, 2014b own
construction

According to the authors, there is no strict borderline between the categories of basic
products and fashion-basic products, which - with slight variations - are a permanent
range of products in shops. They are sourced in bulk, with long lead times, from low-
wage countries (Caro & de Albéniz, 2014b).

4.2 Research findings related to the main categories of brand avoidance

The following chapter aims to show how consumers' brand avoidance behaviour is influenced by the main categories of brand avoidance - experiential, identity, moral, deficit-value and advertising brand avoidance.

4.2.1 Experiential avoidance related to fast fashion

Fast fashion companies offer fashionable products at an affordable price, these two important product characteristics is needed to satisfy the needs of potential consumers (Caro & De Albéniz, 2014a). However, the quality of fast fashion products can be a serious problem. Consumer perceptions of the quality of fast fashion products are contrasting between those, who buy them and those, who avoid them. Watson and Yan (2013) compared fast and slow fashion buying along the purchase decision process. In terms of experiential brand avoidance they found that fast fashion shoppers have low expectations of these products. In other words, they expect these products to break quickly, yet they are satisfied after purchase because their prior expectations were met.

Similar results were obtained by Gabrielli et al. (2013). The reasons for buying fast fashion products are seen by the researchers as twofold: those buy fast fashion products, who want pieces, which are different from their usual style, and those, who regularly update their wardrobe. These two findings are relevant to the study of brand avoidance, as they are the factors that lead to lower expectations of fast fashion products.

Shoppers, who are looking for a different style of garment do not expect high quality from fast fashion products, because they do not want to wear them for long. Nor do wardrobe refreshers expect the products to be durable, which also leads to lower expectations of fast fashion products.

Customers, who buy fast fashion products buy them despite their low quality, while customers who avoid them buy them because of their poor quality (Kim et al., 2007).

One of the questions Collett et al.'s (2013) research, what is behind the fact that people no longer wear fast fashion products. According to their research, the most relevant

reason is that the poor quality of the product, followed by the fact that it no longer fits. The reasons also include that the garment is no longer in line with the individual's identity.

An essential element of experiential brand avoidance is the in-store environment, which surrounds shoppers. There is relatively little literature on the in-store environment for fast fashion brands. The focus of the literature is mostly on the physical location of stores - such as the strategic choice of country and city, including the decision on store location, preceded by thorough market research (Arrigo, 2010). When examining the store environment for fast fashion brands, the physical characteristics of the store environment - such as the window, store layout, merchandising or signage - are the most important aspects to consider, as well as the challenges for store staff in adapting the fast fashion concept (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010).

Ghemawat and Nueno's (2006) research focused on an in-depth study of Zara's corporate operations, where the researchers quoted Luis Blanc, an international director of Inditex, on the store concept. One of the essential points in the design of the stores is to provide customers with a pleasant environment, where is an opportunity to shop pieces, which reflects the latest trends. The store environment should be in line with the fact, that the aim is to motivate customer to spend as much time in it as possible in order to increase the likelihood of making a purchase (Arrigo, 2010). It should also make consumers feel that if they want to buy a product, they should do so immediately, as they may not have the opportunity to do so later, even the following week, due to the scarcity of supply (Ghemawat & Nueno, 2016).

4.2.2 Identity brand avoidance in the case of fast fashion

In research focusing on clothing products, we can find examples of the definition of clothing and fashion in the clothing industry. Fletcher (2008) distinguishes between the two concepts: clothing is a material creation, that satisfies our functional needs such as the need for protection. Fashion is symbolic and related to our emotional needs, a tool to express our identity (Fletcher, 2008; Banister & Hogg, 2004; Kim et al., 2013). Kim et al. (2013) also relate to this line of thinking, arguing that consumers often see clothing as a "second skin", and for this reason, brand avoidance linked to

identity can be examined in the chosen industry. According to another approach, "fashion, in addition to the utility value attached to products, also provides consumers with a pleasure and experience value (Bannister & Hogg, 2004; cited in Kelemen-Erdős & Kőszegi, 2017, p. 243-244).

As it was mentioned earlier during the introduction to the chosen industry, clothing, especially fashion products, have a relevant symbolic content for some consumers, given that they satisfy both functional and symbolic needs of the consumer. Thus, clothing allows consumers to express themselves and their personality (Goldsmith et al., 1999; Khare-Rakesh, 2010; Noh et al. 2015). The literature relevant to this research topic has paid little attention to understanding the brand avoidance behaviour of exclusively male consumers, more typically examining the behaviour of a common demographic group and exclusively female consumers, even though men are also known to use clothing products to express their personality (Noh et al., 2015; Watson-Yan, 2013; Birtwistle & Moore, 2007; Kim et al., 2013; Lin et al., 2020; Gabrielli et al., 2013; Choi et al. 2010).

Noh et al. (2015) surveyed male university students about their dress and avoidance behaviour. The majority of the respondents use clothing as a means of communication and to express their identity. They prefer to wear comfortable clothing, T-shirts and jeans, and purchase these products from fast fashion brands such as GAP or H&M. The research shows that the style of clothing and the reference group wearing the style play a significant role in their avoidance behaviour.

Sirgy's (1982) self-congruence theory is discussed in detail for indentity brand avoidance. According to this theory, our actions are influenced by self-consistency and self-esteem. The study by Bannister and Hogg (2004) focused on the impact of the latter. Self-esteem in the case of a clothing product or brand, when linked to an undesirable self supports product or brand avoidance.

Reference groups are also important for identity brand avoidance. Consumers, who buy fast fashion products can also be considered as a reference group, which some consumers would like to be compared to and some consumers would not like to be compared to. In the research by Gabrielli et al. (2013), none of the focus groups wanted to be identified with consumers, who were compulsive buyers of fast fashion products.

In the research by Watson and Yan (2013), consumers of fast fashion products reinforce their self-image by buying trendy, unique and colourful products. At the same time, the slow fashion buyers are also influenced by self-image: those who are committed to the slow fashion trend, referred to these products as classic and timeless in style.

Although not all of the results presented are related to fast fashion brands, the reasons behind identity brand avoidance can be identified from the studies processed. The products of fast fashion brands have common characteristics that may lead to identity brand avoidance. Such problems may be that the style of the products is too trendy, it is difficult to express one's identity with these products, they are mass appeal products, or they are similar to other brands' products in terms of their source of inspiration (Kim et al., 2013).

4.2.3 Moral brand avoidance in the case of fast fashion

Among the categories of brand avoidance, I would highlight moral brand avoidance in relation to the problems of the clothing industry, which all researchers classify into two broad groups, environmental and social. The seriousness of the problems associated with the clothing industry is also underlined by the fact, that according to the Danish Fashion Institute, the clothing industry is the second most polluting industry in the world (Chikanspanet, 2015).

The main environmental problems - as identified by Alwood et al. (2006) - are:
- mainly *energy and water* used in the production of raw materials,
- *the use of toxic chemicals*, which are hazardous not only to the environment but also to human health,
- *the presence of these chemicals in waste water*, which can harm aquatic life,
- *various wastes* generated during the production process.
Pruzan & Joergens (2010) (cited in Kosewska 2011, p. 2) interprets environmental and social problems along the product life cycle, where outputs appear alongside the main inputs, as shown in 9. Figure.
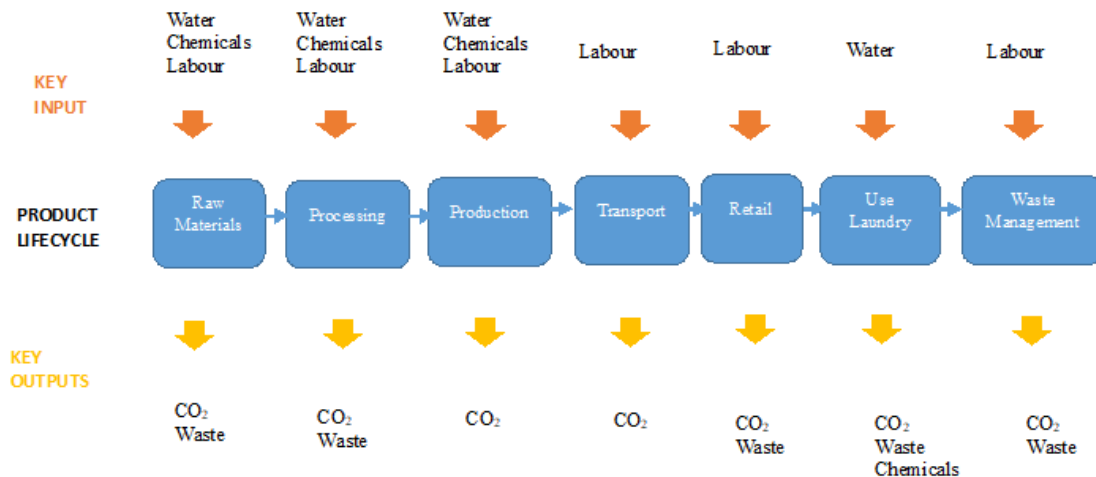
9. Figure: Key inputs and outputs identified throughout the product lifecycle

Source: Based on Pruzan & Joergens (2010), cited by Kosewska, 2011, p. 21., own construction

The product life cycle starts with the production of raw materials, where, as in the other steps, key inputs have been identified. Although the analysis of the raw materials used in the clothing industry is not a fundamental part of the research, it is important to note that, with regard to environmental problems, it is not possible to talk about one raw material being better than another, taking only one factor into account. By looking at several aspects (water and energy requirements, recyclability, how comfortable it is for people to wear), conclusions can be drawn about the materials (for more on this topic see for example Fletcher, 2008). 9. Figure shows, that the life-cycle problems can be addressed by companies at the retail level and proper waste management is essential due to the high volume of textile waste, but it also requires consumers, who can contribute most to reducing the environmental impact of the life-cycle of clothing products by washing them properly.

Returning to the problems facing the industry, the most relevant social problems are (Alwood et al., 2006):

- *the issue of child labour:* its elimination is a priority aim of the International Labour Organization (ILO), yet the organization often runs into problems due to the difficulty of tracking subcontractors or indirect labour,

- the majority of garment workers are women, many of whom are unskilled. These workers are often powerless in the face of the *various abuses that affect them*, and often do not know their rights or be able to claim their rights,

- *low salary,*

- *precarious employment:* in some countries, contracts are either not concluded or are only temporary, and there are delays in payment and a lack of benefits,

- *sexual harassment*: women working in the clothing industry are often threatened by their superiors.

Kosewska (2011) also mentions very long working hours, mental and physical harassment of workers, and dangerous working conditions as social problems. The latter are supported by the Rana Plaza tragedy in 2013, where more than 1,000 people lost their lives (Taplin, 2014).

Kim et al. (2013) do not mention environmental and social problems directly in relation to fashion, but in relation to materialism, of which fashion is one of the best examples. Based on Chaplin & John (2007), the authors discuss how the rise of materialist values in the 20th century has given rise to a new view: how good our lives are depends on how much we consume. According to this new view, the emphasis was on speed and quantity, which led to environmental problems such as:

- global warming and climate change,

- ozone layer depletion,

- water and air pollution,

- endangerment of certain species,

- land erosion (Kim et al., 2013. p. 244).

Some studies focus on the environmental and social problems associated with fast fashion brands (Taplin, 2014; Kozlowski, 2012; Ertekin & Atik, 2015); these overlap with the problems associated with the clothing industry in general, which can be explained - among other things - by the market leadership of fast fashion companies.

The emergence of fast fashion companies is also challenging for the luxury sector. There are many articles comparing fast fashion companies using the catwalk collections of the big luxury brands as a source of inspiration, causing problems for the big luxury brands.

In these articles the brand Zara is mostly cited as an example in comparison to luxury brands, which Tokatli defines in his 2007 research as a pioneer of fast fashion. But fast

fashion brands affected luxury sector in different other ways. These brands have speeded up the entire industry, making consumers less and less patient, and this is also have an impact on the luxury sector. Whereas consumers used to be able to wait several months for pieces to appear on the catwalks, the emergence of fast fashion brands (catwalk-inspired pieces are available in stores after 3-4 weeks after the catwalk shows) means that consumers are less willing to wait for a garment. In response to this, some luxury brands have introduced "See now, buy now" fashion shows, which allow consumers to buy their chosen piece immediately after the show, putting pressure on consumers, generating consumption and accelerating the industry.

Some companies, such as H&M, are trying to manage the huge amount of textile waste (they allow consumers to drop off any kind of garment in collection containers, which are placed in their stores). According to their 2019 Sustainability Report, they collected 40% more garments than in 2018, which in numbers means more than 29,000 tonnes of garments (H&M Group, 2020). From the collected materials the company aims to recycle as much as possible and use it in the production of new products, while also incorporating new materials beyond those recycled to make new pieces. However, in this sustainability move it should be remembered that there is an incentive coupon for each garment returned, so this sustainability move can be viewed with a critical eye.

When analysing the impact of fast fashion companies, we also have to consider the aspect that they are making clothes available to a larger number of people at affordable prices. Among other things, consumers who would not have the opportunity to dress fashionably outside of fast fashion products have the opportunity to do so.

Considering, that many environmental and social problems associated with fast fashion companies, they are often under attack. Fast fashion companies, like many others, document and communicate their activities to contribute to sustainable development and reflect their corporate social responsibility through their sustainability reports, thus contributing to a more positive image of fast fashion companies. Sustainability reporting has become a widely used communication tool for companies' non-financial performance.

According to Bill spreading of sustainability reports originates in three reasons:

- problems related to sustainability significantly influence corporate performance;
- stakeholders of companies are increasingly calling for transparency;

- expectations are increasing towards companies to properly react on challenges related to sustainable development.

Considering the environmental and social problems associated with fast fashion companies, these can be a good motivation for consumers, who are sensitive to the issue to avoid a brand. It is clear from the sustainability reports of fast fashion companies, that they take the attacks on them seriously, at least at the communication level.

4.2.4 Advertising avoidance in the case of fast fashion

The analysis of advertising brand avoidance can be challenging in several ways, as it varies from brand to brand, unlike other categories of brand avoidance. Related to this there is little research in the fast fashion literature. Zara's estimated advertising costs account for only 0.3 percent of its costs (compared to 3-4 per cent for a traditional clothing company) (Tokatli, 2008). In contrast, Reinach (2005) finds that one of the common characteristics of fast fashion companies is that they rarely advertise. Ghemawat and Nueno (2006) point out the differences between Zara and H&M, among others, in terms of advertising: while the latter has extensive advertising, Zara does not make much use of advertising. Taplin (2014) also compares Zara and H&M: H&M's advertising often features celebrities (they have collaborated with David Beckham and Madonna, among others). If a celebrity appears in the advertisement who for some reason is not liked by the potential customer, this can lead to brand avoidance.

4.2.5 Testing brand avoidance models in the clothing industry

The first research on fast fashion brand avoidance is by Kim et al. (2013). Based on the fact, that consumers express their dissatisfaction with fast fashion products in the online space, the researchers examined blogs through content analysis to identify elements of the model, that could be relevant for fast fashion products:
- Poor performance,
- Overly trendy style of the products,
- Big store discomfort,
- Lack of personal help,
- Deindividuation,

- Inauthenticity,

- Irresponsibility,

- Foreignness.

Poor performance, overly trendy styles, big store discomfort and the lack of personal help are categorized by researchers as the main group of unmet expectations associated with experiential brand avoidance. Deindividuation and inauthenticity belong to the main group of symbolic incongruence, which is linked to identity brand avoidance. Corporate irresponsibility and foreigness belong to the main group of ideological incompatibility, which - according to the model- is linked to moral brand avoidance. The results of the research show that poor performance and deindividuation have a positive effect on brand avoidance among Korean consumers, while inauthenticity has a negative effect. Poor performance refers to product workmanship (poor stitching), product quality, to the clothing's form often changes after washing and repeated use, the use of poor quality raw material and product durability. In terms of deindividuation, Korean consumers have a positive perception of the uniqueness of the garments, which allows them to express their personality. If fast fashion products cannot provide these aspects, it can lead to brand avoidance. On the issue of authenticity, the researchers note, that the belief that fast fashion brands are cheap versions of luxury brands did not lead to brand avoidance among the respondents.

In terms of foreignness, respondents thought that buying foreign brands was detrimental to local fashion and culture, while corporate irresponsibility was not a relevant aspect of respondents' brand avoidance behaviour. The lack of alternatives identified by Lee et al (2009a) as a brand avoidance barrier was not found to be a limiting factor. Kim et al's (2013) research is undoubtedly a major contribution to the field of brand avoidance for fast fashion products, but during the research deficit-value and advertising brand avoidance were not examined.

The other brand avoidance research specifically investigating clothing products is by Lin et al (2020), who examined Chinese consumers' brand avoidance behaviour towards sportswear. The initial model for this research was the basic model extended by Knittel et al. (2016). The aspects, which were analysed among Chinese consumers' brand avoidance behaviour are:
(a) unattractive store environment,

b) poor product performance,

(c) hassle factor,

(d) negative reference group,

(e) self-incongruity,

f) deindividuation,

g) ideological incompability,

h) unpleasant advertising,

All subcategory of experiential and identity brand avoidance were included in the analysis, while in the case of moral, deficit-value and advertising brand avoidance only one subcategory were analysed. The brand avoidance behaviour of Chinese consumers was significantly influenced by poor product performance, self-incongruity and unpleasant advertising. Respondents showed more significant brand avoidance towards domestic sportswear than global sportswear products. A significant added value of the research is that it separately identifies the reasons behind avoidance of domestic and foreign sportswear brands: a common theme was self-incongruity. In the case of domestic products, association with a negative reference group and unpleasant advertising also emerge as brand avoidance factor, while in the case of global brands, in addition to the common factor, poor product performance is also a relevant factor behind brand avoidance behaviour.

5. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

5.1 Research questions and hypotheses

I have been working on empirical research on brand avoidance since 2017. The present research has three main objectives: (1) to identify the attitudes that distinguish consumers who buy fast fashion brands from brand avoiders, (2) to identify the reasons behind the frequency of buying fast fashion brands, and (3) to gain a deeper understanding of brand avoidance behaviour towards fast fashion brands in the offline and online shopping space. The research questions presented in the dissertation are in line with the fact, that brand avoidance behaviour is a relatively a new research area. Before the introduction of the hypotheses, let me highlight, that all hypotheses are strictly industry-specific.

The main research question of the thesis is:

What aspects influence Generation Z brand avoidance behaviour?

The literature on brand avoidance, presented in the theoretical part, focuses on the reasons for the behaviour, either before or after the purchase process. It is also interesting to examine whether certain opinions and attitudes predict who will become a brand avoider:

RQ1: Based on several opinions is it possible to predict which consumer will become brand avoider?

The hypotheses related to RQ1 are:

H1: The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion is significantly different.

The opinions of the students in the sample were asked in four main categories. They were asked to rate statements about product attributes, stores and personnel, the social and environmental impact of fast fashion companies, and fast fashion advertising on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest.

The sample includes both consumers, who regularly or always buy fast fashion products and consumers, who rarely or never buy from fast fashion brands. A part of the sample (1/5) are brand avoiders, so it can be assumed that their opinions and attitudes differ

significantly from fast fashion consumers, regarding fast fashion products, stores, personnel, companies and advertising.

The sub-hypotheses related to hypothesis H1 are:

H1a: The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion products is significantly different.

H1b: The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion stores and personnel is significantly different.

H1c: The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion companies' environmental and social effects is significantly different.

H1d: The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion advertisement is significantly different.

I will use a two-sample t-test to test the sub-hypotheses and draw conclusions on the basis of this test for both the sub-hypotheses and the main hypothesis.

It can also be assumed that those, who rarely or never buy from fast fashion brands have a more critical view of fast fashion products, stores, fast fashion companies and advertising than those, who regularly or always choose fast fashion brands. The related hypothesis is the following:

H2: Fast fashion avoiders are more critical of fast fashion brands than those, who regularly or always buy fast fashion products.

I also think it is important to analyse how strong the overall criticism of fast fashion by brand avoiders. My hypothesis is the following:

H3: Fast fashion avoiders criticize fast fashion brands more than moderate.

If the average value of the critical variables is higher than 3 in Likert-scale in the case of fast fashion avoiders, it can be considered, that fast fashion avoiders are more critical.

The extended model of Knittel et al. (2016) defines 5 brand avoidance categories - experiential, identity, moral, deficit-value and advertising brand avoidance - but the brand avoidance behaviour of respondents towards fast fashion brands is not necessarily

affected by each brand avoidance category with the same strength. The next research question of this paper is:

RQ2: Does any of the main categories of brand avoidance dominate in the brand avoidance behaviour of Gen Z, and if so, which one?

The low quality of fast fashion products is a serious problem, consumers have low expectations of these products. Consumers do not expect these products to be durable (Gabrielli et al., 2013; Watson & Yan, 2013). Building on the expectation-confirmation theory – which explains experiential brand avoidance - low expectations will lead to a more favourable perception of perceived performance, and thus not necessarily lead to consumer dissatisfaction and hence brand avoidance. The hypothesis related to experiential brand avoidance is the following:

H4: Within the fast fashion brand avoidance behaviour, experiential brand avoidance is of less than moderate importance.

I would like to interpret "less than or more than moderate" importance. On a Likert scale from 1 to 5, the value 3 is medium; above this average value I interpret more than moderate importance, while below I interpret less than moderate importance.

According to Khan and Lee (2014), it is generally accepted that undesirable self - which is linked to identity brand avoidance - is the most important factor in brand avoidance behaviour. Conversely, some researchers argue, that it depends on the industry, which brand avoidance main category dominates (Odoom et al., 2019, Kavaliauské & Simanavičiuté, 2015). Clothing products have a symbolic content (Kim et al., 2013; Fletcher, 2008; Hogg & Banister, 2004). According to the authors Nógrádi-Szabó and Neulinger (2017), members of Generation Z pay the most attention to mobile communication and clothing. Williams and Page (2011) describe members of this generation as people, who think carefully about what they wear. Among other things, fashion is a tool in their hands that is key to acceptance and inclusion. The hypothesis related to identity-related brand avoidance is based on this:

H5: Within the fast fashion brand avoidance behaviour, indentity brand avoidance is the most important brand avoidance category

The clothing industry faces a number of environmental and social problems, many of which are linked to fast fashion companies. Since generation Z is considered to be the most environmentally conscious generation according to generational research (Tari, 2011), I formulated the hypothesis related to moral brand avoidance as follows:

H6: Within the fast fashion brand avoidance behaviour, moral brand avoidance is of more than moderate importance.

Fast fashion brands have different advertising strategies. H&M has a wide range of advertising activities and often collaborate with celebrities in its advertising. Zara, a fast fashion pioneer, spends only 0.3% of its costs on advertising (Tokatli, 2008; Ghemawat & Nueno, 2006). Considering these facts, hypothesis 7 is as follows:

H7: Within the fast fashion brand avoidance behaviour, advertisement brand avoidance is of less than moderate importance.

The pandemic and the way it has been handled has had an impact on many areas of our lives, including our shopping habits. With the closure of shops, the only way to sell clothing - including fast fashion items - was temporarily left: through websites. The factors, which most influencing consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction during the online shopping environment have been identified. In the factors of consumer dissatisfaction related to the online space, or the absence of factors influencing consumer satisfaction, we can discover reasons for brand avoidance. With restrictive measures and the growing online presence, it is also crucial for fast fashion brands to identify the factors, that lead to brand avoidance due to online experiences.

The last research question is related to online shopping environment:

RQ3: What are the reasons behind brand avoidance behaviour during online shopping of fast fashion brands?

For the third research question, I did not formulate any hypotheses, given that I am using a qualitative research method, content analysis, to analyse the Trustpilot product evaluation forum in order to answer the research question.

5.2. Research methodology

During the research qualitative and quantitative research techniques were also used as it is visible on 10. Figure.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           Summary of methodology applied throughout the dissertation      │
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         │                                              │
         ▼                                              ▼
┌──────────────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────────┐
│   Web based online survey │              │     Content analysis      │
└──────────────────────────┘              └──────────────────────────┘
         │                                              │
         ▼                                              ▼
┌──────────────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Asking Gen Z about fast  │              │ The analysis of          │
│ fashion products, stores │              │ experiential avoidance   │
│ and personnel, companies │              │ in online environment    │
│ and fast fashion         │              │                          │
│ advertisement            │              │                          │
└──────────────────────────┘              └──────────────────────────┘
         │
         ▼
┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Determination of the     │
│ aspects, which has an    │
│ effect on the purchase   │
│ frequency of fast        │
│ fashion product          │
└──────────────────────────┘
         │
         ▼
┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Determination of         │
│ sensitivity aspects,     │
│ which have a role in     │
│ fast fashion avoidance   │
└──────────────────────────┘
         │
         ▼
┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Classify the consumers   │
│ based on their fast      │
│ fashion avoidance        │
│ behaviour                │
└──────────────────────────┘
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10. Figure: Summary of the used methodology

Source: Own construction

5.2.1 Data sampling for attitudinal analysis and brand avoidance behaviour

Data collection was conducted via a web-based online survey, 516 students of Corvinus University of Budapest participated in the survey, from April to May 2017. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: in the first part the opinions and attitudes of respondents from Gen Z were investigated related to fast fashion brands in general, while

the second part based on the extended model of Knittel et al.'s (2016) focused on the analysis of brand avoidance behaviour of respondents. After the eclusion of non-relevant respondents, the final sample consisted of 501 students, belonging to the same age group (average age was 20 years).

5.2.2 Methods for analysing data from the survey

The attitude analysis is based on the following methods:

- frequency distribution of the used variables and its comparison with two-sample t-test,
- identification of the relationship between the opinions about fast fashion brands and the
- purchase frequency of fast fashion products with Pearson correlation coefficient,
- exploring the relationship between the used variables with decision tree,
- classification of the opinion variables with factor analysis,
- classification of the respondents with cluster analysis based on opinion factors.

The analysis of brand avoidance behaviour is based on the following methods:

- analysis of the variables, which has a role in brand avoidance behaviour applying frequency distributions,
- mapping the variables, which has a role in brand avoidance behaviour using multidimensional scaling,
- grouping fast fashion avoiders into clusters.

The features and benefits of the methods used are described in more detail below.

a) Decision tree

Using decision tree analysis is one of the most effective ways to identify hidden patterns in data (Gudmann et al., 2019). Decision tree is a hierarchical, tree structure (root, branches, nodes, leaves) based classification method. The algorithm classifies the data by decomposing the original input variables into subgroups in such a way that the resulting groups become increasingly homogeneous (Song & Lu, 2015; Gudmann et al., 2019; Hajdu, 2018).

The advantages of the decision tree method are that it is easy to visualize, the results are easy to interpret, unlike other analysis methods, there is no restriction on the scale of the variables, it does not require special data preparation, and it automatically detects the relevant variables, which helps to understand the problem (Dudás, 2018; Gupta et al., 2017; Zhao & Zhang, 2007; Song & Lu, 2015).

b) Factor analysis (principal component analysis, Varimax rotation)

Factor analysis is an analytical technique, that allows the description of complex relationships between phenomena in the simplest possible form. The main advantage of the method is that it allows the number of variables to be reduced by recovering some of the information accumulated in the factors (Hosszú et al., 1975; Rennie, 1997).

c) Multidimensional scaling

Multidimensional scaling is one of the methods of multivariate statistical analysis, that is becoming increasingly popular in the field of consumer behaviour studies (Laruccia et al., 2011; Mostafa, 2015; Zsóka et al., 2013). The method allows to represent even multidimensional objects in a two- or three-dimensional space in such a way, that similar objects are placed close to each other and dissimilar objects are placed further away (Takács, 2013). Multidimensional scaling aims to reveal the hidden content of data (Lehota, 2001). The goodness of fit of a model can be measured by the so-called stress index, which is an indicator calculated from the difference between the coordinates of the plotted and the original points (Takács, 2013, p. 142).

d) Cluster analysis

Cluster analysis is a type of data reduction procedure that performs clustering based on the similarity or distance of objects, it is suitable for exploring data structure (Füstös 2009, p. 178). The advantages of K-means cluster analysis are that it is less dependent on outliers and can be used even when the number of units of analysis is high. It can be considered a simple, efficient and flexible method, but the disadvantage is that the number of clusters needs to be predetermined (Li & Wu, 2012; Füstös, 2009; Vora & Oza, 2013; Petrovics, 2020).

Considering that the sample includes respondents, who buy fast fashion brands and brand avoiders, I use a two-sample t-test to test significant differences between their attitudes

as hypothesized by the H1 hypothesis. I use Pearson's correlation coefficient to identify the relationship between opinions about fast fashion products and companies and the frequency of purchase of fast fashion products. This indicator is used to identify the variables that have an effect - positive, negative or neutral - on the purchase frequency of fast fashion products. In addition, the indicator also identifies the strength of the relationship between the variables and purchase frequency.

5.2.3 Data sampling for empirical study of brand avoidance in the online space

Consumers can express their displeasure with products and companies on a number of platforms, including complaint forums, product evaluation forums and and anti-brand sites. The authors Krishnamurthy and Kucuk (2009) distinguish these sites on the basis of their organizers, their purpose, their main focus and their orientation. According to the researchers, the purpose of anti-brand sites is to create a negative online identity of the chosen brand. Socially irresponsible activities and questionable business practices associated with the brand are used to create a negative online identity.

Anti-brand sites are also characterised by visual language, memorable domain names (for example, Killercoke.org for Coca-Cola or Aolsucks.org for AOL) and critical language. My aim was to find an anti-brand site related to fast fashion brands and to analyse the information presented on the site, since all aspects of brand avoidance can be found on these sites. I ran a keyword search using the Google search engine based on the characteristics identified by the authors, but I was unable to identify any anti-brand site related to fast fashion. However, there are several forums where consumers can express their opinions on fast fashion products.

Based on Krishnamurty and Kucuk (2009) definition, the main focus of product review sites is on feedback about the quality of products, which can be related to experiential brand avoidance. Nevertheless product evaluation forums may also provide other types of feedback, that can complement the initial model.

For the analysis I chose the Trustpilot online evaluation forum which - in addition to providing reviews of all the brands I wanted to survey - also allows anyone to write feedback in the language of their choice. The site also has the advantage that reviewers can rate their chosen brand from 1 to 5, with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best, i.e.

an excellent rating. The site also allows you to filter the responses, so the focus of the research was on the English written worst reviews. In the case of Bershka, there was feedback in Hungarian language, but none of the respondents expressed a bad experience with this fast fashion brand, so these reviews were not included in the analysis.

Of the analysed fast fashion brands, only Bershka had a good rating, with 9155 responses (55%) out of 16,625 responses rating the brand as excellent. At the same time, 15% (2,478) of the respondents gave the same brand a poor rating, so I had the opportunity to analyse this fast fashion brand from a brand avoidance perspective. The best known brand of the Inditex group - Zara - was rated by a total of 1431 respondents, 65% of whom (923 negative reviews) had a bad opinion of the brand.

H&M received a total of 3036 responses, of which 60 percent (1831) were negative. Massimo Dutti, also part of the Inditex group, was rated by 257 respondents, with 76% (196) of the responses being negative. The brand C&A was the only one to show a small difference between the proportion of excellent and negative reviews. 34% of respondents (104 in total) rated the brand as excellent, while 40% of respondents (123) rated it as poor.

11. Table: Date of first and last opinion on the fast fashion brands during the analysis

Analysed brand	*Date of the last negative opinion*	*Date of the first negative opinion*
H&M: hm.com	28th of April, 2019.	12th of January, 2012
Brands, which are a part of the Inditex group		
Zara: zara.com	29th of Arpil, 2019.	20th of August, 2013.
Massimo Dutti: massimoduti.com	18th of April, 2019.	1st of December, 2015.
Bershka: bershka.com	27th of April, 2019.	16th of October, 2015.
Pull&Bear: pullandbear.com	15th of April, 2019.	30th of September, 2015.

Source: Own construction

In the case of C&A the brand did not receive any negative reviews in English, so I was not able to analyse the feedbacks. Pull&Bear, also part of the Inditex group, received a total of 261 reviews, of which 54% (141) were negative.

The online research question did not justify limiting the reviews to a specific year, so all negative reviews in English were read, which took place between 22 and 29 April 2019. The dates of the first and last reviews varied by brand, which I have listed in 11. Table.

Only feedback that clearly expressed that a bad online shopping experience leads to a complete avoidance of the fast fashion brand was used as the starting point for the analysis, and thus 146 feedbacks were used as the basis for the analysis.

5.2.4 Method of analysis of data obtained from the Trustpilot product evaluation forum

A deeper understanding of brand avoidance behaviour in the online space is based on content analysis, a frequently used method for analysing online forums (Harrison & Walker, 2001; Holtz et al., 2012; Okazaki & Rivas, 2002). Antal (1976) defines content analysis as "any process by which, on the basis of the periodic features of messages, conclusions are drawn by a systematic and objective procedure, which are not explicitly stated in the messages, but which can be inferred from the way the message is structured, i.e. encoded, and which may be confirmed or verified by other data, which were obtained by other tools (other than content analysis)" (Antal, 1976, p. 13).

Content analysis is based on the creation of different categories, the categories have to meet different assumptions, such as:

- the categories should reflect the purpose of the research,

- be exhaustive,

- mutually exclusive,

- derive from the same classification principle" (Antal, 1976, p. 49).

The next step in content analysis is coding, in which elements of messages, communications, texts are classified into predefined categories. Coding can be both deductive and inductive: in deductive coding, the researcher codes based on pre-existing theories, whereas in inductive coding there is no predefined coding system (Antal, 1976; Joffe & Yardley, 2004). The advantage of the unobtrusive method is that it is time and

cost efficient compared to other research methods (Babbie, 2003; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The aim of the analysis was to identify the reasons for brand avoidance related to the online space, so inductive coding was used.

6. RESULTS

6.1 Sample characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the sample are summarised in 12. Table.

12. Table: Demographic characteristics of the sample

Demographics	n=515 %
Gender	
Male	37%
Female	64%
Habitation	
Capital city	55%
Town	36%
Village	9%
Disposable net income/month/ person	
0-20.000 HUF	12%
21.000-40.000 HUF	25%
41.000-60.000 HUF	27%
61.000-80.000 HUF	12%
81.000-100.000 HUF	13%
101.000-120.000 HUF	5%
121.000-140.000 HUF	2%
141.000 HUF felett	4%

Source: Own construction

During the the survey only one generation were asked, the sample's average age is 20 years. There is no consensus in the literature on what the analysed generation is called. In this thesis I use the term Generation Z, but you may also come across the terms Post Millenials, New Silent Generation, Digital Natives, Generation M, and Net Generation in research (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2014). The literature is not uniform not only in terms of the designation, but also in terms of the year of birth from which we can talk about members of Generation Z. There are often research, that refers to those born after 1995 (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2014) or 1996 (Montana & Petit, 2005; Ernst and Young 2015) as Generation Z, but there is also research (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015) that considers young people born from 2000 as members of this generation. In this research, I consider those born from 1995 as members of Generation Z. In 2017 according to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2021a) 51.4% of the members of the 20-year-old age group were male and 48.6% were female; in contrast, the sample is almost twice as large for women as for men.

55% of the sample live in the capital city, 36% in a town and 9% in a village. Compared to the statistics found on the website of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 18% of Hungary's population lived in the capital, 52% in towns and 30% in villages in 2017 (Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2021b). In the sample, the high capital city figure is due to the fact that many university students move to the capital city when they start their university years. An advantage for the research is that 91% of the sample chose the capital and the city as their place of residence, as these are the municipalities, where fast fashion brands are present.

Related to the disposable net income/month/ person I found statistics only for net income per capita. In 2017, the per capita net income for people under 25 years of age was 105 638 HUF (Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2021c). From this data, however, it is difficult to predict, how much disposable income there might be among people under 25.

6.2 Analysis of opinions on fast fashion products and companies
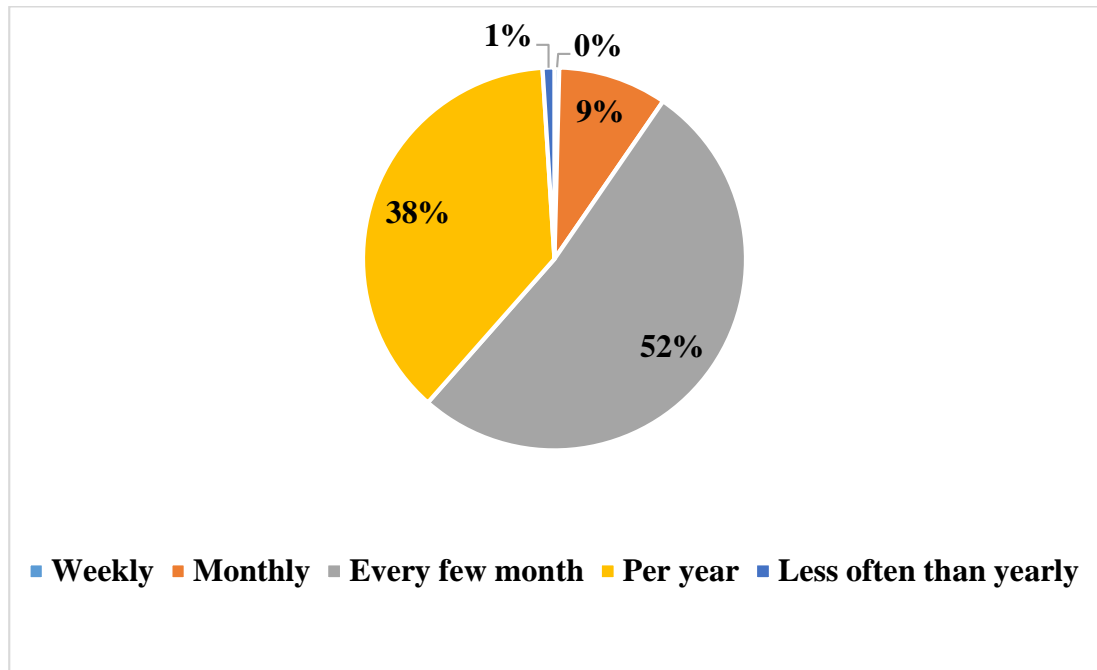
11. Figure: Frequency of clothing purchases in the sample

Source: Own construction

Regarding the purchasing behaviour of clothing (11. Figure) results show that more than half of the students buy clothing every few months. There was no respondent, who purchases clothing weekly, however, only 1% of the sample buys clothing less often than yearly. 70% of the respondents purchase clothing always in stores, the other 30% mainly in stores and sometimes via Internet. Due to the survey of Ernst & Young (2016), members of this generational group buy at least once in a month something online, although it was not identified, which kind of products. In case of clothing, there are some risk factors of buying online (size, fit, quality, difference between the picture and the reality, etc.); this can be an explanation behind buying clothing mainly or entirely in traditional shops.

The opinions of the students in the sample were asked in four main categories. The hypothesis H1 and and its sub-hypotheses related to this topic. The statements were formulated in relation to product attributes, stores and the personnel, the environmental and social impact of fast fashion companies and fast fashion advertising. The students

were asked to rank their opinion on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest.

The average values of opinions about fast fashion product attributes, as well as the average values of consumers, who buy fast fashion brands (always and regularly) and those, who avoid the brand (rarely or never buy) are also shown in 12. Figure. The most respondents fully agree that fast fashion products follow the latest trends (mean value of responses is 4.52), while they least agreed with fast fashion products to be unique (2.16). Although they do not consider these products as unique and they prefer to think that fast fashion products are similar to other brands (3.89), most of them feel comfortable wearing these products (3.99) and agree that with fast fashion products are easy to express themselves (3.37).

However, according to the independent samples t-test (see Appendix 1), there is a statistically significant difference between the attitudes of fast fashion buyers and brand avoiders on certain variables. These variables are:

- *Fast fashion products are cheap (Sig <.001)*
- *Fast fashion products have good value for money (Sig<.001);*
- *Fast fashion products follow the latest trends (Sig=.004);*
- *Fast fashion products are available in a variety of colours (Sig=.045).*
- *Fast fashion makes it easy to express my personality. (Sig<,001);*
- *I feel good in fast fashion products. (Sig<.001);*
- *Fast fashion products are unique (Sig=.011)*
- *Sensitive to trends, cannot wear them for long (Sig=.054)* – Given that the two-tailed test allots half of your alpha to testing the statistical significance, this variable can be considered significant (UCLA, 2021; Lénárt Education, 2021).

Thus, for eight of the twelve variables, in terms of the mean responses, fast fashion buyers agree significantly more with the positive statements about the fast fashion products than the brand avoiders, while the opposite is true for the negative statements. According to the independent samples t-test, for the other four variables, there is no significant difference between the opinions of consumers, who buy fast fashion brands and those who avoid them.

12. Figure also provides an indication of whether those, who avoid fast fashion brands are more critical of fast fashion brands than the average. To do this, it is necessary to separate the variables that are critical of fast fashion brands. These are:

- *The style of fast fashion products is too sensitive to trends, you can't wear them for long.*
- *Fast fashion products are similar to products from other brands.*
- *Styles have too much mass appeal.*

12. Figure shows, that the average of the responses of the brand avoiders is higher than 3, thus confirming that they are more critical than average of fast fashion products. At the same time, with the exception of trend sensitivity, fast fashion buyers' opinions also reflect stronger than average criticisms of the mass-market nature and similarity to other products (lack of uniqueness).

Among the critical variables, trend sensitivity was significantly more criticised by respondents, who avoid fast fashion brands than by those, who are fast fashion buyers, while for the other two statements (similarity to other brands and mass appeal) there was no significant difference in opinions (according to the results of the independent samples t-test). It is also worth mentioning the statement on uniqueness, which has a positive content, where the mean of the responses of both brand avoiders and fast fashion buyers is less than 3. This is also implicitly critical, although the statement itself is not critical.
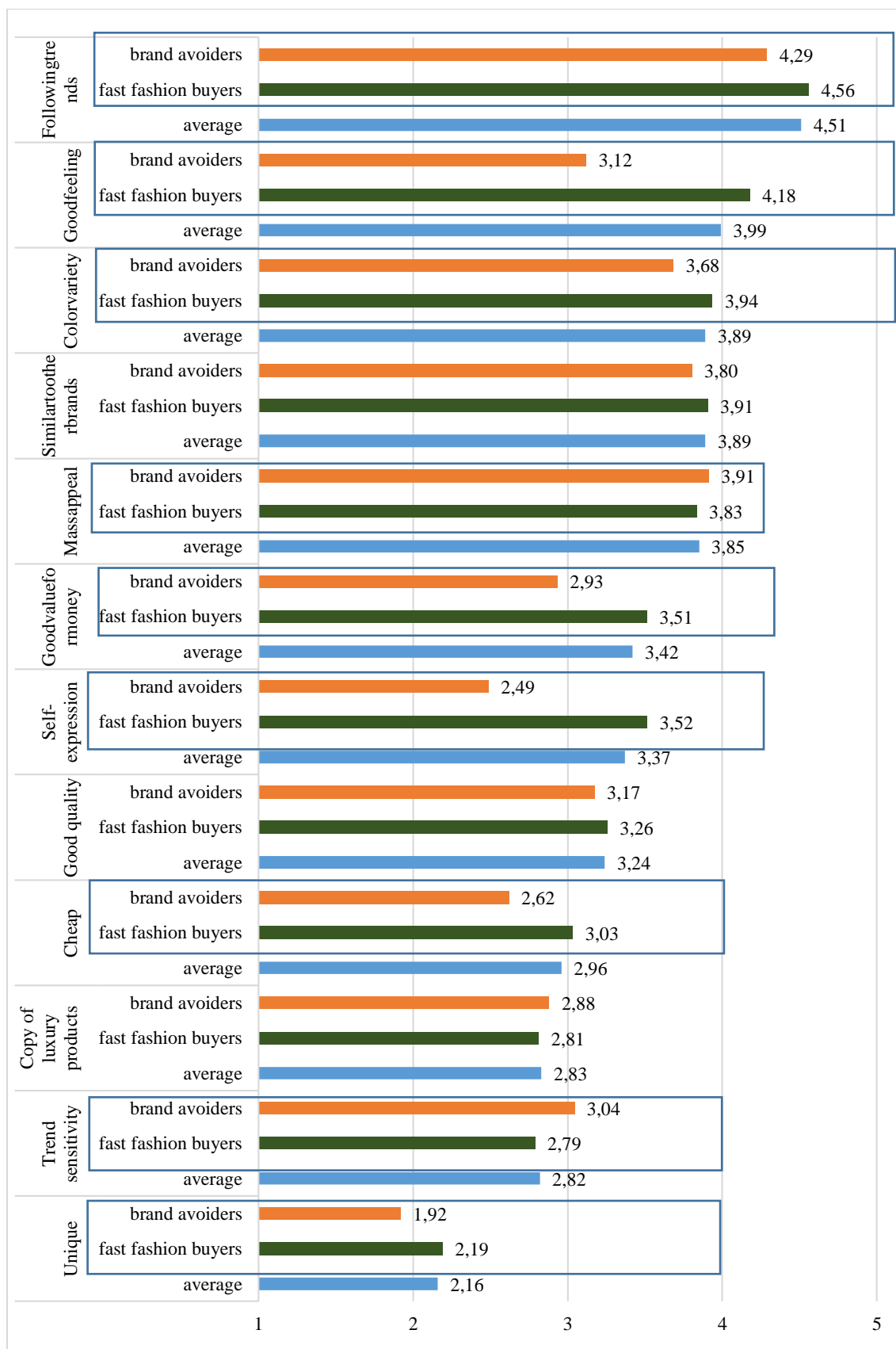
12. Figure: Respondents' opinions on fast fashion products (average values)

1= Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree

***Source*:** Own construction

The average values of opinions about fast fashion stores and personnel for consumers, who buy the brands (always and regularly buy fast fashion products), those who avoid the brands (rarely or never buy) and the total sample are shown in 13. Figure. As almost all of the students shop exclusively or mostly in-store in the sample, the sample was also suitable for testing these statements. For the sample as a whole, respondents agreed least that these stores are large (2.05) and most that they have a good atmosphere (3.48).

13. Figure: *The respondents opinion on fast fashion stores and personnel (average values)*

1= Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree

Source**:** Own construction

Respondents agree slightly more than average that the displays are well organized (mean: 3.45). The average response for helpfulness is 3.34, while the average for the ease of asking for help from personnel is 3.31. Based on the responses received, it can be said

that brand avoiders and fast fashion shoppers have similar opinions about the displays, the kindness of sales staff, and queuing at the checkout.

However, according to the independent samples t-test (see Appendix 1), there is a significant difference between the attitudes of fast fashion buyers and brand avoiders for the following variables:

- *Fast fashion stores are too big (Sig<.001);*
- *Fast fashion stores have a good atmosphere (Sig<.001);*
- *It is easy to get help from salespeople (Sig=,021);*
- *There are only a few salespeople available (Sig=,082).* Given that the two-tailed test allots half of your alpha to testing the statistical significance, this variable can be considered significant (UCLA, 2021; Lénárt Education, 2021).

Brand avoiders were more critical of fast fashion stores than fast fashion buyers in the case of these variables.

For brand avoiders I also examined whether they criticise fast fashion brands more strongly than the average. Criticism could be that the stores are too big, that there is a long wait for the cashier or that there are not enough salespeople working in fast fashion stores. Considering that the average value for the variables is below than the medium level (value 3), it can be concluded, that for these variables brand avoiders do not criticise fast fashion brands more than moderate. However, they are more critical of the atmosphere, as indicated by the fact, that they agree to a lesser than medium that the atmosphere is good in fast (average: 2.7).

In subsection 4.2.3, I also discussed the environmental and social problems affecting the clothing industry, to which the activities of fast fashion companies also make an integral contribution. In examining Generation Z, the perception of social and environmental problems associated with fast fashion companies is relevant, because according to Pater (2017), Generation Z in America is committed to solving 11 environmental problems - including slowing climate change, reducing pollution, access to clean water, and recycling. These issues are discussed in the discussion of the environmental and social impacts of the fast fashion companies presented earlier, and the question is to what extent respondents associate the problems with fast fashion companies (14. Figure).

14. Figure: *Respondents' opinions on the environmental and social impacts of fast fashion companies (average values)*

1= Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree

Source: Own construction

In the overall sample, respondents gave the highest score to the statement about overconsumption (mean: 4.03), but there is also more than medium agreement that these companies contribute to making fashion the same all over the world (mean of responses: 3.8), exploit developing countries (mean: 3.34), pollute the environment (mean: 3.29) and contribute to the loss of traditional culture (3.1).

Comparing the fast fashion buyers and avoiders - based on the independent samples t-test (see Appendix 1), the only significant difference between the opinions of buyers and avoiders is the contribution of fast fashion to the loss of traditional culture – fast fashion brand avoiders are more critical than buyers of these companies' products.

As regards the environmental and social impact of fast fashion brands - all the statements made were critical:

- *Fast fashion stimulates over-consumption,*
- *Fast fashion contaminates the environment*
- *Fast fashion exploits labor in less developed countries,*
- *Fast fashion makes the world's fashion all look the same,*
- *Fast fashion perverts traditional culture.*

It can be concluded, that brand avoiders criticised fast fashion companies more strongly than the average in all aspects (note that this is also true for fast fashion customers!).

The final set of questions summarises the opinions of respondents, who have seen fast fashion advertisements (15. Figure).

Respondents agreed most that in fast fashion advertising the actors are symphatetic (3.42) and least that in fast fashion ads the music is annoying (2.24). According to the independent samples t-test (see Appendix 1), there is a statistically significant difference between the attitudes of fast fashion buyers and brand avoiders across all variables - brand avoiders are more critical on all characteristics:

- *In general, fast fashion advertising has a bad message (Sig<,001);*
- *In general, the fast fashion advertising is provocative (Sig=,023);*
- *In general, in fast fashion advertising the actor is symphatetic (Sig<,001);*
- *In general, in fast fashion advertising the music is annoying (Sig<,001);*
- *In general, in fast fashion advertising the music is loud (Sig=,006);*
- *In general, fast fashion advertising is annoying (Sig<,001).*

With the exception of the statement about the stars, the other statements are all critical. Those, who avoided fast fashion brands in the case of the variable related to the message of the advertisements express more than moderate disagreement.

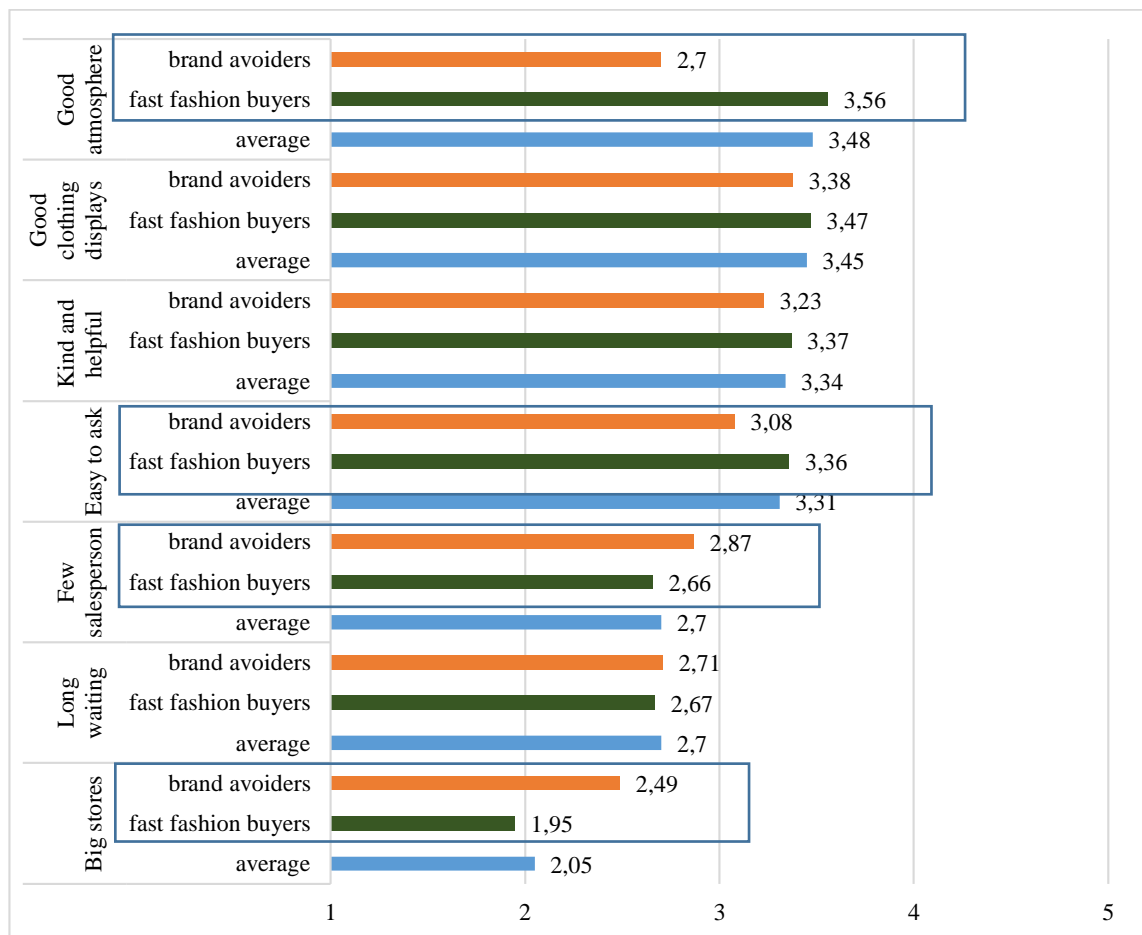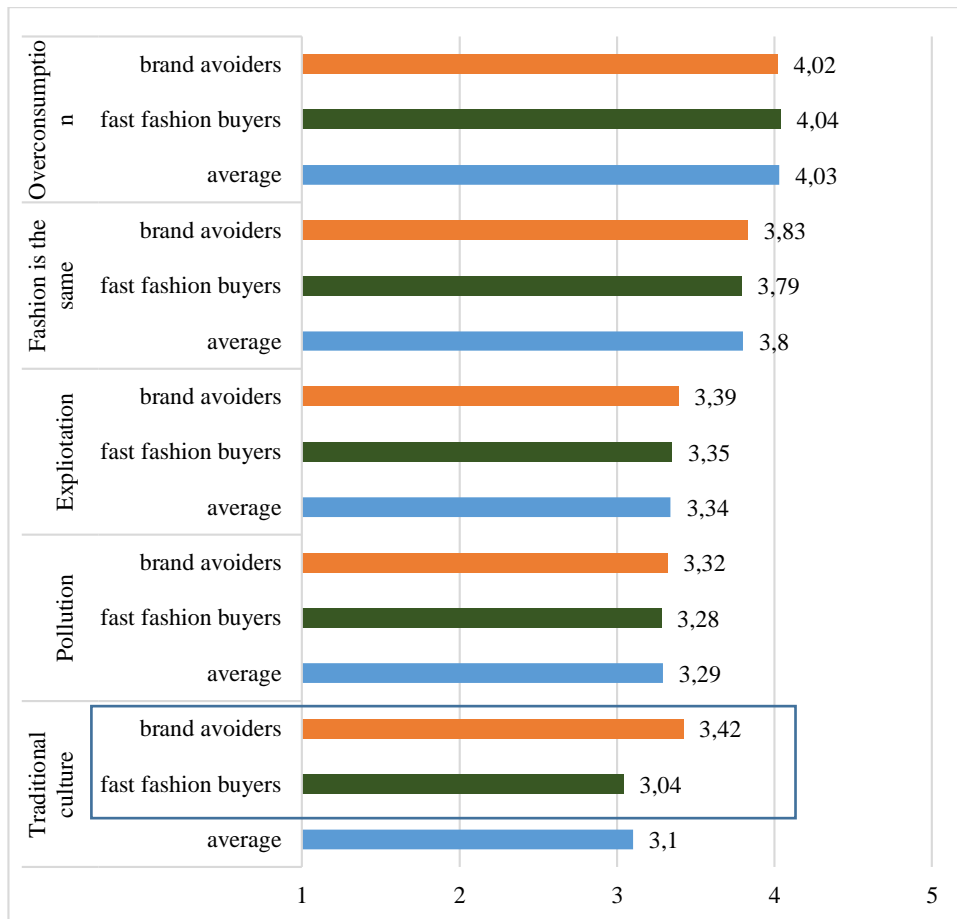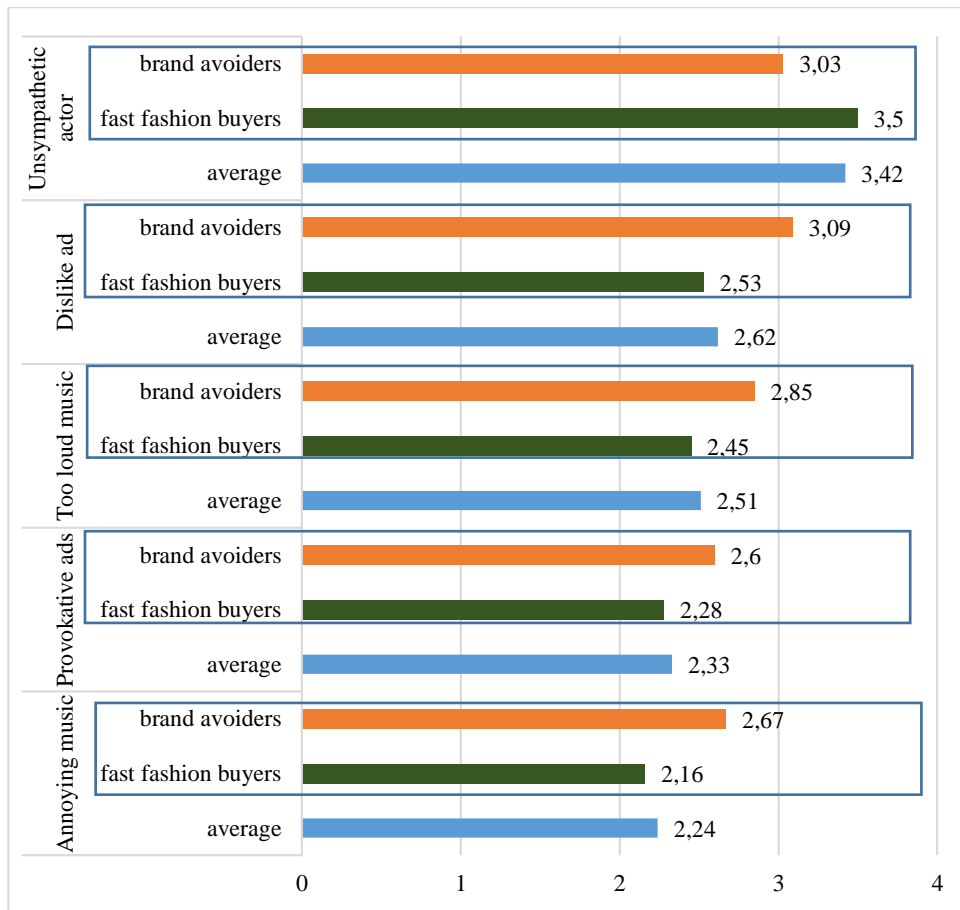*15. Figure: Respondents' opinion on fast fashion advertising (average values)*

1= Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree

***Source*: Own construction**

6.2.1 Hypothesis testing based on opinions on fast fashion

Based on the opinions analysed in chapter 6.2, the hypothesis H1 related to research question K1 - including sub-hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c and H1d - as well as hypotheses H2 and H3 can be judged.

There is a statistically significant difference between the attitudes of respondents, who buy fast fashion products and those, who avoid fast fashion products in 8 of the 12 variables (highlighted in 12. Figure). In light of this, sub-hypothesis ***H1a can only be considered as partially confirmed,*** not fully, because opinions do not differ significantly along all variables. If we take a very strict view of the hypothesis and require a significant difference of opinion for all variables, then the hypothesis should in fact be rejected. The attitudes of respondents, who buy fast fashion products and those, who avoid them

towards fast fashion stores and personnel differ significantly for 4 out of the 7 variables analysed (see 13. Figure). Accordingly, the sub-hypothesis ***H1b can be considered partially confirmed,*** because there is no significant difference in opinion for all variables. Strictly speaking, this hypothesis should also be rejected.

I examined respondents' opinions on a total of 5 variables related to the environmental and social impacts of fast fashion companies. It can be concluded, that there is a statistically significant difference between the attitudes of respondents, who buy fast fashion brands and those, who avoid fast fashion brands only with regard to the contribution of fast fashion to the loss of traditional culture. Since the mean values of the attitudes of the two subsamples are similar for the other four variables, ***I reject sub-hypothesis H1c***: in the light of the results, it is not confirmed, that the attitudes of respondents, who buy fast fashion brands and those, who avoid fast fashion brands differ related to the environmental and social impacts of fast fashion companies.

However, there is a statistically significant difference in attitudes towards fast fashion advertising between respondents, who buy fast fashion products and those, who avoid them for all 6 variables. Accordingly, ***I accept the sub-hypothesis H1d***: there is a difference in the attitudes towards fast fashion advertising between respondents, who buy fast fashion brands and those, who avoid fast fashion brands. Based on the results, hypothesis ***H1 is partially confirmed.***

The answer to RQ1 is that factors showing significant differences of opinion are the most likely to indicate, which respondents will become brand avoiders. Brand avoiders expressed significantly more negative opinion of uniqueness, self-expression, value for money, good price, good feeling, trend following styles, trend sensitivity and color variability associated with fast fashion products. For fast fashion stores, they have more negative opinions about the atmosphere, personnel and store size. They are also more critical of these brands' communication and fast fashion advertising than fast fashion buyers. At the same time - and this is a really interesting finding of the research - fast fashion buyers are just as critical of the social and environmental impact of fast fashion companies as brand avoiders, so it is not possible to conclude, who will become a brand avoider from attitudes and opinions alone.

The answer will have to be found in how the criticized fast fashion features count during the shopping process. The detailed analysis of brand avoiders in the next chapter aims to

determine the factors, which play a particularly prominent role in brand avoidance behaviour. Overall, the results suggest that hypothesis ***H2 should be rejected,*** as it is not fully true for all variables that brand avoiders are more critical of fast fashion brands than those, who regularly or always choose to buy products from these brands.

Hypothesis H3 was about the strength of the criticisms of fast fashion avoiders. When examining product attributes, brand avoiders rated fast fashion products critical more than moderate. However, for fast fashion stores and personnel, there was no evidence of stronger than medium criticism of fast fashion brands by respondents, who avoided fast fashion brands.

The exact opposite is true for the environmental and social impacts of fast fashion brands: brand avoiders criticised fast fashion companies more than moderare in each of the aspects (and we have seen that the same can be said for fast fashion consumers). The only area, in which brand avoiders expressed stronger than moderate disagreement with fast fashion advertising was the message of the advertisements. The results show, that fast fashion brand avoiders do not criticise fast fashion brands more than moderate for all variables, so I reject ***hypothesis H3.***

6.3 Identifying factors, which influence the frequency of purchase of fast fashion products

The factors influencing the frequency of purchase of fast fashion products were identified using Pearson's correlation coefficient (13. Table). For opinions on fast fashion products, stores and companies, the population was 501. However, for the variables related to advertising, only respondents, who had encountered fast fashion advertising were included in the sample (N=477).

13. Table: Examining the relationship between the factors influencing the purchase of fast fashion products and purchase frequency

Factors, which influencing the purchase of fast fashion products	How often do you buy Fast fashion brands? (N=501)	
	Pearson correlation	Significance level
Fast fashion products are cheap.	0,134**	,002
Fast fashion products have good quality.	0,051	,244
Fast fashion products have good value for money	0,183**	,001
Fast fashion products follow the latest trends	,158**	,001
Sensitive to trends, cannot wear them for long (Sig=.054)	-,087*	,047
Fast fashion stores are too big.	-,213**	,001
Clothing displays are well organized.	,004	,920
Waiting time for cashier is too long.	-,026	,560
Fast fashion stores have a good atmosphere	,175**	,000
It is easy to get help from salespeople	,118**	,007
Salespeople at stores are kind and helpful	,094*	,032
There are only a few salespeople available	-,089	,043
Fast fashion products are available in a variety of colours.	,091*	,039
Fast fashion makes it easy to express my personality.	,337**	,001
I feel good in fast fashion products.	**,446****	,001
Fast fashion products are unique.	,131**	,003
Fast fashion products are similar to products from other brands.	,047	,286
Styles look like copies of luxury brands.	,010	,819
Styles have too much mass appeal.	-,003	,937

Fast fashion stimulates over-consumption.	,057	,193
Fast fashion contaminates the environment.	,016	,719
Fast fashion exploits labor in less developed countries.	,052	,238
Fast fashion makes the world's fashion all look the same.	-,011	,797
Fast fashion perverts traditional culture	-,079	,073
N=477		
In general, fast fashion advertising has a bad message.	-,232**	,001
In general, the fast fashion advertising is provocative.	-,163**	,001
In general, in fast fashion advertising the actor is symphatetic.	,269**	,001
In general, in fast fashion advertising the music is annoying.	-,177**	,001
In general, in fast fashion advertising the music is loud.	-,154**	,001
In general, fast fashion advertising is annoying.	-,216**	,001

Source: Own construction

The correlation between the variables highlighted in yellow and purchase frequency was significant at the p=0.01** level, while for the variables highlighted in grey it was significant at the p=0.05* level. Of the variables examined, the variable *"I feel good in fast fashion products"* has the strongest positive correlation with purchase frequency (correlation 0.446). This is followed by another identity-related variable: *„Fast fashion makes it easy to express my personality"* (correlation value: 0.337).

The frequency of buying fast fashion products is also positively influenced by the degree to which respondents sympathise with the actors in fast fashion advertisements (correlation 0.269), the degree to which they feel that fast fashion products are good value for money (0.183), follow the latest trends (0.158), are cheap (0.134), are unique (0.131) and that it is easy to get help from salespeople in fast fashion stores (0.118).

The strongest negative relationship is found between purchase frequency and two advertising-related variables: *In general, fast fashion advertising has a bad message (-0.232)* and *In general, fast fashion advertising is annoying* (-0.216).

Other negative advertising-related variables also understandably have a negative impact on the purchase of fast fashion products: *In general, in fast fashion advertising the music is annoying* (-0,177), *in general, the fast fashion advertising is provocative* (-0,163) and

in general, in fast fashion advertising the music is loud (-0,154). In addition to the variables mentioned above, the frequency of buying fast fashion products is also negatively affected by the extent to which respondents feel that *fast fashion stores are too big* (-0.213). The quality of products has no effect on the frequency of respondents' purchases.

I also ran a regression model to explain the purchase frequency of fast fashion products (see Appendix 2). The method chosen to run the regression was Stepwise, which resulted in a total of six variables, that were found to be significant in influencing the frequency of purchase of fast fashion brands among the respondents. Interesting results on the strong influence of the variable *I feel good in fast fashion products* - alone explains 19.2% of the purchase frequency of fast fashion products, while the other 5 variables included add a total of 3% to the explanatory power of the model.

I also examined the variables influencing the purchase frequency of fast fashion products using decision tree (16. Figure) in order to explore the relationships between the variables. Using Chaid's algorithm, the correct classification rate was 70.9%. Both the Pearson correlation coefficient and the regression showed that the variable I feel good in Fast fashion products was the most important determinant of purchase frequency.

According to this method this variable is also the most important determinant of whether or not someone becomes a brand avoider. This conclusion can be originated in the first level of the decision tree (16. Figure): respondents were grouped into four different groups depending on their answers to this question (Node 1, 2, 3 and 4).

62.2% of those respondents, who disagree and strongly disagree, that they feel good in fast fashion clothing, rarely buy these products (Node 1). They are brand avoiders. The purchase frequency of respondents, who are undecided, whether they feel good in fast fashion clothing (Node 2) is positively influenced by positive perceptions ("cheap") of the price of fast fashion products, while negative perceptions ("not cheap") have a negative impact.

45.2% of those respondents, who do not consider fast fashion products to be cheap, can be considered brand avoiders (Node 5). In contrast, 79.6% of respondents, who are at least neutral or more positive about the price of fast fashion products can be considered fast fashion buyers (Node 6).

73.9% of those respondens, who agree, that they feel good in fast fashion clothing (Node 3), buy these products regularly. In terms of price, almost two thirds (64.1%) of those, who disagree or strongly agree that these products are cheap (Node 7) buy them regularly, followed by those, who rarely buy fast fashion products because of their price (23.4%). Respondents who agree, that they feel good in fast fashion products and are at least neutral

There is a tendency in the sample so far that the more respondents feel good in fast fashion clothing and the more affordable they feel fast fashion products are, the more likely they are buying fast fashion brands. For the last group, the gender of the respondents has an impact on purchasing frequency. This group includes respondents, who strongly agree that they feel good in these pieces (Node 4). In this case most people buy fast fashion products regularly (72.2%) or always (22.7%). The percentage of women and men, who regularly buy fast fashion products is almost the same for both groups (71.6% for Node 9 and 72.2% for Node 10). However, among those, who strongly agree, that they feel good in fast fashion items, women are almost twice as likely to always buy these items as men (26.6% compared to 14.8%).

Node 0 — How regularly do you buy fast fashion products?

Category	%	n
never	1,7	9
rarely	16,1	83
regularly	67,8	349
always	14,4	74
Total	100,0	515

I feel good in fast fashion products.
Adj. P-value=0,000, Chi-square=148,177, df=9

strongly disagree, disagree

Node 1

Category	%	n
never	16,2	6
rarely	62,2	23
regularly	21,6	8
always	0,0	0
Total	7,2	37

undecided

Node 2

Category	%	n
never	2,4	2
rarely	27,1	23
regularly	63,5	54
always	7,1	6
Total	16,5	85

Fast fashion products are cheap.
Adj. P-value=0,019, Chi-square=13,000, df=3

strongly disagree, disagree

Node 5

Category	%	n
never	0,0	0
rarely	45,2	14
regularly	41,9	13
always	12,9	4
Total	6,0	31

undecided, agree, strongly agree

Node 6

Category	%	n
never	3,7	2
rarely	16,7	9
regularly	75,9	41
always	3,7	2
Total	10,5	54

agree

Node 3

Category	%	n
never	0,4	1
rarely	12,2	28
regularly	73,9	170
always	13,5	31
Total	44,7	230

Fast fashion products are cheap.
Adj. P-value=0,015, Chi-square=13,424, df=3

strongly disagree, disagree

Node 7

Category	%	n
never	1,6	1
rarely	23,4	15
regularly	64,1	41
always	10,9	7
Total	12,4	64

undecided, agree, strongly agree

Node 8

Category	%	n
never	0,0	0
rarely	7,8	13
regularly	77,7	129
always	14,5	24
Total	32,2	166

strongly agree

Node 4

Category	%	n
never	0,0	0
rarely	5,5	9
regularly	71,8	117
always	22,7	37
Total	31,7	163

What is your gender?
Adj. P-value=0,006, Chi-square=10,313, df=2

woman

Node 9

Category	%	n
never	0,0	0
rarely	1,8	2
regularly	71,6	78
always	26,6	29
Total	21,2	109

man

Node 10

Category	%	n
never	0,0	0
rarely	13,0	7
regularly	72,2	39
always	14,8	8
Total	10,5	54

Legend: never / rarely / regularly / always

16. Figure: Correlations between factors influencing the frequency of purchase of fast fashion products

Source: Own construction with SPSS

6.4 Grouping respondents according to their opinion of fast fashion

The next step in the analysis was to cluster respondents according to their opinions on fast fashion products, stores, companies and advertising. In order to simplify the characterisation of the clusters, I grouped the opinion variables into factors using principal component analysis. As a first step, all variables were included in the analysis, and then based on the KMO test, the cumulative eigenvalues, communalities, the table of explained variances and the explanatory power of the factors, 15 variables were classified into 6 factors instead of the original 29 variables (14. Table). Based on Bartlett's test (p<0.000), the null hypothesis is rejected, KMO test result is 0.677, the result of factor analysis is acceptable (Kaiser, 1974; Ul Hadi et al., 2016; Csallner, 2015). The explained variance was 65.68%. Using varimax rotation, the factors constructed by SPSS are easier to interpret.

The first factor is composed of variables related to environmental and social problems associated with fast fashion companies, so the first factor is named *Global Negative Perceptions.* The second factor can be called the *Advertising-related problems factor*, only advertising-related variables are a part of this factor. The third factor is composed exclusively of identity-related variables, and is therefore called *Identity Expression.* The fourth factor is created by variables related to the price of fast fashion products, so this group of variables can be referred to as *the Favourable Price factor.* The fifth factor consists of the problems related to the uniqueness of fast fashion products, so the factor is called the *Mass appeal of fast fashion brands.* The last factor identified is the variables related to the personnel of fast fashion stores, so the last factor is called *Dissatisfaction with Personnel.*

14. Table: Grouping the opinion variables into factors

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fast fashion contaminates the environment.	,843					
Fast fashion exploits labor in less developed countries.	,782					
Fast fashion stimulates over-consumption.	,719					
In general, in fast fashion advertising the music is annoying.		,830				
In general, in fast fashion advertising the music is loud.		,813				
In general, fast fashion advertising has a bad message.		,597				
In general, the fast fashion advertising is provocative.		,489				
I feel good in fast fashion products.			, 870			
Fast fashion makes it easy to express my personality.			,848			
A Fast fashion products are cheap.				,851		
Fast fashion products have good value for money				,791		
Fast fashion products are similar to products from other brands.					,801	
Styles look like copies of luxury brands.					,573	
There are only a few salespeople available.						,854
Salespeople at stores are kind and helpful.						-,638

Source: Own construction with SPSS

Then K-means cluster analysis was used to classify the respondents into a total of 7 clusters as follows (15. Table):

15. Table: Final cluster centers

	Cluster						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
globalnegativeperception	-,55824	*-1,14900*	,70680	*,71918*	,27286	,32681	-,11512
problemwithads	*1,40327*	*-,79960*	,30698	-,21009	,17495	,13470	-,54669
identityexpression	,27567	-,09893	-1,37088	,54911	-,93939	*,62383*	,18974
favourableprice	-,19517	-,23071	,72414	-,70902	*-,96174*	,29654	*,76499*
massappeal	,35743	-,47146	*-,61042*	-,53293	*,86773*	-,17446	,64758
dissatisfactionwithpersonnel	-,43955	,30313	-,40910	*-,70422*	,60998	*1,33537*	-,47696

Source: Own construction with SPSS

Cluster 1: Respondents, who are the most critical of fast fashion advertisement – 64 members

Of all the clusters, the first cluster expressed the most, that they have problems with advertising of fast fashion brands (1.40327), as the name of the cluster refers to it. Members of this cluster are less likely to have a negative perception of fast fashion companies (-.55824) or to be dissatisfied with personnel (-.43955). The group is less likely to be characterized as perceiving the styles of fast fashion products as mass appeal (.35743) and less likely to be characterized as they have a problem with expressing their personality with fast fashion products (.27567). Group members are only slightly critical of the prices of fast fashion products (-,19517).

Cluster 2: Respondents, who are at least critical of fast fashion brands related to environmental and social problems – 73 members

Compared to the other clusters, members of cluster 2 are the least likely to have a negative perception of fast fashion companies (-1.14900) and to have problems with fast fashion advertising (-.79960), but are slightly dissatisfied with the spersonnel in fast fashion

stores (.30313). The cluster is not characterised by a tendency to describe the styles of fast fashion products as mass appeal (-,47146), but they are also somewhat critical of the prices of fast fashion products (-,19517). This cluster is only slightly characterized by the fact, that they would have problems expressing their personality with fast fashion products (-,09893).

Cluster 3: Respondents, who mostly protect their identity – 53 members

This group is the most likely to be said to protect their identity, as they are the most strongly expressed among the clusters in terms of not being able to express their identity through fast fashion products (-1.37088), but the least likely to think that the styles of these products are mass appeal (-.61042), so the fear of identity is not due to the mass-produced nature of the products. Of the factors examined, the group is characterised by a negative global perception of fast fashion companies (0.70918) and a positive perception of the prices of fast fashion products (0.72414). *In terms of purchase frequency, 33.93% of brand avoiders (respondents who rarely or never buy fast fashion products) belong to this cluster.*

Cluster 4: Respondents, who the strongest criticize 78 members

The cluster is not critical for all factors, but for those factors where they are, fast fashion brands, companies and retailers are heavily criticised by the group members. Among the clusters, cluster 4 is the cluster with the most negative perception of fast fashion companies (.71918), dissatisfaction with personnel (-.70422) and also typical the criticism of the price of fast fashion products (-.70902). Despite this criticism, the group members feel good in fast fashion products (,54911), but are less likely to perceive the styles of fast fashion products as mass appeal (-,53293). Group members are only slightly likely to have a problem with fast fashion advertising (-,21009).

Cluster 5: The main criticizers – 46 members

Cluster 5 can be best described as the main critics of fast fashion brands. They are more likely to have a negative global perception of fast fashion brands (.27286) and to have a

problem with fast fashion advertising (.17495). They are much more likely to be dissatisfied with the personnel in the stores (.60998) and very likely to perceive the styles fast fashion products as mass appeal (.86773). They also have a problem with not being able to express their personality with fast fashion products (-.93939) and are the most critical of all clusters in terms of the price of fast fashion products (-.96174). *In terms of purchase frequency, 41.3% of brand avoiders belong to this cluster.*

Cluster 6: The respondents, who are principally dissatisfied with personnel – 73 members

In the case of Cluster 6 is the most typical the dissatisfaction with personnel in fast fashion stores (1.33537). In addition, this cluster stands out from the others in that they are the most likely to think that with fast fashion products is easy to express their identity (.62383). They are slightly more critical of the negative global perception of fast fashion, than cluster 5 (.32681), but compared to the same cluster, they are less likely to have a problem with fast fashion advertising (.13470). Nor can cluster members be said to have a strong tendency to describe the styles of fast fashion brands as mass appeal (-,17446). *In terms of frequency of purchase, 93.2% of those who buy fast fashion brands (respondents who regularly or always buy fast fashion brands) belong to this cluster.*

Cluster 7: The respondents, who perceive the prices of the fast fashion products as most favourable – 90 members

Compared to the other clusters, the members of cluster 7 rate the prices of fast fashion products most favourably (,76499). Compared to the other clusters, they were the most likely to express that the style fast fashion products are mass appeal (.64758), after cluster 5. The members of this cluster did not tend to have problems with fast fashion advertising (-,54669) or personnel (-47696). Nor can the group be said to strongly express their personality with fast fashion products (,18974). *In terms of frequency of purchase, 95.6% of respondents who buy fast fashion brands (those who regularly or always buy fast fashion brands) belong to this cluster.*

6.5 Examining the brand avoidance behaviour of Generation Z

The aim of this subsection is to analyse the brand avoidance behaviour of Generation Z members using the extended model of Knittel et al.'s (2016). The results are presented and published in Vol. 51 No. 5 (2020) the journal Budapest Management Review.

In the sample, 19% of respondents said that they rarely or never buy these products, and I based my analysis of the avoidance behaviour of fast fashion brands on their feedback. Demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in 16. Table.

16. Table: Demographic characteristics of the sample

Demographics		N=92
Gender	Male	44 (48%)
	Female	48 (52%)
Habitation	Capital city	42 (46%)
	Town	38 (41%)
	Village	12 (13%)
Disposable net income/month/person	0-20.000 HUF	15 (16%)
	21.000-40.000 HUF	19 (21%)
	41.000-60.000 HUF	24 (26%)
	61.000-80.000 HUF	8 (9%)
	81.000-100.000 HUF	9 (10%)
	101.000-120.000 HUF	5 (5%)
	121.000-140.000 HUF	1 (1%)
	Above 141.000 HUF	11 (12%)

Source: Own construction

The sample is not representative related to habitation: majority of the respondents live in the capital city or in towns and has a better access to fast fashion products. Disposable net income of respondents has positive skewness (the value of the skewness is 0.854), therefore they cannot afford complete brand avoidance in its strict meaning. There were only 9 respondents who reported to never buy fast fashion products.

6.5.1 Testing hypotheses on brand avoidance behaviour

Based on previous research results (Lee et al. 2009a, 2009b, Kim et al. 2013 and Knittel et al. 2016), a total of 29 variables have been identified for the 5 main brand avoidance categories. Mean values for all variables are illustrated by Figure 1 and Figure 2, related to each category.

Figure 1 incudes the categories of experiential, identity, moral and deficit value avoidance for all brand avoiders (N=92). Validity and reliability of these categories was tested previously by Kim et al. (2013).
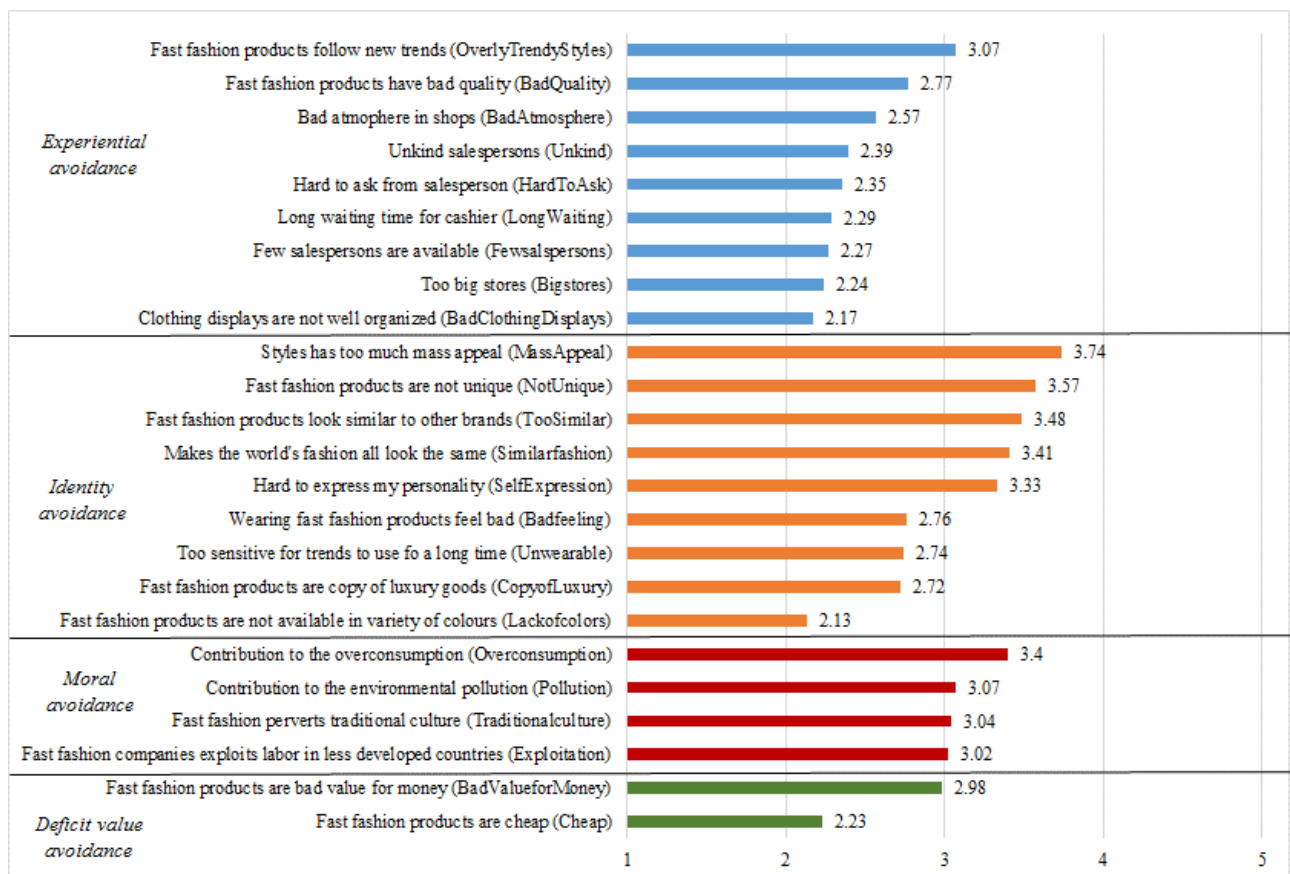
17. Figure: Mean values to the question: "How do the following statements – related to fast fashion brands – affect your brand avoidance behaviour?" (1= not at all, 5=very strongly) N=92

Source: Own construction

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The strength of main brand avoidance categories in brand avoidance behaviour of the sample can be explained through the total average scores for each category. Moral brand avoidance variables received the highest average score (3.19), exerting the strongest influence on brand avoidance behaviour of respective respondents. Within this category, contribution of fast fashion companies to overconsumption seems to bother respondents most (3.4).

Hypothesis H6 was related to this main category, i.e. that moral brand avoidance is more than moderate importance. Given that the mean value for the moral brand avoidance variables was 3.19, I accept hypothesis H6.

The most influential patterns affecting brand avoidance behaviour of respondents are mass appeal, not unique feature and same or similar look of fast fashion products, followed by the concern that it is hard to express one's personality through those products (3.33).

The mean value for all variables related to identity brand avoidance was 3.14, while the overall mean value for all variables related to moral brand avoidance was 3.19, so considering this result alone, I reject hypothesis H5, i.e., identity brand avoidance cannot be said to be the most important brand avoidance behaviour related to fast fashion brands. It is important to mention that within the category of *identity avoidance*, average responses to variables express a range of "slight" to "strong" (but not "very strong") influence on respondents' brand avoidance. Difference between the highest and the lowest average score is significant.

Within the respondents' brand avoidance behaviour, the four largest average values related to identity-related variables, so even if identity brand avoidance does not appear to be the most significant variable based on the average values for all variables in a given category, there are four variables that have the strongest impact on brand avoidance behaviour. In addition, the number of variables included in each brand avoidance category varies, so conclusions can be drawn with great care.

Within *deficit value avoidance*, the aspect of bad value for money seemed to have higher distracting power from purchase than low price.

Experiential avoidance variables – including store-related features, personnel and product quality – are reported to have the *lowest* influence on brand avoidance behaviour in the sample (average score was 2.49) and only the average value for the effect of trend following is above 3 (3.07), I accept hypothesis H4, i.e., within the fast fashion brand avoidance behaviour, experiential brand avoidance is of less than moderate importance.

The low average value of experiential avoidance can be explained by the research results of Gabrielli et al. (2013) who identified the motivational factors behind buying fast fashion products. Main reasons appeared to be trying something different from the usual style and refreshing the wardrobe. In both cases, expectations towards fast fashion products proved to be low, decreasing the probability of experiential brand avoidance. Further explanation may stem from the value proposition of fast fashion which is fashionable clothing at accessible price (Caro & de Albéniz 2014). As price is often regarded as an indicator of quality (Hofmeister-Tóth, 2006 p.173), lower price may lead to lower quality expectations, which can also decrease the probability of experiential brand avoidance.

Advertising related brand avoidance (see 18. Figure) was tested after a control question which asked whether the respondent has ever seen any kind of fast fashion brand advertising which resulted in a lower number of respondents (N=72).
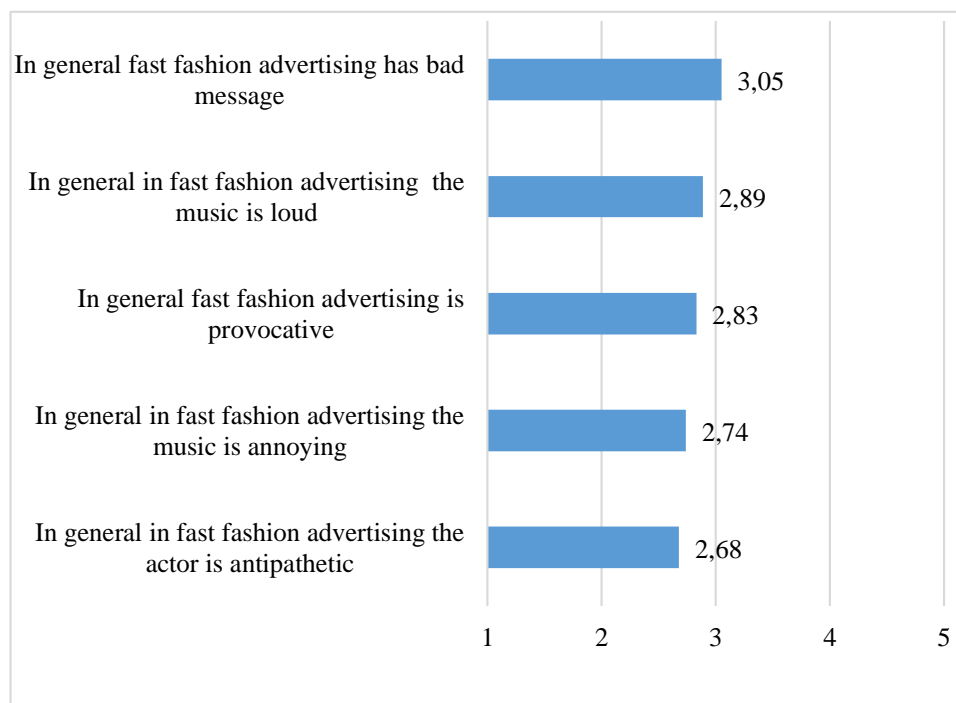
18. Figure: Mean values to the question:"How do the following statements - related to fast fashion advertising - affect your brand avoidance behaviour?" (1= not at all, 5=very strongly) N=72

Source: Own construction

Since reliability for advertising related statements has not been tested before, the value of Cronbach alpha had to be calculated in this research (as suggested by Füstös, 2009).

According to the results, α=0.811, which is in the recommended interval of reliability from 0.7 to 0.9 (Nunnally (1978), cited by Panayides, 2013). Deleting any of the variables did not result in higher Cronbach alpha value.

Based on the results of Knittel et al. (2016), I conducted an analysis of advertising brand avoidance behaviour on a reduced sample (N=72) (18. Figure). Based on the mean of the values for the variables examined, it can be concluded, that none of the advertising-related variables strongly influence the brand avoidance behaviour of the respondents. Hypothesis H7 is related to this main category of brand avoidance. According to the results, with an average value of 2.61 for the advertising-related brand avoidance variables and only the mean of the responses to the message statement being slightly above 3 (3.05), I accept hypothesis H7, i.e.: within the fast fashion brand avoidance behaviour, advertisement related brand avoidance is of less than moderate importance.

6.5.2 Multidimensional scaling for interpreting brand avoidance variables

Beyond linking brand avoidance variables to the main categories, suggested by the literature, the aim was to further analyse and show graphically how those variables actually build the behaviour of respondents. Hence, we used multidimensional scaling which makes possible to examine the background and hidden structure of the data (Lehota, 2001), by visualising the proximity of variables (their similarity or difference). This method is getting popular in consumer behaviour research (see Laruccia et al. (2011), Mostafa (2015), Zsóka et al. (2013).

The stress factor for the model, describing the model's goodness of fit, was 0.193. There is no agreement in the literature whether this value is acceptable or poor. According to Kruskal (1964, cited by Cox and Cox, 1992), if the stress factor is below 20%, the goodness of fit is poor, while Lehota (2013) argues, that the values of the stress factor in the interval of 0.1 to 0.2 are acceptable and the results can be interpreted.

According to Sturrock and Rocha (2000), the upper bound on the value of the stress factor is 0.324 for 29 variables in two dimensions, so the value of the stress factor is acceptable. Results of the multidimensional scaling are illustrated in 19. Figure. As a result of the method, 8 groups of brand avoidance variables were identified. Variables within those groups represent specific kinds of sensitivity which have to be considered when assessing brand avoidance behaviour of consumers.

Derived Stimulus Configuration

Euclidean distance model
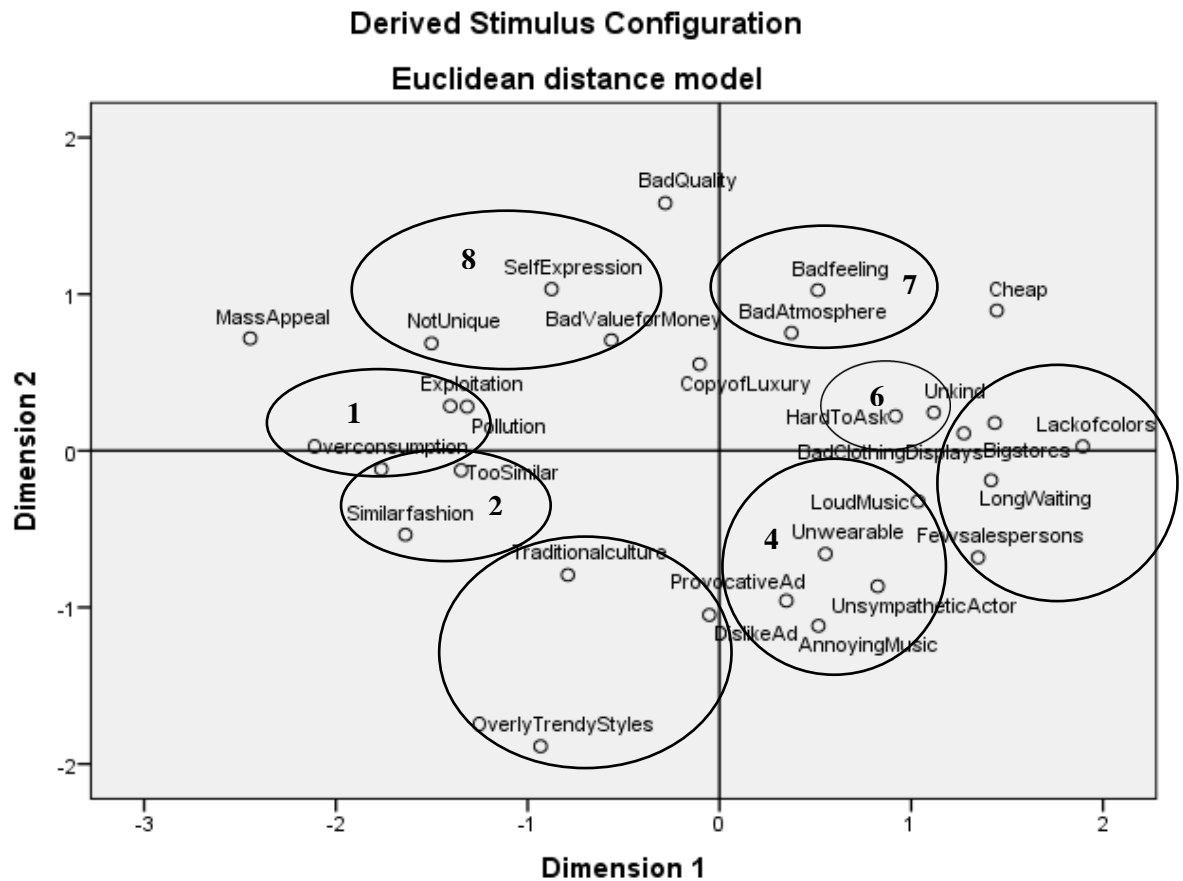
19. Figure: Result of the multidimensional scaling of all brand avoidance variables

Source: Own construction

Group 1 includes variables of moral brand avoidance, expressing *Sensitivity to social and environmental problems*, including contribution of fast fashion companies to overconsumption, to environmental pollution and the exploitation of less developed countries.

Group 2 reflects *Sensitivity to uniformity*, including two variables connected to identity brand avoidance, expressing that fast fashion products are similar to other brands and fast fashion companies make the world's fashion all look the same.

Group 3 illustrates *Sensitivity to values* (in the form of Conservatism versus modernism), consisting of a moral and experiential brand avoidance variable, expressing that fast fashion companies contribute to the loss of traditional culture and the feature of fast fashion products to follow the latest trends.

Group 4 expresses *Sensitivity to communication and wearability,* including almost all variables related to advertising, plus wearability, meaning that the styles of fast fashion products to be too trendy to use for a long time.

Group 5 reflects *Sensitivity to the store concept*, consisting of experiential brand avoidance variables, related to fast fashion stores and staff as well as one identity brand avoidance variable, which expresses that fast fashion products do not have large variety of colours.

Group 6 expresses *Sensitivity to the attitude of the store personnel,* including two experiential brand avoidance variables - which describe the attitude of the personnel in a negative phrasing.

Group 7 reflects *Sensitivity to personal feelings and store atmosphere*, including an identity and an experiential brand avoidance variable, expressing that respondent does not feel good in fast fashion products and the atmosphere is not good in fast fashion stores.

Group 8 reflects *Sensitivity to connect brand value and the product*, including two identity brand avoidance variables and one deficit-value avoidance variable, expressing that fast fashion products are not unique, they make it hard to express someone's personality and they have bad value for money relation.

It is obvious from the results that the sensitivity related grouping of the multidimensional scaling is not completely identical with the original grouping of variables into brand avoidance categories. The reason behind those results lies in human behaviour patterns. Apparently, the sources of brand avoidance (reflected in the 29 variables) play a multifaceted role in the actual behaviour, their importance and influence on brand avoidance vary from respondent to respondent. Sensitivity related grouping expresses how those variables stand together in the brand avoidance behaviour of the sample.

As a verification As I ran a factor analysis on the variables (see Appendix 3) and found some discrepancy between the results of the multidimensional scaling and the factor analysis. This discrepancy is due to the fact, that I did not include all variables in the factor analysis, but those variables, that were included follow a very similar pattern as in the multidimensional scaling.

6.5.3 Cluster analysis of respondents, based on brand avoidance behaviour

Based on brand avoidance variables, a k-means cluster analysis was conducted, in order to classify respondents, according to the main features of their brand avoidance behaviour, during the cluster analysis all the previously introduced variables were used. The appropriate number of clusters was supported by the significance levels in the Anova table, resulting in 3 clusters. Final cluster centers are summarized in 17. Table.

Each involved variable was statistically significant at P<0.05, except for the variable 'BadValueForMoney', however it was statistically significant at P <0.1 (0.093). Taking into account the sample size, this value was regarded as acceptable.

In the following, clusters will be described, based on the initial comprehensive model of brand avoidance and the results of MDS analysis. As demographic variables do not show significant differences in the three clusters, the behaviour of respondents can be exclusively explained by the strength of influence of brand avoidance variables.

17. Table: Final cluster centers

Final Cluster Centers

	Cluster		
	1	2	3
Cheap	1.78	2.40	*2.60*
BadQuality	2.33	2.88	*3.44*
BadValueforMoney	2.78	*3.35*	2.92
OverlyTrendyStyles	2.26	3.15	*3.88*
Unwearable	1.93	2.93	*3.52*
Bigstores	1.85	*2.73*	2.00
BadClothingDisplays	1.78	*2.68*	1.76
LongWaiting.	1.78	*2.95*	1.96
BadAtmosphere	2.00	*3.10*	2.52
HardToAsk	1.74	*3.03*	2.20
Unkind	1.67	*2.93*	2.40
Fewsalespersons	1.67	*2.98*	2.00
Lackofcolors	1.70	*2.55*	2.04
SelfExpression	2.37	3.70	*4.00*
Badfeeling	2.11	*3.23*	3.16
NotUnique	2.37	3.85	*4.56*
TooSimilar	2.33	3.85	*428*
CopyofLuxury	1.89	2.95	*3.44*
MassAppeal	2.67	3.95	*4.76*
Overconsumption	2.63	3.73	*3.96*
Pollution	2.41	*3.43*	3.40
Exploitation	2.59	*3.35*	3.16
Similarfashion	2.19	*3.80*	4.36
Traditionalculture	2.07	*3.65*	3.44
DislikeAd	2.35	*3.79*	2.16
ProvocativeAd	2.18	*3.42*	2.28
UnsymphateticActor	1.82	*3.31*	2.30
Annoyingmusic	2.07	*3.29*	2.11
Loudmusic	2.13	*3.55*	2.21

Source: Own construction

Cluster 1: Least committed brand avoiders, 27 members

From 17. Table it is obvious that none of the variables have high average scores in this cluster. The total average score of all variables is 2.28. Most important (even if not too strong) aspects in the brand avoidance of the least commited brand avoider group are bad value for money and the mass appeal of fast fashion products, followed by moral aspects. Least influential aspects are connected to fast fashion stores and to the personnel. Regarding results of the MDS analysis, Cluster 1 does not show strong sensitivity in any categories.

Cluster 2: Most committed brand avoiders, 40 members

As opposed to Cluster 1, the total average scores of all variables is 3.5 in Cluster 2, showing a significantly larger importance of brand avoidance aspects in fast fashion related behaviour of the 40 cluster members. Two third of variables take their highest average score in this cluster, compared to the other two clusters. While considering most brand avoidance sources as important, identity related statements seemed to be the most relevant features in the brand avoidance behaviour of Cluster 2 (even if they take their highest value in Cluster 3), including the problem styles have too much mass appeal in case of fast fashion products, they are not unique and are too similar to other brands. The group of most committed brand avoiders criticize the message of the advertising and the contribution of fast fashion to overconsumption. Least important aspects are lack of colour availability and the low price of fast fashion products.

Compared to results of the MDS, members of Cluster 2 strongly expressed strong sensitivity related to brand value and product patterns, uniformity, communication and wearability, followed by the sensitivity to social and environmental problems, values, personal feelings and the attitude of the store personnel.

Cluster 3 - Brand avoiders, who most protect their identity, 25 members

The total average scores of all variables is also relatively high in this Cluster (3.22) and 1/3 of variables take their highest value in this group. Variables of identity avoidance are absolutely prevailing: members of Cluster 3 strongly expressed their fear of

deindividuation, they criticize fast fashion products for having too much mass appeal, being not unique, making the world's fashion all look the same, being too similar to other brands. This group considers it hard to express personality with fast fashion products. Least important factors in the brand avoidance behaviour of Cluster 3 – similarly to Cluster 1 –are connected to stores and the personnel.

Related to MDS results, members of Cluster 3 expressed strong sensitivity to brand value and product patterns, uniformity, as well as social and environmental problems, followed by sensitivity to values, communication and wearability as well as personal feelings and store atmosphere.

6.6 Identifying the reasons of brand avoidance based on online shopping environment

Identifying the brand avoidance factors that arise during online shopping is not negligible for the analysis of brand avoidance. During the research I analysed the leading companies in the clothing industry, such as H&M and the Inditex group, which have the most online shops according to their official websites. The research involved analysing 146 responses through content analysis, which resulted the identification of the main reasons, that can lead to brand avoidance. Among the fast fashion brands, besides H&M and C&A, I looked at the four brands within the Inditex group that have the most online shops according to their official websites: Zara, Massimo Dutti, Bershka and Pull&Bear. There were some cases, where store-related negative experiences, social problems associated with fast fashion brands (child employment) or poor quality of products led to brand avoidance, but these factors were not the focus of the research. There were individuals, who decided to stop ordering from a brand's online store because of a negative experience of shopping online, but I did not consider this as brand avoidance either, because the decision to stop shopping online does not necessarily mean, that they will stay away from fast fashion stores. For this reason, I applied and analysed only those responses, in which is clearly expressed, that the individual would never shop again from the fast fashion brands in question.

Such expressions were for example:

"I will never buy from them again""Never again"... (the name of the brand) has lost a loyal customer"; "I know I will never shop from them again"; "I will never shop from them in their stores and especially online"; "I would rather take my money elsewhere"; "The first and last time I shop at (name the brand); "The last time I shop here"; "I have finished shopping at (name the brand in question); "I will not spend a penny more at (name the brand).

On Trustpilot product evaluation forum brands have the opportunity to respond to accusations against them. Of the fast fashion companies surveyed, only Bershka and Massimo Dutti took advantage of this opportunity to provide some feedback.

After filtering the responses, my sample consisted of a total of 146 responses, in some cases I had difficulty interpreting the comments, because people sometimes used slang, did not write feedback according to the grammar rules, so interpreting some of the responses was challenging. Due to the exploratory nature of the research, I did not predefine the categories, but I considered as coding units the word combinations and phrases, that named the problems related to online ordering within the feedback. During the content analysis, 8 categories were identified, which play a role in brand avoidance behaviour.

a) Technical issues

For the online ordering process to run smoothly and end with a successful purchase, the underlying system must ensure continuous and trouble-free operation. The website must be able to easily place an order, process the order, ensure that different billing and delivery addresses can be specified and that the payment of the order can be made smoothly. Other technical issues may be, that the coupon code for discounts and free delivery sent out in the newsletter does not work or that the availability of products does not reflect the actual status. Technical issues are not limited to problems with the website, but may also include the incorrect functioning of the applications related to the brand:

"Terrible website"; "Lot of problem with website"; "Their website says my address is wrong"; "My credit card was declined due to an error called RM2"; "The coupon code for 25% discount and free shipping.... does not work"; "After multiple attempts using multiple browsers, I managed to place the order"; "The app is...poor".

b) Provision of incomplete or misleading information

The received feedbacks suggest, that incomplete or misleading information can also be a problem during the online shopping process. Incomplete information may relate to the curier, the delivery date of the product or information on how to return the product. The misleading information is related to the delivery or same-day delivery:

"There was no information at all about which parcel delivery company is doing the delivery"; "I don't see any information about the parcel delivery company"; "Very misleading the same day delivery option"; "It's been 3 days (since order) and I haven't received any information about my order"; "(After the failed delivery) I didn't receive any

card to contact them (parcel delivery company)"; "No information about the return process".

c) Difficulties at product delivery;

I have included in this category any problem with the delivery, that makes the delivery process itself complicated. Such a problem could be, for example, if the delivery is too slow compared to the information given in advance. Some fast fashion brands offer the possibility of next-day delivery for an extra charge, and if this is not happened, the failure is also included in this category:

"Too slow"; "Delivery took several weeks"; "Delivery took two months"; "I paid for next day delivery - the dress never arrived.

d) Non-delivered goods

As a result of content analysis, in the case of fast fashion brands it may happen, that the order is not received at all. In this category, terms were included, which indicated that the order had not been received:

"I never received my order"; "They sent my order to the wrong place"; "My online order never arrived"; " The top I ordered from Zara never arrived";

e) Delivered product is not in accordance with the expected one

This category included terms, that implied that consumers were not receive the product they expected. When shopping online, I interpreted expectations as the product being the right size, the right colour, free of defects and without clothing security tags, so terms that indicated that these expectations were not met were also included in this category. Expressions were also included in this category if the products were not delivered as ordered or if the order was incomplete, i.e. if a product was missing from the order. All of these problems can lead to brand avoidance:

"Bershka sent me the wrong size"; "The sent me a products in the wrong colour"; "They sent me a sandal, which is one size bigg"; "The zip on the skirt didn't work"; "They sent me a product with clothing security tags"; "They sent me used boots"; "They sent me two right shoes"; "The scarf was a completely different colour to the one I ordered".

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f) Difficulties at product return

It's not just the delivery of the order can be complicated. If the process of returning the unwanted product is complicated, it can also lead to brand avoidance. This category covers these kind of problems. Brands may have different views on the return of products. Some brands offer the possibility to return products ordered online to physical stores. Some fast fashion brands, such as H&M, does not offer this option and at the same time, customers have to pay for the return of the products, which has also been a problem for some customers. However, returning to a physical store can also be a hassle, if the physical store is not close to where the customer lives.

"Terrible return system"; "Returning system... is not flexible"; "They won't let me return the wrong items to H&M's store"; "The return process will probably take longer than a month";"(The brand) doesn't provide free returns"; "They will deduct $4.99 before I return my money"; "I have to waste more money to travel to the nearest store".

g) Inadequate or non-compliant compensation

In the case of any kind of problem with the product, the refund or resend of the product will be defined in the company's refund policy. I have included in this category the phrases and expressions, in which customers have expressed the fact of inadequate compensation or the total lack of it. Inadequate compensation mainly referred to the refund of products:

"They didn't offer to resend the products"; "They only refunded the price of the product, which was not worn" (one defective product was also returned); "They didn't refund the full amount";" The value of the products was not refunded properly"; "The refund invoice was for £150.84, 2 days later they sent £9.99 to my account"; "I returned 3 products but only two were refunded"

The feedbacks also showed, that there were cases, where the package did not contain one ordered poduct, the consumer returned an item of clothing, and the company refunded only the returned one.

I have also included in this category those cases, where the value of the product was refunded, but in the form of gift card:

The total lack of compensation was expressed in the following terms:

"No refund for the defective product"; "No refund"; "No promised compensation received."

h) Poor customer service

I have included in this category the expressions related to the customer service and the inadequate attitude of the staff. I also included in this category problems related to the slowness or non-response of the customer service or the failure to keep their promises, mainly related to the callbacks of customers. Customer services of fast fashion brands have been negatively labelled, among others, with the following comments:

"terrible customer service"; "horrible customer service"; "bad customer service"; "exceptionally rude customer service"; "customer service is disappointing"; "the worst customer service"

The feedback was not only about the customer service, but also about the attitude of the customer service staff:

"the lady I spoke to was rude"; "the customer service assistant was unhelpful"; "...extremely aggressive"; "the customer service assistant... did not let me finish my sentence"; "the customer service assistant treated me like a thief".

Compared to experiential brand avoidance in the offline space, the following parallels can be identified with some modification for experiential brand avoidance in the online space (18. Table). Poor performance in the offline space is related to brand promise. In my view, the extended brand promise in the online space can also be seen as the fact that products are delivered to the customer based on an order placed in the online shop.

18. Table: Comparison of offline and online experiential brand avoidance

Offline experiential avoidance	Online experiential avoidance
• Poor performance	• The delivered product is not in accordance with the expected one

• Hassle factor	• Difficulties at product delivery and retur • Non-delivered goods • Inadequate or non-compliant compensation
• Store environment	• Technical issues • Poor customer service • provision of incomplete or misleading information

Source: Comparing the results of Lee et al.'s (2009a, 2009b) and own results

The inconvenience related to the offline experiantial avoidance includes several inconveniences in the online space. Such inconvenience is related to the delivery and return of the product. Some fast fashion brands have store policies, that do not allow customers to return products purchased online to the store. For these brands, returning the product by post or courier is the only way to return the product, which is not only inconvenient, but also requires a financial outlay from the customer. Non-delivered order can also be a source of inconvenience in terms of the time the consumer has to take to find out from either the fast fashion company's customer service or the courier service what has happened to his order. In addition, inadequate or non-compliant compensation can also be a source of inconvenience.

The shopping environment is replaced by the webshop in the online space. For consumers to be able to shop without problems, it is essential, that the system behind the webshop can work without disruption. In fast fashion stores, we do not necessarily expect to be surrounded by personnel, we have learned to serve ourselves. In the online space, customer service is even more pronounced because of the greater vulnerability, and innapropritate customer service can be a source of brand avoidance just as it is in the case of offline space. Incomplete or misleading information is not just a feature of the online space. In the research, incomplete or misleading information about delivery or returns in an online shop can also be a source of brand avoidance.

7. SUMMARY

Anti-consumption is an increasingly prominent area of research: what consumers do not want to consume, buy and why, is as exciting a research question as what they want. The aim of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of one type of anti-consumption behaviour, brand avoidance. The study contributes to through understanding of this behaviour through a number of findings.

7.1 Summary of results and conclusions of opinions on fast fashion products, companies and advertising

a) Reflection on the main characteristics of fast fashion

Caro & de Albeníz (2014b) defined fast fashion as a business strategy, where the value proposition are fashionability and availability of the products. In the survey, the value of fashionability was supported by the high mean value (4,52) of the variable "fast fashion products follow the latest trends", while availability was not tested directly, only through the statement regarding low price of those products, where the mean score was much lower (2,96). In fast fashion related literature, *price* often plays a key role. In the research of Watson and Yan (2013), respondents used the low price of fast fashion products as an argument to avoid bad conscience and buyer's remorse. According to the results of Gabrielli et al. (2013), respondents associated fast fashion with low price first when defining the phrase. In the research, the low mean score of low price as an attribute of fast fashion products can be explained with demography, especially with low monthly income of the sample. In the research of Gabrielli et al. (2013), 35% of the respondents belonged to the low, 45% to the middle, and 25% to the high income category. In the sample, the vast majority of respondents (83%) have less than 100.000 HUF per month to manage their lives. In the light of low income, the otherwise low priced fast fashion products can be perceived as not cheap.

In the research of Gabrielli et al. (2013), after low price, respondents associated the phrase "fast fashion" with "acceptable quality of fast fashion products", while the respondents in the sample where not that much convinced, at least not about the "good" quality of fast

fashion products (mean value is 3,26). Connected to the durability of these products, Taplin (2014) pointed to the statement of Zara about their products claiming that they cannot be worn more than 7 times, and to meet the emerging demand the brand creates two lines per week.

Even if low price and good quality received lower scores of agreement in the sample, the statement about fast fashion products provide good value for money received a higher mean score (3,42). This outcome is in line with the results of Gabrielli et al. (2013), where the participants of the focus groups under age 25, and age between 35 and 45 had low expectations towards fast fashion products which led to better evaluation of those products. The explanation lies in two factors: (1) the respondents do not often purchase fast fashion products and do not intend to wear them for a long time, and (2) respondents accept the low quality of fast fashion products because they do not think they are produced to be durable.

Despite the popular definition of fast fashion as a copy of luxury goods (see Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013; Carey & Cervellon, 2014; Cortez et al. 2014), students of the sample do not strongly agree with this statement (the mean score was 2,82). However, several articles contain comparison of luxury goods and fast fashion garments, undoubtedly supporting the definition of the above researchers: fast fashion companies use the catwalk styles of luxury brands as an inspiration source (see in subchapter 4.2.3).

b) The attitudes of fast fashion buyers and fast fashion avoiders

One of the main findings of the dissertation, is that only in the case of few variables are statistically significant differences between the fast fashion buyers and fast fashion avoiders. As a reflection to the RQ1, based on the statements, where is statistically significant difference between fast fashion avoiders and buyers can be predicted which consumer will become brand avoider.

An interesting finding is that the environmental and social impacts of fast fashion companies are largely perceived similarly by brand buyers and brand avoiders, so it cannot be drawn any conclusions in relation which consumer will become brand avoider, but as a result of deeper analysis it turns out, that brand avoiders reveal that - moral brand avoidance, which focuses on these issues - is a major factor in their avoidance behaviour,

while fast fashion buyers still consume products from these companies despite their critical opinions.

This is also true for identity brand avoidance, where fast fashion buyers and brand avoiders in the sample have significantly different attitudes on some identity-related variables, but very similar attitudes on others. However, the same variables play a significant role in the brand avoidance behaviour of brand avoiders, while fast fashion customers are not deterred from buying by their own critical opinion. Fast fashion brand avoiders are not more than moderate critical of fast fashion brands for all variables, and are not necessarily more critical of fast fashion brands than those, who regularly or always choose to buy products from these brands. Thus, in addition to differences of opinion, it is also useful to examine the importance of the fast fashion features count during the shopping process.

c) Aspects influencing the purchase frequency of fast fashion products

According to the Pearson correlation coefficient the strongest positive relationship is between purchase frequency and the variable *I feel good in fast fashion products.* The purchase frequency is also positively influenced if the respondents can express their personality by fast fashion products, if the actor in the advertisement is sympathetic, if the products are good value for money, follow the newest trends, cheap and unique and it is also relevant, if it is easy to get help from salespeople. The strongest negative relationship is among purchase frequency and two advertisement related variables, namely *Fast fashion advertisement has bad message* and *Fast fashion advertisement is annoying.* The purchase frequency is also negatively influenced if the respondents feel that the fast fashion stores are too big.

The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient is also confirmed by linear regression. The variable I feel good in fast fashion products explains 19,2% of the purchase frequency. According to the results of the decision tree the purchasing frequency is also influenced by how the prices of fast fashion products are favourable. At the same time the respondents' purchasing frequency – who fully agreed with the statement I feel good in fast fashion products – is influenced by their gender.

The aim of the research was also to group the opinion variables with factor analysis. During the factor analysis 6 factors were identified: *Negative global judgement, Problems*

related to advertisement, Identity expression, Favourable price, Mass appeal and *Dissatisfaction related to personnel.* As a next step grouping of the respondents was made with cluster analysis based on opinion factors.

As a result the group names are the following:

- Respondents, who are the most critical of fast fashion advertisement;
- Respondents, who are at least critical of fast fashion brands related to environmental and social problems;
- Respondents, who mostly protect their identity;
- Respondents, who the strongest criticize;
- The main criticizers;
- The respondents, who are principally dissatisfied with personnel;
- The respondents, who perceive the prices of the fast fashion products as most favourable.

The majority of the brand avoiders belong to the cluster named *The main criticizers,* which is followed by the cluster *Respondents, who mostly protect their identity.* The majority of the fast fashion buyers is belong to the cluster named *The respondents, who perceive the prices of the fast fashion products as most favourable* and interestingly it follows the cluster named *The respondents, who are principally dissatisfied with personnel.*

To conclude this sub-chapter, 19. Table summarises the results of the hypothesis test related to this topic discussed above.

19. Table: Summary of hypothesis testing in the case of RQ1

Hypotheses	Results
H1: The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion is significantly different.	Partially confirmed

H1a: *The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion products is significantly different.*	Partially confirmed by the following variables: *Fast fashion products are cheap.* *Fast fashion products are good value for money.* *Fast fashion products follow the newest trends.* *Fast fashion products are available in variety of colours.* *Fast fashion makes it easy to express my personality.* *I feel good in fast fashion products.* *Fast fashion products are unique.* *Styles are too trendy to use for a long time.*
H1b: *The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion stores and personnel is significantly different.*	Partially confirmed by the following variables: *Fast fashion stores are too big.* *Fast fashion stores have a good atmosphere.* *It is easy to get help from salespeople.* *There are only a few salespeople available.*
H1c: *The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion companies' environmental and social effects is significantly different.*	Rejected
H1d: *The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion advertisement is significantly different.*	Confirmed
H2: *Fast fashion avoiders are more critical of fast fashion brands than those, who regularly or always buy fast fashion products.*	Rejected
H3: *Fast fashion avoiders criticize fast fashion brands more than moderate.*	Rejected

Source: Own construction

7.2 Summary of the results related to brand avoidance behaviour

For this part of the analysis, based on the purchase frequency I separated the sample in order to gain a deeper insight into brand avoidance behaviour. In the case of the brand avoiders, the aim was to examine how important are the opinion variables in their brand avoidance behaviour.

Variables associated with experiential brand avoidance, such the store, personnel and product quality related variables are found to have the least impact on respondents' purchase frequency. In the case of identity brand avoidance, the most significant effects on respondents' identity brand avoidance behaviour were the mass-market nature and the lack of uniqueness of the products, the similarity of fast fashion products to other brands and the lack of self-expression.

It is important to note that in the case of identity brand avoidance, some variables had a significant effect on the brand avoidance behaviour of the respondents, while some variables had a less significant effect, thus influencing the results of the hypothesis testing. Related to the second research question, within brand avoidance behaviour, moral brand avoidance and identity brand avoidance had the strongest impact on the brand avoidance behaviour of the respondents.

These results provide answers to the main research question of the dissertation. However, an important contribution of the dissertation is to identify – based on the brand avoidance related variables – sensitivity groups related to fast fashion brands. Despite the fact that the literature on brand avoidance dates back less than 10 years, researchers have identified a number of reasons, that may lead to brand avoidance. However, I have not found any research that examines how these reasons are linked. The 8 sensitivity groups, which play a role in fast fashion brand avoidance are the following: *(a) Sensitivity to social and environmental problems; (b) Sensitivity to uniformity; (c) Sensitivity to values; (d) Sensitivity to communication and wearability; (e) Sensitivity to the store concept; (f) Sensitivity to the attitude of the store personnel; (g) Sensitivity to personal feelings and store atmosphere and (h) Sensitivity to connect brand value and the product*. The sensitivity groups are not completely identical with the original grouping of variables into brand avoidance categories, groups express how those variables stand together in the brand avoidance behaviour

The brand avoiders were grouped by using k-mean cluster analysis into 3 different clusters. The first group is named *Least commmitted brand avoiders.* None of the variables have high average scores in this cluster. Most important (even if not too strong) aspects in the brand avoidance of the least committed brand avoider group are bad value for money and the mass appeal of fast fashion products, followed by moral aspects. Least influential aspects are connected to fast fashion stores and to the personnel. The second

group is named *The most committed brand avoiders*. Two third of variables take their highest average score in this cluster. While considering most brand avoidance sources as important, identity related statements seemed to be the most relevant features in the brand avoidance behaviour of this cluster. The third cluster is named *Brand avoiders, who most protect their identity*. In this cluster variables of identity avoidance are absolutely prevailing.

To conclude this subsection, 20. Table summarizes the results of the hypothesis test related to brand avoidance in this thesis.

20. Table: Summary of hypothesis testing in the case of RQ2

Hypotheses	Results
H4: *Within the fast fashion brand avoidance behaviour, experiential brand avoidance is of less than moderate importance.*	Confirmed
H5: *Within the fast fashion brand avoidance behaviour, indentity brand avoidance is the most important brand avoidance category.*	Partially confirmed, if not only based on the average values of the main brand avoidance categories
H6: *Within the fast fashion brand avoidance behaviour, moral brand avoidance is of more than moderate importance.*	Confirmed
H7: *Within the fast fashion brand avoidance behaviour, advertisement related brand avoidance is of less than moderate importance.*	Confirmed

Source: Own construction

7.3 Identifying the reasons of experiential brand avoidance related to the online space

Related to the third research question, the paper also identified the reasons for brand avoidance in online shopping environment with the aim of extending the model of Knittel et al. (2016). In total, 8 reasons were identified, which lead to brand avoidance:

- Technical issues;

- Provision of incomplete or misleading information;

- Difficulties at product delivery;

- Non-delivered goods;

- The delivered product is not in accordance with the expected one;

- Difficulties at product return

- Inadequate or non-compliant compensation;

- Poor customer service.

The identification of these brand avoidance reasons related to the online space is linked to the factors, that influence customer satisfaction when shopping online. The satisfaction factor related to the category to *Technical issues* is *Website security/reliability*. Although not defined as a satisfaction factor for offline-goods, the availability of a website on multiple platforms is also covered by this category as an aspect influencing the outcome of online shopping (He & Bach, 2014). These problems related to the function of the system have been reported to lead to brand avoidance. Providing the *appropriate depth of information* is not only a factor influencing the outcome of online shopping, but also an important aspect influencing satisfaction (He & Bach, 2014; Shanthi & Kannaiah, 2015; Guo et al., 2012). The literature focuses mainly on product information as a factor of satisfaction, but incomplete or misleading information can also include delivery or return of products. The lack of this information can also be a reason for brand avoidance. The category of *Difficulties at product delivery* coincides with the delivery efficiency identified in the satisfaction factors and fast delivery time as a factor influencing online shopping outcomes (Guo et al., 2012; Alam & Yasin, 2010; Shanthi & Kannaiah; 2015).

Reflecting the thoughts of Chernatony & Christodoulides (2004) on brand promise, the choice of the right courier service is a key issue, which can be a source of brand avoidance behaviour. The identified category *The delivered product is not in accordance with the expected one* is much broader category, than the quality of the received product as a factor affecting satisfaction does not only include problems related to product quality (Guo et al., 2012).

The online space has its own characteristics compared to the offline space and therefore requires a different approach (Kemény, 2017). During the online shopping process it should be payed close attention to dealing with possible refunds and problems at the end

of the purchase (Kemény, 2017; Lee & Lin, 2005; Parasuraman et al., 2005; Collier & Bienstock, 2006).

An overlap can be identified between the satisfaction factor affecting the purchase of offline-goods in the online space and the categories *Difficulties at product return, Inadequate or non-compliant compensation and Poor customer service.*

Inadequate post-purchase complaint handling is a factor affecting satisfaction, the lack of this factor can lead to brand avoidance. Compared to the results of Kemény and Simon (2015), the present research also confirms that perception of quality of customer service was found to be more relevant for product purchases, it was also identified as a brand avoidance reason. A proper customer service not only affects customer satisfaction, but also increases trust in the brand (Chernatony & Christodoulides, 2004).

The identification of brand avoidance reasons related to the online space has made it possible to extend the theoretical model of the reasons behind brand avoidance behaviour (Figure 20). Considering that more and more brands are selling their products in the online space, consumers may not only be more aware of these aspects during the online shopping process, but they may also become more pronounced.

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                        ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                        │       Brand avoidance categories         │
                        └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Experiential brand avoidance – offline space

1. Poor performance
2. Hassle factor
3. Store environment

Experiential brand avoidance – online space

1. Technical issues;
2. Provision of incomplete or misleading information;
3. Difficulties at product delivery;
4. Non-delivered goods;
5. The delivered product is not in accordance with the expected one;
6. Difficulties at product return
7. Inadequate or non-compliant compensation;
8. Poor customer service.

Moral brand avoidance

Country effect

1. Animosity
2. Financial patriotism

Anti-hegemony

1. Monopoly resistance
2. Impersonalisation
3. Corporate irresponsibility

Identity brand avoidance

1. Negative reference group
2. Inauthenticity
3. Deividuation

Deficit value avoidance

1. Unfamiliarity
2. Aesthetic insufficiency
3. Food favoritism

Advertising

1. Content
2. Celebrity endorser
3. Music
4. Response

20. Figure: New theoretical model of brand avoidance

Source: Own construction

7.4 Sciencific and practical significance of the results

This study is the first attempt obseving the attitudes of fast fashion buyers and fast fashion avoiders simultaneously. The main contribution of the study from the scientific point of view, is that between the attitudes of fast fashion buyers and fast fashion avoiders from all the analysed aspects, only in the case of all fast fashion advertisement related variables were identified statistically significant difference. The smallest difference between attitudes of fast fashion buyers and fast fashion avoiders were identified with regard to fast fashion brands' enviromental and social effects, one variable was proven statistically significant difference in particular. Based on the aspects, which are appearing in the study, careful investigation is needed to determine which consumer will become a brand avoider. From the statistically significant attutide related variables can be concluded for this behaviour, however deeper examination is needed in the case of those variables, that show similar opinions to determine how the criticized fast fashion features count during the shopping process. Fast fashion avoiders – compared to those ones, who regularly or always buy fast fashion products – are not more critical regarding to all the analysed aspects, however these aspects could play a significant role in their brand avoidance behaviour.

The main focus of brand avoidance behaviour literature from anti-consumption approach is the determination of the reasons behind brand avoidance; in the dissertation the aspects, which are influencing the purchase frequency of fast fashion products and the correlations between them were also identified. According to the results the most significant aspect in the purchase frequency of fast fashion products is the way consumers feel themselves during wearing these items.

Regarding to brand avoidance behaviour it can be concluded, that based on the average values of the main brand avoidance categories, moral brand avoidance contributes mostly to brand avoidance behaviour of the respondents. However, investigating the variables separately, the highest values were given to identity related variables, this was also supported by the results of cluster analysis.

As mentioned above, the reasons behind brand avoidance behaviour were identified in the literature, however the connection between them has not been investigated so far.

Other additional contribution of the thesis is the determination of 8 sensitivity groups, which play a significant role in fast fashion brand avoidance. The sensitivity groups are not completely identical with the original grouping of variables into brand avoidance categories, groups express how those variables stand together in the brand avoidance behaviour

The pandemic has affected our lives as well as our shopping habits. In the case of fast fashion products it is crucial to know the reasons related to online shopping environment as well. The dissertation also provides an insight into these reasons and by the results of the dissertation it was possible to create a new theoretical model of brand avoidance.

7.5 Limitations and future studies

The current dissertation has several limitations. Data collection was conducted via a web-based online survey and only the students of Corvinus University of Budapest were questioned, which can affect the results.

During the research fast fashion buyers were not asked, why they still buy these products if they are critical of fast fashion brands and companies (especially in relation with fast fashion companies' environmental and social impacts). Thus, it can only be assumed, that the highly criticized features of fast fashion and their relevance is different in the shopping behaviour of fast fashion shoppers and fast fashion brand avoiders. This is one of the limitations of the research: cause and effect connections were not surveyed in this context, only brand avoiders were asked more deeply, the fast fashion buyers were not asked about the importance of the analysed features and their role in their consumer behaviour. For deeper understanding the phenomena it is recommendable to increase the number of respondents, who actively avoid fast fashion brands. The online shopping environment related brand avoidance reasons can be interpreted in the case of fast fashion products, which can be considered as offline-goods according to Francis & White's (2004) classification. As a future research direction for the remaining categories of the classification (2004) it is also recommendable to identify the aspects, which are influencing consumer satisfaction and their role in brand avoidance behaviour. In the dissertation content analysis was only used for the analysis of those feedbacks, which have appeared on the Trustpilot product evaluation forum connected to fast fashion

brands. By analysing more product evaluation forums it is possible to explore more brand avoidance reasons connected to the online shopping environment.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Independent sample t-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
		F	Sig.	t	df			
Fast fashion products are cheap.	Equal variances assumed	23,679	,000	4,284	513	,000	,414	,097
	Equal variances not assumed			3,639	115,807	,000	,414	,114
Fast fashion products have good quality.	Equal variances assumed	5,777	,017	,867	513	,387	,084	,097
	Equal variances not assumed			,766	119,332	,445	,084	,109
Fast fashion products have good value for money	Equal variances assumed	10,647	,001	5,712	513	,000	,578	,101
	Equal variances not assumed			5,943	139,465	,000	,578	,097
Fast fashion products follow the latest trends	Equal variances assumed	13,124	,000	3,649	513	,000	,267	,073
	Equal variances not assumed			2,962	112,276	,004	,267	,090
The style of fast fashion products is too sensitive to trends, you can't wear them for long.	Equal variances assumed	,671	,413	-1,931	513	,054	-,254	,131
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,831	126,743	,069	-,254	,139
Fast fashion stores are too big.	Equal variances assumed	14,400	,000	-5,208	513	,000	-,539	,103
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,621	119,706	,000	-,539	,117
Clothing displays are well organized.	Equal variances assumed	,001	,972	,856	513	,393	,090	,105
	Equal variances not assumed			,857	133,835	,393	,090	,105

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Waiting time for cashier is too long.	Equal variances assumed	,923	,337	-,212	513	,832	-,027	,126
	Equal variances not assumed			-,201	126,895	,841	-,027	,132
Fast fashion stores have a good atmosphere.	Equal variances assumed	1,163	,281	3,670	513	,000	,403	,110
	Equal variances not assumed			3,438	125,325	,001	,403	,117
It is easy to get help from salespeople.	Equal variances assumed	,415	,520	2,313	513	,021	,281	,121
	Equal variances not assumed			2,269	130,923	,025	,281	,124
Salespeople at stores are kind and helpful.	Equal variances assumed	,005	,942	1,262	513	,207	,138	,109
	Equal variances not assumed			1,218	128,803	,225	,138	,113
There are only a few salespeople available.	Equal variances assumed	,132	,717	-1,741	513	,082	-,208	,119
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,684	129,086	,095	-,208	,123
Fast fashion products are available in a variety of colours.	Equal variances assumed	6,903	,009	2,160	513	,031	,251	,116
	Equal variances not assumed			2,023	125,278	,045	,251	,124
Fast fashion makes it easy to express my personality.	Equal variances assumed	1,567	,211	8,458	513	,000	1,026	,121
	Equal variances not assumed			8,098	127,863	,000	1,026	,127
I feel good in fast fashion products.	Equal variances assumed	32,437	,000	11,062	513	,000	1,060	,096
	Equal variances not assumed			8,674	109,869	,000	1,060	,122
Fast fashion products are unique.	Equal variances assumed	,206	,650	2,554	513	,011	,289	,113
	Equal variances not assumed			2,410	126,162	,017	,289	,120
Fast fashion products are	Equal variances assumed	10,643	,001	1,002	513	,317	,101	,101

similar to products from other brands.	Equal variances not assumed			,880	118,759	,381	,101	,115
Styles look like copies of luxury brands.	Equal variances assumed	6,170	,013	-,563	513	,574	-,067	,119
	Equal variances not assumed			-,506	120,938	,614	-,067	,133
Styles have too much mass appeal.	Equal variances assumed	2,205	,138	-,681	513	,496	-,079	,115
	Equal variances not assumed			-,621	122,356	,536	-,079	,127
Fast fashion stimulates over-consumption.	Equal variances assumed	,022	,881	,149	513	,882	,016	,108
	Equal variances not assumed			,148	132,501	,883	,016	,109
Fast fashion contaminates the environment.	Equal variances assumed	,033	,857	-,260	513	,795	-,029	,112
	Equal variances not assumed			-,254	130,409	,800	-,029	,115
Fast fashion exploits labor in less developed countries.	Equal variances assumed	,026	,871	,448	513	,654	,054	,121
	Equal variances not assumed			,450	133,964	,654	,054	,120
Fast fashion makes the world's fashion all look the same.	Equal variances assumed	,539	,463	-,306	513	,760	-,034	,112
	Equal variances not assumed			-,298	130,206	,766	-,034	,114
Fast fashion perverts traditional culture.	Equal variances assumed	,217	,641	-2,878	513	,004	-,386	,134
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,986	139,065	,003	-,386	,129
In general, fast fashion advertising has a bad message.	Equal variances assumed	,177	,674	-4,777	475	,000	-,556	,116
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,659	106,805	,000	-,556	,119
. In general, the fast fashion advertising is provocative.	Equal variances assumed	7,729	,006	-2,562	475	,011	-,322	,126
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,303	100,096	,023	-,322	,140

In general, in fast fashion advertising the actor is symphatetic.	Equal variances assumed	2,030	,155	4,495	475	,000	,471	,105
	Equal variances not assumed			3,849	96,803	,000	,471	,122
In general, in fast fashion advertising the music is annoying.	Equal variances assumed	7,736	,006	-3,904	475	,000	-,509	,130
	Equal variances not assumed			-3,525	100,415	,001	-,509	,144
In general, in fast fashion advertising the music is loud.	Equal variances assumed	,070	,792	-2,739	475	,006	-,398	,145
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,695	107,645	,008	-,398	,148
In general, fast fashion advertising is annoying.	Equal variances assumed	1,150	,284	-3,914	475	,000	-,581	,149
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,057	113,088	,000	-,581	,143

Appendix 2: Regression model describing the purchase frequency of fast fashion products

Models	Evolution of the variables included in the regression model	B	β	Sig.	Adjusted R^2
Model 1	I feel good in fast fashion products.	1,189	,287	,000	0,192
Model 2	I feel good in fast fashion products.		,307	,000	
	Clothing displays are well organized.		-,072	0,009	
		1,991			0,202
Model 3	I feel good in fast fashion products.		,288	,000	
	Clothing displays are well organized.		-,079	,004	
	In general, fast fashion advertising is annoying.	2,247	-,057	,006	,213
Model 4	I feel good in fast fashion products.		,283	,000	
	Clothing displays are well organized.		-,079	,004	
	In general, fast fashion advertising is annoying.	2,092	-,056	,007	,218

	Fast fashion products are cheap.		,058	,041	
Model 5	I feel good in fast fashion products.		,269	,000	
	Clothing displays are well organized.		-,085	,002	
	In general, fast fashion advertising is annoying.		-,047	,027	,223
	Fast fashion products are cheap.	2,255	,060	,035	
	Fast fashion stores are too big.		-,059	,038	

Appendix 3: Rotated component matrix –variables involved in brand avoidance

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fast fashion contaminates the environment.	,934						
Fast fashion stimulates over-consumption.	,873						
Fast fashion exploits labor in less developed countries.	,817						
It is hard to get help from salespeople		,870					
The salespeople are rude and unhelpful.		,860					
There are only a few salespeople available		,753					
Fast fashion products are not unique.			,879				
Styles have too much mass appeal			,857				
Fast fashion products are similar to products from other brands.			,712				
Clothing displays are not well organized.				,867			
Fast fashion stores have a bad atmosphere				,797			
Stores are too big.				,745			

In general, in fast fashion advertising the actor is asymphatetic.						,875		
In general, fast fashion advertising has a bad message.						,874		
Fast fashion products are cheap.							-,800	
Fast fashion products are bad value for money.							,749	
Styles are too trendy to use for a long time								,889
Styles are too sensitive to changing trends								,591

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.[a]

Appendix 4: The used questionnare

Survey of opinions and consumer attitudes towards fast fashion brands

*Compulsory

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1. **How often do you buy clothes? ***

o Several times a week

o Weekly

o Monthly

o Every few months

o Every year

o Less frequently

2. **Have you heard of Fast fashion brands? (Fast fashion brands: Zara, H&M, Stradivarius, Bershka, Pull&Bear, C&A, Mango, Forever 21**) *

o Yes

o No, please go to question 13!

Opinion related to fast fashion products and companies

3. **Below we would like to assess the respondent's OPINION about Fast fashion products and companies by means of different statements.**
On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements (1 - strongly disagree, 5 - strongly agree). *
Please tick only one answer per line.

	1	2.	3.	4.	5.
Fast fashion products have good quality.					
Fast fashion products have good value for money					
Fast fashion products follow the latest trends					
The style of fast fashion products is too sensitive to trends, you can't wear them for long.					
Fast fashion stores are too big.					
Clothing displays are well organized.					

	1	2.	3.	4.	5.
Waiting time for cashier is too long					
Fast fashion stores have a good atmosphere					
It is easy to get help from salespeople					
Salespeople at stores are kind and helpful					
There are only a few salespeople available					
Fast fashion products are available in a variety of colours.					
Fast fashion makes it easy to express my personality.					

	1	2.	3.	4.	5.
I feel good in fast fashion products.					
Fast fashion products are unique.					
Fast fashion products are similar to products from other brands.					
Styles look like copies of luxury brands.					
Styles have too much mass appeal.					
Fast fashion stimulates over-consumption.					
Fast fashion contaminates the environment.					
Fast fashion exploits labor in less					

	1	2.	3.	4.	5.
developed countries.					
Fast fashion makes the world's fashion all look the same.					
Fast fashion perverts traditional culture.					

4. Have you ever seen an advert promoting Fast fashion products? *

o Yes, please go to question 5!

o No, please go to question 7!

OPINION on advertising by fast fashion companies

5. Below we would like to assess the respondent's OPINION about Fast fashion advertising activities of fast fashion companies. On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate your OPINION of Fast fashion companies' advertising (1 - strongly disagree, 5 - strongly agree). *
Please indicate only one answer per line.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
In general, fast fashion advertising					

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
has a bad message.					
In general, the fast fashion advertising is provocative.					
In general, in fast fashion advertising the actor is symphatetic.					
In general, in fast fashion advertising the music is annoying.					
In general, in fast fashion advertising the music is loud.					
In general, fast fashion advertising is annoying.					

6. **Which Fast Fashion brand advert have you seen? You can tick more than one answer ***

  - o Zara
  - o H&M
  - o Stradivarius

- o Bershka
- o Pull&Bear
- o C&A
- o Mango
- o Forever 21
- o Egyéb:

Purchase frequency

7. How often do you buy Fast fashion brands?*

o I always buy these brands, please continue with question 8!

o I regularly buy these brands, please continue with question 8!

o I rarely buy these brands, please continue with question 9!

o I do not buy these brands, please continue with question 10!

Survey on the method of shopping I, II.

8. How do you buy Fast fashion brands? *

o Always in store, please continue with question 13!

o Mostly in store, please continue with question 13!

o Always in webshop, please continue with question 13!

o Mostly in webshop, please continue with question 13!

Survey on the method of shopping III.

9. How do you buy Fast fashion brands? *

o Always in store, please continue with question 10!

o Mostly in store, please continue with question 10!

o Always in webshop, please continue with question 10!

o Mostly in webshop, please continue with question 10!

Surveying brand avoidance behaviour

10. Since you rarely or never buy Fast fashion products, below we would like to assess how the following statements about Fast fashion products and companies affect your brand avoidance behaviour.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate how strong an impact each of these aspects has on your brand avoidance behaviour. *

Please indicate only one oval per row

	1	2	3	4	5
Fast fashion products are cheap.					
Fast fashion products have a bad quality.					
Fast fashion products are bad value for money.					
Fast fashion products follow the latest trends					

	1	2	3	4	5
The style of fast fashion products is too sensitive to trends, you can't wear them for long.					
Fast fashion stores are too big.					
Clothing displays are not well organized.					
Waiting time for cashier is too long.					
Fast fashion stores have a bad atmosphere					
It is hard to get help from salespeople					
Salespeople at stores are rude anf unhelpful.					
There are only a few salespeople available.					

	1	2	3	4	5
Fast fashion products do not have a wide choice of colours.					
Fast fashion makes it hard to express my personality.					
I do not feel good in fast fashion products.					
Fast fashion products are not unique.					
Fast fashion products are similar to products from other brands.					
Styles look like copies of luxury brands.					
Styles have too much mass appeal.					

	1	2	3	4	5
Fast fashion stimulates over-consumption.					
Fast fashion contaminates the environment.					
Fast fashion exploits labor in less developed countries.					
Fast fashion makes the world's fashion all look the same.					
Fast fashion perverts traditional culture.					

Examining brand avoidance behaviour of advertising by fast fashion companies

11. As you rarely or never buy Fast fashion products, we would like to assess how strongly your brand buying behaviour is influenced by your opinion of the advertising for these products.
If you agree at least partially with the statements below, please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 how strongly these attributes affect your FASHIONER behaviour (1 - very weakly affected, 5 - very strongly affected). *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	I have never seen fast fashion brand advertising	I disagree with this statement
In general, fast fashion advertising has a bad message.							
In general, the fast fashion advertising is provocative.							
In general, in fast fashion advertising the actor is asymphatetic.							
In general, in fast fashion advertising the music is annoying.							
In general, in fast fashion							

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	I have never seen fast fashion brand advertising	I disagree with this statement
advertising the music is loud.							
In general, fast fashion advertising is annoying.							

12. Where and what kind of clothing brand do you buy? *

Demographic data

13. Your gender: *

- o   Man
- o   Woman

14. Where do you live? *

- o   Capital city
- o   Town
- o   Village

15. Your age is: *

16. How much money do you manage each month? *

- o   0-20.000 Ft
- o   21.000-40.000 Ft

- 41.000-60.000 Ft
- 61.000-80.000 Ft
- 81.000-100.000 Ft
- 101.000 -120.000Ft
- 121.000-140.000 Ft
- above 141.000 Ft