

SUMMARY OF THESESES

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**Brand avoidance investigation of fast fashion brands with
anti-consumption approach**

of doctoral (PhD) dissertation

Supervisor:

Dr. Zsóka Ágnes
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Department of Marketing

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approach in the case of fast fashion brands**

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Table of content

Table of content.....	3
1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND REASONING OF THE THESIS	4
1.1 Theoretical background.....	5
2. METHODOLOGY.....	7
2.1 Research questions and hypotheses.....	7
2.2 Research methodology.....	9
3. RESULTS	11
3.1 Reflection on the main characteristics of fast fashion.....	11
3.2 The attitudes of fast fashion buyers and fast fashion avoiders.....	12
3.3 Aspects influencing the purchase frequency of fast fashion products.....	15
3.4 Summary of the results related to brand avoidance behaviour.....	16
3.5 Scientific and practical significance of the results.....	17
3.6 Limitations and future studies.....	19
4. REFERENCES:.....	20
5. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS.....	22

1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND REASONING OF THE THESIS

The majority of relevant research studies investigating consumer behaviour and branding focus on the reasons behind the rejection of 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. 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 industry 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 avoidance 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. Taking into consideration, that Gen Z is the most environmentally conscious generation

based on the literature, it is also significant to examine how the environmental and social issues associated with fast fashion brands affect the generation's brand avoidance behaviour (Tari, 2011). 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 goal of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of brand avoidance behaviour of Gen Z towards fast fashion brands, to identify differences among fast fashion buyers and avoiders, as well as to identify the reasons, which can lead to brand avoidance due to online shopping experience.

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.

1.1 Theoretical background

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. From the corporate-based perspective the symbolic meaning of the brand and its ability to link the product to a particular manufacturer is significant, from the consumer-based perspective the brand promise and previous brand experience is relevant.

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 anti-thesis of brand loyalty (Oliva et al.,

1992). In the dissertation the “quality-satisfaction-loyalty chain” of the loyalty literature is emphasized, special attention is paid to the relationship between consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

During the thesis the most relevant anti-consumption and consumer brand relationship literature were also investigated, as well as the most significant fast fashion related research. The paper also summarizes the main characteristics of the online environment and the sources of consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction from the brand avoidance perspective.

As mentioned above, research of brand avoidance is a relatively new research field, the main motivations of brand avoidance behaviour is summarized in the comprehensive model of Lee et al. (2009b). This model is applied as a starting point for several brand avoidance related research (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 completed, in the thesis the extended version of Knittel et al. (2016) is applied for the analysis of brand avoidance behaviour.

Experiential avoidance originates from brand promise, which is one important aspect of a brand’s constellation of values, as emphasized by several authors (Lee et al. 2009b; Majerova-Kliestik, 2015). Majerova and Kliestik (2015) consider brand promise as a rational component, expressing what the brand provides to the consumer. Individual expectations are derived from those promises and if the company is not able to meet the expectations, it may lead to disappointment and can result in brand avoidance. (Lee et al, 2009b).

Identity avoidance occurs when consumers perceive certain brands to be inauthentic, or when it is connected to a negatively judged reference group which they do not want to belong to (Lee et al. 2009b; English & Soloman, 1995; Hogg & Banister, 2001).

Moral avoidance is related to the wider society, unlike the other three types which express how the brand promise directly influences the well-being of the individual (Lee et al., 2009b). For certain consumers, brand promise is not compatible with their reported moral values, consequently the brand is avoided because of ethical reasons.

Deficit-value avoidance mainly occurs when consumers associate the low price of the product with low quality (Rekettye, 2012; Lee et al., 2009b). In addition to budget brands, deficit-value avoidance may also emerge in case of premium brands which are considered to be unable to provide adequate value for consumers for the higher price (Abid & Khattak, 2017).

According to the results of Knittel et al.’s (2016), the content of the advertisement, celebrity endorser, music and response also can lead to brand avoidance, more specifically to **advertisement related brand avoidance**.

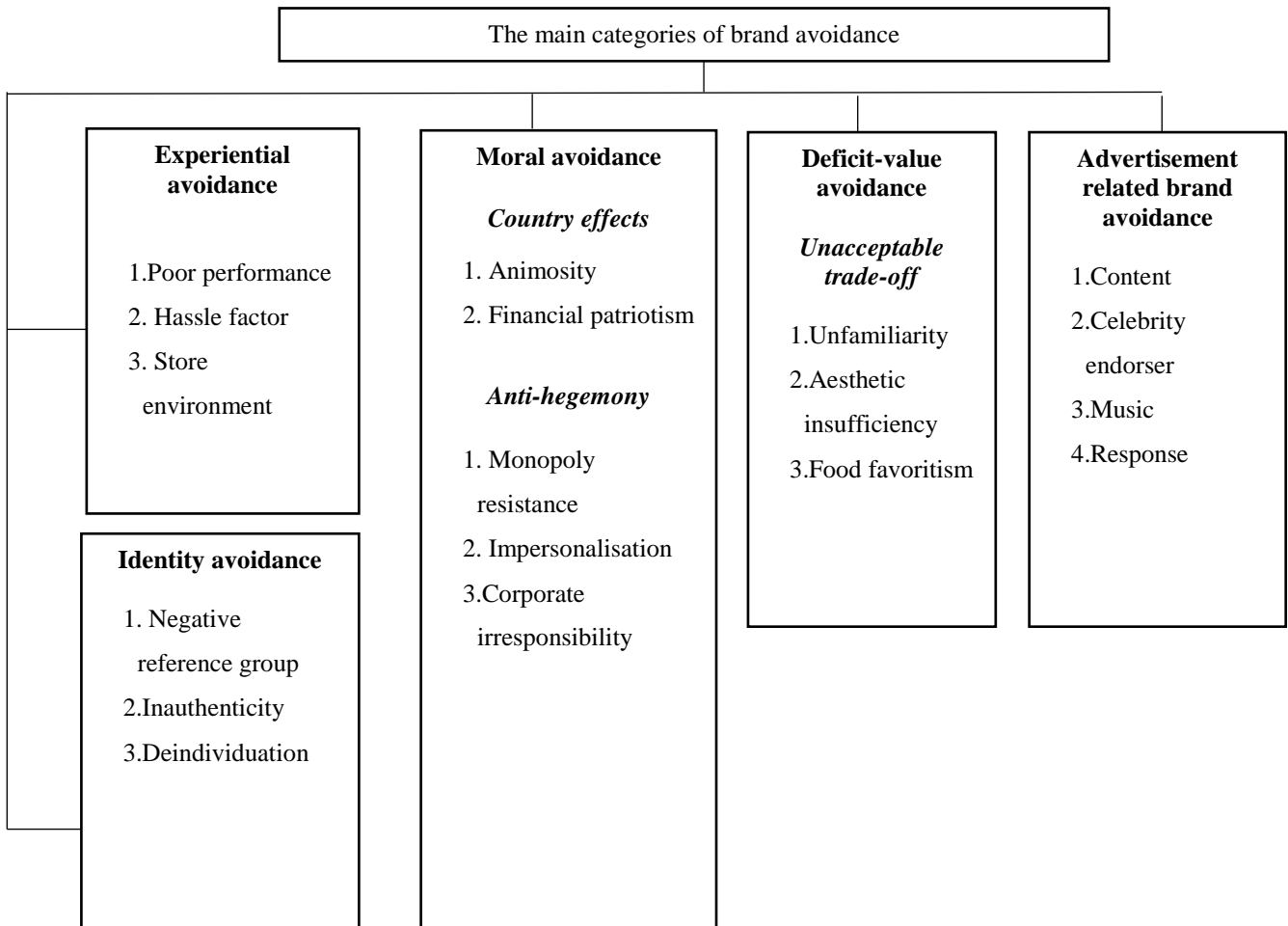


Figure 1: Lee et al.'s brand avoidance model (2009a, 2009b) extended by the results of Knittel et al. (2016)

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

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research questions and hypotheses

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?

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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 hypotheses related to RQ2 are 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.

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

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

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

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?

2.2 Research methodology

During the research qualitative and quantitative research techniques were also used as it is visible on Figure 2.

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 focused on specifically brand avoidance behaviour of respondents. After the exclusion of non-relevant respondents, the final sample consisted of 501 students, belonging to the same age group (average age was 20 years).

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.

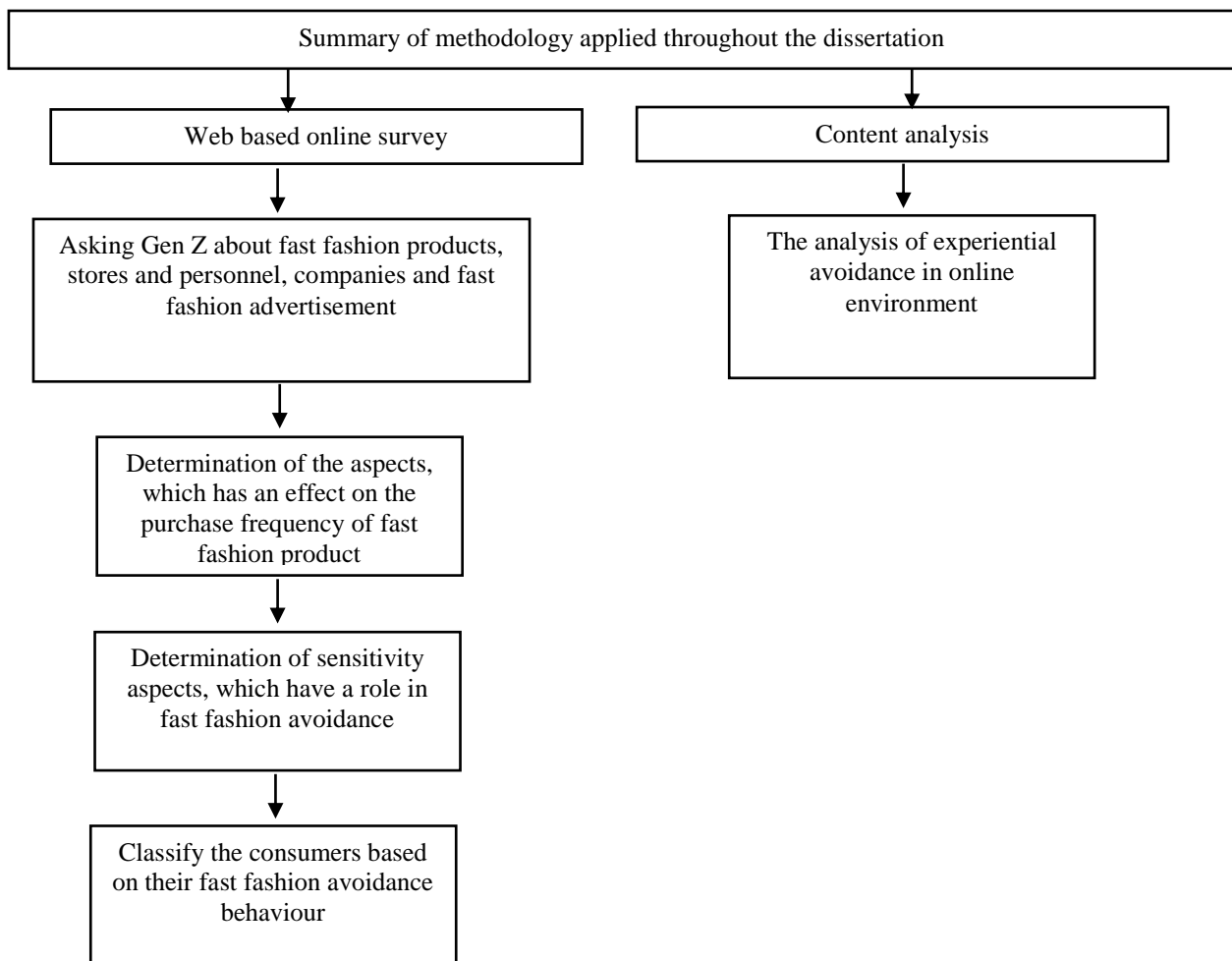


Figure 2: Summary of the used methodology

Source: Own construction

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.

For the deeper understanding of online shopping experience related to brand avoidance the method of content analysis was applied. As a base for content analysis I used Trustpilot product evaluation

forum. On this forum several feedbacks are available about the main fast fashion brands and the consumers also have an opportunity to evaluate the selected brand from 1 (which is the worst evaluation) to 5 (which is the best evaluation). During the research only those feedbacks were analysed, in which the consumers clearly stated, that bad online shopping experience lead complete avoidance of a given fast fashion brand (altogether 146 feedbacks).

3. RESULTS

3.1 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.

3.2 The attitudes of fast fashion buyers and fast fashion avoiders

The students were asked about their opinion on fast fashion products, store environment and personnel, fast fashion brands' environmental and social effects and fast fashion advertisement. The H1 hypothesis and its sub-hypotheses are related to this topic. The opinions about agreement or disagreement were measured on Likert scale, where value 1 was fully disagree and value 5 was fully agree. Related to fast fashion product characteristics, 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). According to the results of independent sample t-test, there was statistically significant difference between the attitudes of fast fashion buyers and fast fashion avoiders 8 out of 12 variables. Fast fashion avoiders criticize fast fashion brands more than moderate, and nonetheless this is also true for fast fashion buyers with regards to mass appeal nature of the products and similarity to other products.

From between the critical variables in the case of trend sensitivity, fast fashion avoiders are significantly more critical of fast fast fashion brands than fast fashion buyers.

Connected to the fast fashion stores and personnel it can be concluded, that the respondents least agreed that the size of fast fashion stores are too big (mean value of responses is 2,05) and they fully agreed with the good atmosphere in fast fashion stores (3,48).

According to the results of independent t-test, statistically significant difference can be stated between fast fashion buyers and avoiders in the case of 4 variables out of 7 variables. Related to fast fashion stores and personnel, 4 variables were critical and by the critical variables it can be determined, that fast fashion avoiders are more critical of fast fashion stores. In the case of brand avoiders it was also examined, whether fast fashion brands are criticized more than moderate. Considering that the average value of the examined variables does not reach the average level (the value of 3), it can be concluded, that, brand avoiders do not criticize fast fashion brands more than moderate.

Related to the fast fashion companies' environmental and social effects it can be concluded, that the contribution of fast fashion companies to overconsumption is mostly agreed with by the respondents (mean score is 4,03) and least agreed statement is the contribution to the loss of traditional culture (mean score: 3,1). Statistically significant difference between the fast fashion buyers and avoiders can be stated in the case of fast fashion companies' contribution to the loss of traditional culture by the results of independent t-test.

Regarding to the environmental and social effects of fast fashion brands - all the statements were critical. In all cases fast fashion avoiders were more critical than moderate, although it is also true for fast fashion buyers.

In the last question part – opinions about fast fashion advertisement - only those respondents were asked, who have seen fast fashion advertisements. It can be concluded, that the respondents fully agreed, that the actors are sympathetic in advertisement (3,42) and least agreed with statement that in fast fashion advertising the music is annoying (2,24).

All the statements related to fast fashion advertisement were critical – except one variable: In fast fashion advertising the actors are sympathetic. In all cases is statistically significant difference between fast fashion buyers and avoiders. According to the results of two-sample t-test and it can also be concluded, that fast fashion avoiders are more critical in all aspects. Fast fashion avoiders are more critical than moderate related to the message of the fast fashion advertisement.

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. 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. In the case of fast fashion stores, brand avoiders are more negative about the store atmosphere, personnel and store size. They are also more critical related to fast fashion brands' communication, advertisement. At the same time fast fashion buyers are as critical as the fast fashion avoiders about the fast fashion brands' social and environmental effects.

The results of the hypotheses connected to RQ1 are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of hypothesis testing in the case of RQ1

Hypotheses	Results
<i>H1: The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion is significantly different.</i>	Partially confirmed
<i>H1a: The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion products is significantly different.</i>	Partially confirmed by the following variables: <i>Fast fashion products are cheap.</i> <i>Fast fashion products are good value for money.</i> <i>Fast fashion products follow the newest trends.</i> <i>Fast fashion products are available in variety of colours.</i> <i>Fast fashion makes it easy to express my personality.</i> <i>I feel good in fast fashion products.</i> <i>Fast fashion products are unique.</i> <i>Styles are too trendy to use for a long time.</i>
<i>H1b: The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion stores and personnel is significantly different.</i>	Partially confirmed by the following variables: <i>Fast fashion stores are too big.</i> <i>A fast fashion boltokban kellemes az atmoszféra.</i> <i>It is easy to get help from salespeople.</i> <i>There are only a few salespeople available.</i>
<i>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.</i>	Rejected
<i>H1d: The attitude of fast fashion buyers and the attitude of fast fashion avoiders related to fast fashion advertisement is significantly different.</i>	Confirmed
<i>H2: Fast fashion avoiders are more critical of fast fashion brands than those, who regularly or always buy fast fashion products.</i>	Rejected
<i>H3: Fast fashion avoiders criticize fast fashion brands more than moderate.</i>	Rejected

Source: Own construction

3.3 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*.

3.4 Summary of the results related to brand avoidance behaviour

Moral brand avoidance variables received the highest average score, exerting the strongest influence on brand avoidance behaviour of respective respondents. 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 and it also affects the results of hypothesis testing. Difference between the highest and the lowest average score is significant. 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.

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.

Connected to RQ2, moral brand avoidance and identity avoidance have the strongest effect on the respondents’ brand avoidance behaviour.

The results of the hypotheses connected to RQ2 are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of hypothesis testing in the case of RQ2

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

Source: Own construction

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. 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 committed 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.

As a result of content analysis, the reasons of brand avoidance connected to online environment were identified: (a) technical issues; (b) provision of incomplete or misleading information; (c) difficulties at product delivery; (d) non-delivered goods; (e) the delivered product is not in accordance with the expected one; (f) difficulties at product delivery; (g) inadequate or non-compliant compensation; (h) poor customer service. By identifying these reasons it was also possible to create a new theoretical model of brand avoidance.

3.5 Scientific and practical significance of the results

This study is the first attempt observing 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' environmental 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 attitude 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.

3.6 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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5. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

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