BRAND AVOIDANCE: RELATIONS BETWEEN BRAND-RELATED STIMULI AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

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Abstract. *The article analyses one of the parts of anti-consumption phenomenon – brand avoidance. Most of the research on the topic of brand avoidance is usually qualitative, analysing only singular brand avoidance reasons, whereas this article employs a quantitative method to analyse brand avoidance, including different brand-related stimuli (unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence, unacceptable trade-off, ideological incompatibility) and the negative emotions (dislike, anger, worry, embarrassment) consumers feel towards brands. What is more, this research is the first to analyse brand avoidance in the context of emerging markets, as previous studies were carried out in Western countries. However, it was found that different brand-related stimuli have positive relations mainly with dislike emotion, which was the only one influencing brand avoidance.*

Key words: *brand avoidance, anti-consumption, emotions*

1. Introduction

Positively rated brands are extremely important to business as enterprises have possibility to gain competitive advantage through their successful brands (Keller, 1993; Lassar et al., 1995). Usually consumer behaviour research is focused on consumption of brands from a positive perspective, however, marketing specialists are concerned not only about the reasons why certain brands are being chosen but also what causes anti-consumption of particular brands (Lee et al., 2009b), since negative brand relationships can be damaging to companies owning these brands (Fournier & Alvarez, 2013). If the motives leading consumers to reject brands are familiar to enterprises, companies have a chance to prevent or at least mitigate the unfavourable outcomes (Lee et al., 2009b) keeping in mind that consumers may not only just stop using a specific brand

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but also spread their negative opinions of the brand to others. What is more, negative attitudes toward brands are more likely to be disseminated through social networks in comparison to positive experiences of consumption (Allsop et al., 2007). It is also worth mentioning that finding out what motivates brand avoidance behaviour is important to all marketing specialists even if it is the brand of a competitor, as this knowledge can be used strategically for their brands' positioning as an appealing alternative (Lee et al., 2009b).

Positive consumer behaviour and loyalty toward brands are quite widely explored topics in scientific community, however, the anti-consumption topic is poorly examined and could still be considered as a fresh subject to study (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Truong et al., 2011). It was only during the last decade that the topic of anti-consumption and one of its components – brand avoidance – attained more scientific attention (Iyer & Muncy, 2009; Kozinets et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Lee et al., 2011). Even though the interest in the topic is growing, there is still a lack of comprehensive understanding of anti-consumption and its motives (Kozinets et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009c). Two most examined approaches in this topic could be distinguished: general anti-consumption targeting reduction of consumption in general and specific anti-consumption targeting specific brands only (Kozinets et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2009a). The phenomenon of brand avoidance is ascribable to the latter approach (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b).

The literature and research of brand avoidance is still scarce, with the majority of research being qualitative and usually analysing only singular brand avoidance reasons (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b). It is known that unwanted consumer behaviour (including brand avoidance) can be triggered by consumers' experienced negative emotions toward brands (Romani et al., 2009; 2012) and it is also known that emotions do not appear from nowhere, they are evoked by specific event/stimuli (Dalli et al., 2007; Gilboa & Rafaeli, 2003; Romani et al., 2009; 2012; Sherer, 1994; 2005; Watson & Spence, 2007). However, as there is a lack of research on brand avoidance, it is still not clear how emotions are related with brand avoidance.

Furthermore, brand avoidance has not been analysed in emerging markets yet, focusing instead only on such markets as New Zealand (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b) and the USA (Close & Zinkhan, 2009; Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010; Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Thompson et al., 2006). Meanwhile, Izberk-Bilgin (2010) states that research on consumer resistance should be expanded from Western economically advanced nations to less advanced nations ("emerging markets") as these countries are at a different modernization level and cultural development. Also these "emerging markets" face the supply of Western goods and brands, followed by consumer desires for these goods and brands, but at the same time different consumption attitudes and behaviours of emerging markets consumers.

Therefore, in order to get a better understanding of how brand avoidance appears, the objective of this paper is to identify what relations exist among various brand-

related stimuli, to determine various negative emotions consumers experience toward brands, and consumers' intention to avoid brands.

The main result of this work is the deepened knowledge about this yet poorly studied but very interesting topic, which is only starting to get more attention from marketing scholars. The survey showed that people tend to avoid brands and they do feel various negative emotions towards brands, however, these emotions are not equally strong. Also, despite the assumptions based on the theoretical background, the survey results showed that no relations exist between all of the different brand-related stimuli and various negative emotions, as well as between all of various negative emotions and intention to avoid brands.

2. The Concept of Brand Avoidance

Traditionally consumer research focuses on studying the factors which motivate individuals to consume particular products or brands; however, in order to have a deeper understanding of consumers and their behaviour it is equally important to know and understand what motivates them to choose not to consume (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013; Lee et al., 2009b; Lee et al., 2009c; Zavestoski, 2002). The attention to this phenomenon of anti-consumption is growing (Lee et al., 2009b; Lee et al., 2009c); however, as anti-consumption is a multidimensional construct and was studied from many different approaches and angles (Iyer & Muncy, 2009), a lot of different conceptions of anti-consumption exist. Anti-consumption is analysed in this paper because it is closely related to and helps to explain the nature of brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009b).

Anti-consumption's main idea is directed against consumption (Craig-Lees, 2006; Lee et al., 2009c; Lee et al., 2011; Zavestoski, 2002), and it is not only an overall reduction of consumption or non-consumption, but it can be targeted towards certain products or brands as well (Craig-Lees, 2006; Iyer & Muncy, 2008; Kozinets et al., 2010; Zavestoski, 2002). However, anti-consumption does not necessarily mean that people would completely stop consuming certain products or services, as it also covers rejection, restriction, and reclamation of consumption (Lee et al., 2011).

Anti-consumption has been studied from many different perspectives and can take a lot of various forms (Iyer & Muncy, 2009; Zavestoski, 2002), such as boycotts (Albrecht et al., 2013; Farah & Newman, 2010; Friedman, 1985; John & Klein, 2003; Klein et al., 2004; Mrad et al., 2013; Smith & Li, 2010; Yuksel & Mryteza, 2009), ethical consumption (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Hoffmann & Hutter, 2012), brand avoidance (Kim et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Rindell et al., 2013; Thompson et al., 2006), voluntary simplification (Cherrier, 2009), brand rejection (Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2011; Sandikci & Ekici, 2009; Truong et al., 2011), consumer resistance (Lee et al., 2011), anti-branding (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009), sharing (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010), anti-consumption motivated by undesired-self and image congruency (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Englis & Solomon 1995; 1997; Hogg et

al., 2009; Sirgy, 1982). Some of these forms are more active, aggressive, and publicly noticeable while others are more passive and less noticeable. Ieyr and Muncy (2009) and Kozinets et al. (2010) developed anti-consumption classifications based on either societal/moral or personal concerns of the consumer and object of anti-consumption, either general consumption or specific brands or products.

Moreover, some people might think that the reasons for anti-consumption are the opposite to the reasons for the consumption of certain products or brands. However, reasons for anti-consumption are not the logical opposite to the reasons for consumption, for example, if some consumers buy eco-friendly products because they want to save the planet, it is not logical to think that a reason driving anti-consumption of eco-friendly products would be a desire to harm the environment (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013).

Even though anti-consumption is a multidimensional construct and a very extensive area for research, usually not the whole phenomenon but only separate forms were studied (Kozinets et al., 2010). Further in this paper we will concentrate on the type of anti-consumption that is targeting only brands, as brand avoidance focuses only on brand-level rejection of consumption; therefore, it is just a part of anti-consumption phenomenon (Kim et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2009a). However, as the topic of brand avoidance is only starting to get more attention from marketing scholars, the academic literature of this phenomenon is still quite scarce and lacks comprehensiveness (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Truong et al., 2011).

Lee et al. (2009b) were the first ones to provide a formal definition of brand avoidance as „incidents in which consumers deliberately choose to reject a brand". Brand avoidance focuses on the anti-choice, which is the active rejection of a brand, not on the no-choice incidents when customers have no choice and are not able to purchase brands because of unaffordability, unavailability or inaccessibility (Hogg, 1998; Lee et al., 2009b). The active rejection of brands includes the behaviours of abandonment (giving up a brand which was previously consumed), avoidance (staying away or moving away from a brand) and aversion (turning away from a brand) (Hogg, 1998; Hogg et al., 2009). However, it is important to mention that Lee's brand avoidance definition does not include the cases in between of deliberate/conscious and forced choices, which in real life might be quite common (Rindell et al., 2013). Another opinion exists that brand avoidance should not be defined only as incidents of rejection as customers may holistically form their negative attitudes towards a brand evaluating the company's unethical actions over time; therefore, consumers' brand avoidance behaviour can be caused by some past events, and image heritage concept can become useful while analysing reasons why people avoid certain brands nowadays (Rindell et al., 2013). Therefore, brand avoidance represents consumer behaviour (either based on some incidents or formed over time) of deliberately rejecting a brand even though the consumer has all the necessary access to it, can afford to purchase it and is able to buy it (Hogg, 1998; Lee et al., 2009b; Rindell et al., 2013).

Lee et al. (2009a) suggest that brand avoidance behaviour appears when consumers perceive some brand promises to be incompatible with their needs or wants. However, consumers can react not only to what companies/brands have promised but also to what they morally should have promised but in reality did not; therefore, brand avoidance behaviour may not always be related to what a brand is promising (Rindell et al., 2013). No matter what a brand is (not) promising, brand avoidance/rejection behaviours appear when negative attitudes, beliefs and emotions toward that brand become strong and act as barriers to purchasing (Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2011; Romani et al., 2009; 2012; Thompson et al., 2006). Moreover, negative emotions toward a brand can appear not only after the purchase but can be formed in advance, so consumers can decide to avoid a brand even if they have never tried it (Romani et al., 2009; 2012). Therefore, it can be said that the negative emotions toward brands can have direct relationship with brand avoidance behaviour (Romani et al., 2009; 2012). These consumers' negative emotions toward brands can be evoked by different stimuli/ reasons (Lee et al., 2009b; Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2011).

A few attempts to classify brand avoidance exist; however, as authors of the classification looked at the topic from different angles, the classifications are quite different (see Table 1). Some of them are based on motivational frame (Ieyr & Muncy, 2009; Kozinets et al., 2010) or reasons/stimuli motivating the avoidance behaviour (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2011), while the others are based on duration and expression of the behaviour (Rindell et al., 2013). Despite the lack of common course or vision, some similarities in the typologies can be distinguished.

One of the simplest brand avoidance categorizations is done based on motivational frames as they divide brand avoidance only into two types – (1) based on consumers' societal/moral/collective concerns and (2) based on consumers' personal concerns (Iyer & Muncy, 2009; Kozinets et al., 2010). However, it is important to mention that the authors have not named this classification as brand avoidance classification - this is only a part of a bigger anti-consumption construct and shows the types of anti-consumption targeting brands. But as brand avoidance is a form of anti-consumption targeting brands (Kim et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2009a), this classification is quite relevant.

Classifications based on reasons which motivate consumers to avoid brands were made by Lee et al. (2009b), Lee et al. (2009a) and Nenycz-Thiel and Romaniuk (2011). However, it is important to mention that even though the later categorization was created for brand rejection, but it is also applicable to brand avoidance as "brand rejection" term can be used synonymously to brand avoidance (Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2011). Moreover, marketing scholars (Lee et al., 2009b) at first distinguished three types of brand avoidance; however, later on they added one more additional category. Very similar categorization was made by Nenycz-Thiel and Romaniuk (2011), the only different type they have distinguished is based on spillover effects (Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2011).

TABLE 1. **Classifications of brand avoidance**

Iyer & Muncy (2009)	Lee, Conroy, & Motion, (2009a)	Lee, Motion, & Conroy, (2009b)	Kozinets, Handelman, & Lee (2010)	Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk (2011)	Rindell, Strandvik, & Wilen (2013)
Types of anti-consumption targeting brands	Types of brand avoidance	Types of brand avoidance	Types of anti-consumption targeting brands	Types of brand rejection	Types of ethical consumers' brand avoidance
Based on societal concerns; Based on personal concerns.	Experiential brand avoidance; Identity avoidance; Moral avoidance; Deficit-value avoidance.	Experiential brand avoidance; Identity avoidance; Moral avoidance.	Based on moral or collective motivational frame; Based on personal motivational frame.	Based on negative past experience; Based on moral rejection; Based on high perceived risk associated with the purchase; Based on information from extrinsic cues; Based on spillover effects.	Manifest brand avoidance; Transient brand avoidance; Ambiguous brand avoidance; Vague brand avoidance.

Compiled by the Authors based on: Iyer & Muncy, 2009; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Kozinets et al., 2010; Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk 2011; Rindell et al., 2013.

The most different from the other classifications is the one done by Rindell et al. (2013) because they analysed brand avoidance behaviour from the consumers' ethical viewpoint and distinguished four types based on duration (persistent or temporary) and expression (explicit or latent) of avoidance behaviour, however, they did not reveal the motivations for this behaviour.

According to the classifications presented in Table 1, it can be seen that usually brand avoidance is classified from the reasons/stimuli motivating brand avoidance behaviour perspective (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2011), while the classification based on duration and explicitness of avoidance behaviour (Rindell et al., 2013) is less common. Moreover, the categorization based on personal and societal/moral concerns is quite related to the ones based on reasons as they all use some kind of motivational frames for avoidance behaviour. Therefore, the moral avoidance can be seen as a sub-category of societal/moral concerns-driven brand avoidance, while experiential, identity and deficit-value avoidance types, which are all driven by different kind of personal reasons, can be treated as a sub-category of personal concerns-driven brand avoidance.

3. Motives for brand avoidance

3.1. Consumers' personally-related motives for brand avoidance

Existing research of the brand avoidance lacks the holistic view of the stimuli for the avoidance behaviour and usually focuses only on singular, separate reasons (Lee et al., 2009b). Nevertheless, it can be seen that some of the reasons are more self-relevant, while others seem to be based more on societal/moral concerns (Kim et al., 2013). In this chapter consumers' personally-related reasons are analysed, which can be divided into three groups of *unmet expectations*, *symbolic incongruence* and *unacceptable trade-off* (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b).

Existing studies verified the presence of *unmet expectations* as an influential factor for the behavioural intention of brand avoidance (Kim et al., 2013) and even suggested that negative previous experiences are the most important in anti-consumption behaviour (Lee et al., 2012; Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2011; Winchester & Romaniuk, 2008). Moreover, Winchester and Romaniuk's (2008) research on the relationship between negative brand beliefs and purchase behaviour showed that negative beliefs about the brand are usually formed not prior to the purchase but after it. Therefore, past consumers of the brand are more likely to have negative beliefs than current users or those who have never tried the brand (Winchester & Romaniuk, 2008).

Unmet expectations as reasons motivating brand avoidance behaviour can be explained by expectancy disconfirmation and dissatisfaction theories (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b). Consumers can become dissatisfied with brands because of the gap between the pre-formed expectations and post-experience (Oliver, 1980; Parasuraman et al., 1985) and this negative disconfirmation can evoke dissatisfaction emotions and finally lead to brand rejection behaviour (Day & Bodur, 1978; Lee et al., 2009b; Oliva et al., 1992; Thompson et al., 2006; Winchester & Romaniuk, 2008).

In service industry the majority of reasons for dissatisfaction are directly related to the quality of the service provider's performance (Cho & Song, 2012; Day & Bodur, 1978; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b), such as carelessly and unprofessionally provided service, service provider's incompetence, dissatisfaction with a contact person or the core service (product attractiveness, pricing, payment service, and product information) or an institution providing a service itself (its client management, payment service, ease of use, brand image). Moreover, when a consumption experience has failed and has been very disappointing, even the service recovery actions such as product or service warranties, product returns can be seen as adding unnecessary inconvenience and complication which leads to a stronger dissatisfaction (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b). Furthermore, the unpleasant environment of a store or the place in which a service is provided can also contribute to negative brand experience (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b).

The second reason motivating consumers to avoid brands can be *symbolic incongruence (undesired self).* Consumers often reject products and services due to

their negative symbolic attributes (Hogg et al., 2009). Therefore, symbolic incongruence between brand and consumer can also be a reason for avoidance behaviour (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b). Consumers can create their self-identities and self-concepts not only through consumption of products and brands having positive symbolic values but also by rejecting and avoiding the ones having negative symbolic meanings (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013; Englis & Solomon, 1995; 1997; Hogg et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Sirgy, 1982). Moreover, there are individuals who are more likely to express their self-identities by consuming products or brands that match their identity, while others are more likely to express themselves by avoiding products or brand which can harm their self-esteem (Banister & Hogg, 2004).

Within undesired self, individuals also tend to avoid products, services or brands which are associated with some negative reference groups (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Englis & Solomon, 1995; 1997; Hogg, 1998; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b). Even though the conceptions of undesired self and negative reference groups seem alike, slight differences between them exist – consumers usually have a clear and concrete understanding of their undesired selves, while they highly stereotype the lifestyles of negative reference groups because they usually have insufficient or inaccurate information about that group (Englis & Solomon, 1995; Lee et al., 2009b). Therefore, in order to maintain, enhance or protect their esteem individuals avoid purchasing products/ services/ brands which have associations with groups they do not want to be associated with (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Sirgy, 1982). It does not mean that consumers only avoid groups which are inconsistent with the consumer's current self-identity; on the contrary, individuals usually want to look better than they are and so they avoid groups which are consistent with their current self-identities in order to enhance their self-image (Sirgy, 1982), or abandon products or brands that link them to former social groups they belonged to as they do not want to associate with them anymore (Hogg, 1998).

Moreover, some consumers avoid brands when they perceive them to be inauthentic (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b), as strong and very popular brands have a tendency to become over-commercialized and lose the image of authenticity and unique symbolism (Kozinets, 2002). For example, customers started to avoid "Starbucks" brand because of the lack of cultural distinctiveness and authentic personal touch (Thompson et al., 2006). Customers also tend to avoid brands when brand promises are viewed as inauthentic or fake (Lee et al., 2009b; Thompson et al., 2006). However, in the case of fast fashion, inauthenticity had a negative effect on fast fashion avoidance (Kim et al., 2013), therefore, this attribute can be perceived by consumers as either positive or negative. Furthermore, some individuals avoid mainstream brands because they think that these brands harm their sense of individuality (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b), this is especially typical for clothing brands – if a lot of people wear a particular brand, the ability of this brand to create the unique self-identity decreases and consumers who want to have an individual identity start to avoid this brand (Lee et al., 2009b).

The third reason motivating consumers to avoid brands can be an ***unacceptable cost to benefit trade-off,*** which can appear in different ways (Lee et al., 2009a). Lee et al. (2009a) revealed that some people avoid budget brands as they think that it is not worth paying money for low quality; on the other hand, there are consumers who decide not to purchase premium brands because they think that they are paying only for a brand name which adds no value. Brand unfamiliarity can also be seen as an unacceptable trade-off because a consumer might perceive an unfamiliar brand to have a higher risk associated with the purchase (Lee et al., 2009a; Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk; 2011). Moreover, some people judge the value and quality of brands based on their appearance, and if a brand attributes such as design or packaging are seen as unattractive, aesthetic insufficiency will be perceived as unacceptable trade-off (Lee et al., 2009a; Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk; 2011).

3.2. Societal/moral motives for brand avoidance

Differently from brand avoidance based on personal concerns, in moral brand avoidance consumers focus on societal needs rather than individual, resist to the forces which have negative impact on society and believe that they have to avoid certain brands because it is the right thing to do (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b). The main reason for brand avoidance regarding societal and moral concerns (moral brand avoidance type) is the ***ideological incompatibility*** between a company/brand and consumer, which can be divided into two sub-themes: ***country of origin effects*** and ***anti-hegemony*** (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b).

There are two types of consumers who avoid brands due to country of origin – the ones feeling animosity towards a particular country (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Mrad et al., 2013), and the others feeling financial patriotism for local brands (Kim et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Sandikci & Ekici, 2009). When a person is feeling animosity towards a country, he can refuse to buy the products from this country and avoid all brands originating from this country (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Mrad et al., 2013). Therefore, in this case consumer targets a company/brand indirectly, not as a company/brand itself, but as its country of origin (e. g., McDonald's or Coca Cola as American brands) (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013; Sandikci & Ekici, 2009). Also, if consumers are dissatisfied with a certain country's actions, they will try to avoid purchasing products from that country in front of their reference group (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999).

Sometimes brand avoidance can be expressed as consumers' resistance against an overpowering company and its products (Lee et al., 2011). When a brand becomes very strong and dominant, it reduces consumers' perceived or actual choices leaving them in a state of feeling disempowered so they try to escape this brand hegemony by actively refusing to purchase these brands (Cromie & Ewing, 2009; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b). In Rindell et al. (2013) and Lee et al. (2009a) research, size and power of the company were noticed as important reasons for consumers' brand

avoidance behaviour. However, research of Truong et al. (2011) on brand rejection in FMCG category showed a different situation - the rejection level of big brands (8%) was significantly lower than the rejection level of small brands (18%.). Hence, it is still unclear what effect on brand avoidance behaviour has the size of a company. Moreover, consumers can be dissatisfied not only with brand/company hegemony, but also with a domination of some country or nation in the world and target brands which are very symbolic to that country. For example, consumers can see "Coca Cola" as a symbol of the USA hegemony, which represents western cultural values and harm smaller local cultures, thus they decide to avoid this brand (Sandikci & Ekici, 2009).

Furthermore, usually big multi-national companies and brands are perceived as being impersonal and lacking any personal connection with consumers (Lee et al., 2009a). Also, larger companies and brands are perceived to be more corporate irresponsible (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b). In addition, Rindell et al. (2013) think that moral, ethical concerns lead to long-term and stable brand avoidance. However, in reality, usually there is a gap between consumers' behaviour and their ethical considerations, so what consumers think they would do does not mean they will actually behave this way (Joergens, 2006).

3.3. Brand avoidance motives for different product categories

Most of the limited research on brand rejection/avoidance is one-dimensional, analysing only singular reasons (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b) and usually for different product category brands such as only FMCG category products (Truong et al., 2011), grocery products (Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2011), fashion/clothing products (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Kim et al., 2013), financial services, fast food (Winchester & Romaniuk, 2008), software (Cromie & Ewing, 2009), or genetically modified products (Lee et al., 2012), with less attention paid to services and their brands. International brand rejection research by Truong et al. (2011) in FMCG categories showed that the level of brand rejection is higher for small brands, and high variances were also noticed between brands in product categories of hair care products, pasta and chocolate. Moreover, brand rejection levels in the same product categories differed in different countries. Cromie and Ewing (2009) showed that brand hegemony is an important motivational driver for rejection/avoidance behaviour in software products category. Banister and Hogg (2004) found out that symbolic incongruence motivates rejection/ avoidance of fashion goods. Nenycz-Thiel and Romaniuk (2011) showed that the most common reasons for brand avoidance of private and national grocery products labels are related to negative past experience, following low perceived product quality, spill over effect, and lack of trust for private labels. Kim et al. (2013) verified that symbolic incongruence, unmet expectations and ideological dissatisfaction have influence on fast fashion avoidance. Lee et al. (2012) discovered that consumers avoid genetic modified products because of safety concerns, symbolic incongruity and moral opposition. Winchester and Romaniuk (2008) indicated that past users had the highest tendency to

have negative beliefs about fast-food brands with the majority of participants thinking that fast-food restaurants had a boring product range. However, service brands in brand avoidance research get far less attention. Most of the research focuses either on fast food takeaways/restaurant chains (Hogg, 1998; Krishnamurthy & Kuruk, 2009; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Sandikci & Ekici, 2009; Thompson et al., 2006; Winchester & Romaniuk, 2008;), coffeehouse chains (Krishnamurthy & Kuruk, 2009; Lee et al., 2009a; Thompson et al., 2006) or banks (Winchester & Romaniuk, 2008), and the reasons motivating consumers to avoid brands of these categories include those of unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence, unacceptable trade-off. Moreover, in Lee's researches (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b), McDonald's brand was mentioned in all the types of brand avoidance.

Nevertheless, research of brand avoidance motives for brands of different product/ service categories is still limited, and it can be said that specific brand avoidance reasons can be characteristic of brands of different product/service categories.

4. The role of negative emotions in brand avoidance

Brand avoidance behaviour appears when negative beliefs about brands become so strong that they can evoke negative emotions toward brands which act as barriers to purchasing (Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2011; Romani et al., 2009; 2012; Thompson et al., 2006). However, due to the complex nature of emotions, there exists a diversity of understanding emotion, which is reflected in a variety of emotion definitions (Cabanac, 2002; Sherer, 2005; Sørensen, 2008). Nevertheless, scholars agree that emotions have a role between environment events/stimuli and behavioural reactions (Dalli et al., 2007; Gilboa & Rafaeli, 2003; Romani et al., 2009; 2012; Sherer, 1994; 2005; Watson & Spence, 2007). The key functions of emotion include constant evaluation of external/internal stimuli based on their relevance to the organism and preparation for behavioural reactions (Klaus & Ekman, 2014). However, it is important to mention that non-emotional reactions to environmental stimuli may also exist (Sherer, 1994; 2005), but this paper focuses only on emotional reactions.

Consumers can express not only positive but also negative emotions toward brands (Dalli et al., 2007; Romani et al., 2009; 2012). Since a common and widely accepted definition of emotion does not exist (Cabanac, 2002; Sherer, 2005; Sørensen, 2008), it is not surprising that there is no consensus in the literature on the classification of negative emotions. There is a range of studies analysing positive reactions toward brands, but the research on negative emotions is very limited, most of it focusing only on brand dissatisfaction (Dalli et al., 2007; Romani et al., 2009; 2012).

However, there have been a few attempts to classify consumer negative emotions. Richins (1997) was one of the first to provide a classification of consumer emotional reactions to consumption experiences and to introduce Consumption Emotion Set (CES) consisting of 17 (both – positive and negative) emotions. Laros and Steenkamp

(2005) proposed a hierarchy of consumer emotions, where 4 negative and 4 positive consumer basic emotions were distinguished. However, both classifications of negative emotions were based on general consumption experiences, not brand-related experiences, hence, some of the emotions might be not relevant in the case of negative emotions consumers feel toward brands. Also, the Laros and Steenkamp (2005) set includes only general basic emotions, while emotions toward brands may be more specific. Even though the CES model provides a broad range of emotions, it still misses some very important emotions such as embarrassment (Dalli et al., 2007; Romani et al., 2009; 2012). Moreover, both classifications are based on consumer emotional reactions to consumption experiences, neglecting the fact that consumers can feel negative emotions toward brands even if they have not purchased or consumed these brands (Romani et al., 2009; 2012). The Negative Emotions toward Brands (NEB) set introduced by Dalli et al. (2007) and Romani et al. (2009; 2012) deals with all previously mentioned issues, as its main focus is on negative emotions consumers experience toward brands. Therefore, the NEB set is of a higher value for this paper compared to other classifications as it focuses exclusively on negative emotions consumers feel toward brands.

It should be mentioned that Dalli et al. (2007) and Romani et al. (2009; 2012) have conducted a few studies analysing emotions and trying to construct a set and a scale for measuring negative emotions toward brands, therefore, slight differences exist in their proposed sets in different years (Table 2).

TABLE 2. **Classifications of consumer negative emotions**

Richins (1997)	**Laros & Steenkamp (2005)**	**Dalli et al., (2007)**	**Romani et al., (2009)**	**Romani et al., (2012)**
Consumption Emotions Set, negative emotions (CES)	Basic consumer negative emotions	Brand negative emotions (BNE)	Brand negative emotions (BNE)	Negative emotions toward brands (NEB)
Anger; Discontent; Worry; **Sadness;** Fear; Shame; Envy; Loneliness; Other items (guilty).	**Anger;** Fear; **Sadness;** Shame.	**Sadness:** **Anger;** Discontent; Disgust; Embarrassment; Fear.	Dislike; **Anger;** **Sadness;** Fear; Embarrassment.	Dislike; **Anger;** **Sadness;** Worry; Embarrassment; Discontent.

Compiled by the Authors based on: Richins, 1997; Laros & Steenkamp, 2005; Dalli et al., 2007; Romani et al., 2009; 2012

According to the latest NEB set, the key emotions consumers feel toward brands include ***dislike, anger, sadness, worry, embarrassment, and discontent*** (Romani et al., 2012). Anger, sadness and embarrassment were mentioned in all the three studies. Moreover, anger and sadness emotions are also in line with the CES and basic consumer emotions sets (Laros & Steenkamp, 2005; Richins, 1997); however, embarrassment was absent in these sets. In previous studies, Romani et al. (2012) used the term "fear", however, in the last research it was replaced with a term "worry". Similarly, the term "disgust" used in the first study was replaced with "dislike" in other studies. However, only the label names of emotions were changed, but the meaning stayed the same. Therefore, dislike emotion dimension is described by feelings of contempt, revulsion, and hate; anger includes descriptors of brands making consumers feel indignant, annoyed, resentful; sadness is described by heartbroken, sorrowful, and distressed; worry by threatened, insecure, worried; embarrassment by sheepish, ridiculous, embarrassed; discontent by dissatisfied, unfulfilled, discontented (Romani et al., 2012).

Based on all the analysed literature, it can be said that brand avoidance is one of the anti-consumption forms focusing on consumers' active and conscious rejection of certain brands excluding the cases when consumers cannot afford it, are unable to buy it or have no access to it. Different reasons motivating consumers to avoid brands exist (Iyer & Muncy, 2009; Kozinets et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009a; Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk 2011). So far, as there is a lack of research on brand avoidance topic, the framework of brand avoidance by Lee et al. (2009a) is the most comprehensive (Rindell et al., 2013), including the widest range of possible reasons/motives for brand avoidance behaviour, and is used as a basis in this paper.

5. Research Methodology

5.1. Research model and hypotheses

There is a lack of research and especially quantitative research on brand avoidance and relations among brand-related stimuli, different negative emotional reactions, and brand avoidance behaviour (Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b; Truong et al., 2011), therefore this study aims to develop an initial understanding about the issue. Therefore, the objective of this paper's empirical research is to examine relations between different brand-related stimuli and various consumers' negative emotions toward brands, as well as the relations between these various negative emotions and consumers' intention to avoid these brands. Based on the different qualitative and quantitative research analysed in the previous chapters, the research model of this paper was developed (Fig. 1).

Based on the literature analysis (chapters 3&4), 5 blocks of hypotheses were developed.

Assumption can be made that the stronger unmet expectations, the stronger negative emotions consumers will feel toward the brands. However, it is still not clear whether this relation exists between unmet expectations and all the negative emotions, hence the following hypotheses were developed:
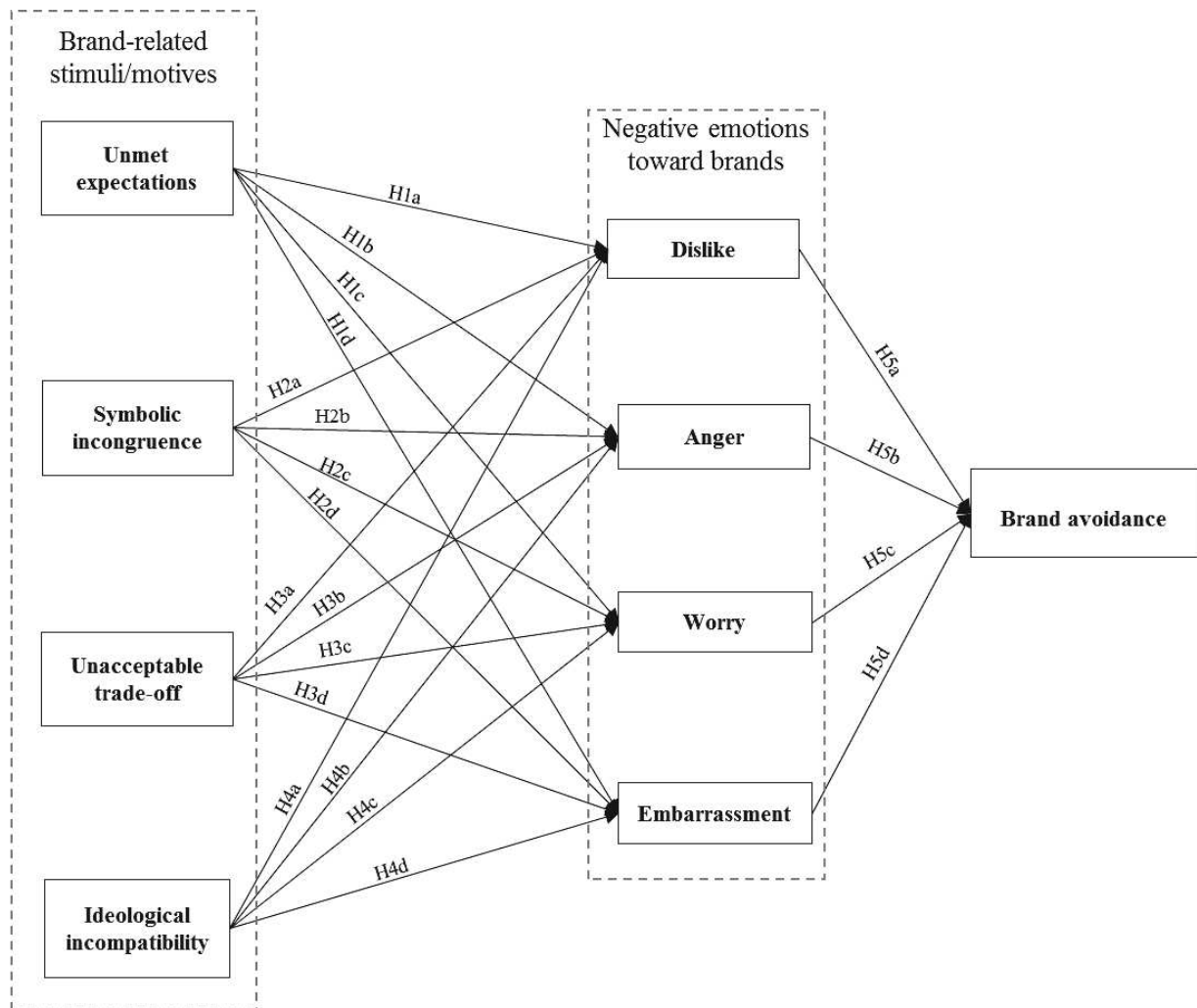
FIGURE 1. **Relations between brand-related stimuli,**
negative emotions towards brands and brand avoidance
Compiled by the Authors

H1a: *The more a brand fails to meet a consumer's expectations, the stronger dislike emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.*

H1b: *The more a brand fails to meet a consumer's expectations, the stronger anger emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.*

H1c: *The more a brand fails to meet a consumer's expectations, the stronger worry emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.*

H1d: *The more a brand fails to meet a consumer's expectations, the stronger embarrassment emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.*

Assumption can be made that the stronger symbolic incongruence exists between a consumer and a brand, the stronger negative emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand. However, it is still not clear whether this relation exists between symbolic incongruence and all the negative emotions, so the following hypotheses were developed:

H2a: The stronger symbolic incongruence exists between a consumer and a brand, the stronger dislike emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

H2b: The stronger symbolic incongruence exists between a consumer and a brand, the stronger anger emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

H2c: The stronger symbolic incongruence exists between a consumer and a brand, the stronger worry emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

H2d: The stronger symbolic incongruence exists between a consumer and a brand, the stronger embarrassment emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

Assumption can be made that the more unacceptable cost to benefit trade-off a brand is offering, the stronger negative emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand. However, it is still not clear whether this relation exists between unacceptable trade-off and all of the negative emotions, therefore the following hypotheses were developed:

H3a: The more unacceptable trade-off a brand is offering, the stronger dislike emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

H3b: The more unacceptable trade-off a brand is offering, the stronger anger emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

H3c: The more unacceptable trade-off a brand is offering, the stronger worry emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

H3d: The more unacceptable trade-off a brand is offering, the stronger embarrassment emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

Assumption can be made that the stronger ideological incompatibility between a consumer and a brand exists, the stronger negative emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand. However, it is still not clear whether this relation exists between ideological incompatibility and all the negative emotions, so the following hypotheses were developed:

H4a: The stronger ideological incompatibility between a consumer and a brand exists, the stronger dislike emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

H4b: The stronger ideological incompatibility between a consumer and a brand exists, the stronger anger emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

H4c: The stronger ideological incompatibility between a consumer and a brand exists, the stronger worry emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

H4d: The stronger ideological incompatibility between a consumer and a brand exists, the stronger embarrassment emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

Assumption can be made that negative emotions toward brands lead to brand rejection/avoidance behaviour, and the stronger negative emotions a consumer feels toward the brand, the stronger would be the consumer's intention to avoid this brand.

Moreover, studies confirmed that dislike, anger, worry/fear, and embarrassment have impact on brand switching. Therefore, the following hypotheses were developed:

H5a: *The stronger dislike emotions a consumer feels toward the brand, the stronger is the consumer's intention to avoid this brand.*

H5b: *The stronger anger emotions a consumer feels toward the brand, the stronger is the consumer's intention to avoid this brand.*

H5c: *The stronger worry emotions a consumer feels toward the brand, the stronger is the consumer's intention to avoid this brand.*

H5d: *The stronger embarrassment emotions a consumer feels toward the brand, the stronger is the consumer's intention to avoid this brand.*

5.2. Data collection, questionnaire development and reliability, limitations

As the majority of brand avoidance studies are based on qualitative research, this study is dedicated to examine with wider population the relations among brand-related stimuli, consumers' negative emotions toward brands and intention to brand avoidance behaviour. Therefore, quantitative methods are used for this research. *Online survey* was chosen as a primary data collection method. Two online surveys were carried out for this research – the first one is a pilot survey to test the reliability of the construct and the second was used to reach the objective of the empirical research.

The initial questionnaire was constructed of five parts and contained 6 questions, making 32 items in total. Control question "please indicate if there is a brand toward which you feel negative emotions" was presented to make sure that respondents felt negative emotions toward brands and were suitable for the survey. If the respondents marked "yes", they were also asked to identify the names of brands toward which they experienced negative emotions. As consumers feel different emotions toward different brands, free-choice of brands questioning style helped to obtain information on various emotions. In the emotions part questions measured four types of consumers' negative emotions toward brands. A 12-item adapted subset of Romani et al. (2012) "Negative Emotions toward Brands" (NEB) scale was used. As this study focuses on emotions leading to brand rejection/avoidance behaviour, the whole NEB scale was not used – scales measuring only relevant emotions (dislike, anger, worry, and embarrassment) were selected. The items were represented on a 7-point Likert scale (1- not at all, 7-very much). In the stimuli/motivations part questions measuring four brand avoidance motivations/stimuli were presented. The scales used by Delzen (2014) were chosen to measure three types of brand avoidance motives (unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence, and ideological incompatibility). As Delzen (2014) proposed, the measures based on Lee et al. (2009b) initially identified reasons for brand avoidance, however, the unacceptable cost-to-benefit trade-off motivation measurement scale was missing in their last work. Therefore, for this study the statements for the unacceptable trade-off motivation scale were derived from Lee et al. (2009a) research. The whole

proposed stimuli/motivations construct consisted of 15 items, of which 3 belonged to the unmet expectations scale, 5 to symbolic incongruence scale, 4 to ideological incompatibility scale, and 3 to unacceptable trade-off scale. The items were represented on a 5-point Likert scale (1- strongly disagree, 5- strongly agree). Brand avoidance behaviour part contained questions measuring consumers' intention for brand avoidance/rejection behaviour. The brand rejection scale consisting of 5 items proposed by Delsen (2014) was chosen. The items were represented on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree, 5 – strongly agree). Finally, two demographic questions about age and gender of the respondents were added.

A pre-test was carried out in order to test the inter-item reliability in the scales used for this study and to reduce the number of items if necessary. The non-probability convenience sampling was selected for the pre-test. The number of respondents was 96, of which 35 were deleted due to not passing the control question, hence leaving 61 valid responses. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 57, with an average of 30. Gender distribution of the respondents was 57 % female and 43 % male. 48 different brands were named by the respondents. The pre-test results analysis was done using SPSS software. Cronbach's alpha was used as a method to measure reliability of the scales in the pre-test questionnaire. The overview of each scale's Cronbach's alpha scores is presented in Table 3. The analysis showed that all emotions, stimuli and brand avoidance constructs had a good reliability, therefore, the same constructs were used in the final questionnaire. The only change made in the final questionnaire was that all scales were unified and all items were represented on a 7-point Likert scale.

As in the pre-test, the analysis of the reliability of the constructs used in the final survey was done by calculating the scores of Cronbach's alpha. The overview of each construct's Cronbach's alpha scores and its changes from the pre-test is presented in Table 3. The analysis showed that all the negative emotions, stimuli and brand avoidance constructs were reliable ($\alpha > 0.6$) and could be further used in the research.

TABLE 3. **Overview of Cronbach's alpha scores in pilot and final surveys**

Dimension	Cronbach's alpha (pre-test)	Cronbach's alpha (final survey)	Change in Cronbach's alphas
ED	0.902	0.881	-0.021
EA	0.8	0.796	-0.004
EW	0.906	0.914	0.008
EE	0.88	0.889	0.009
SUE	0.853	0.814	-0.039
SSI	0.904	0.959	0.055
SUT	0.734 / 0.852 (if SUT3 deleted)	0.720 / 0.762 (if SUT3 deleted)	-0.014
SII	0.941	0.934	-0.007
BA	0.884	0.893	0.009

Compiled by the Authors

The target population of this study was all adults in Lithuania who feel negative emotions toward brands. Based on the available time and financial resources to the researcher the non-probability convenience sampling was selected. With this technique the sample can be selected by the researcher in the cheapest and least time consuming way (Zikmund, Babin, 2012). However, as this is a non-probability sampling, it does not allow an objective evaluation of the precision of the sample results and no generalization to the target population can be made (Zikmund, Babin, 2012). Also, comparative research method cannot be used due to the fact that there is a lack of studies using quantitative research techniques, so there are simply not enough studies to compare to. Therefore, in this case, the "all you can afford" sample size approach was used to collect as many responses as possible within a certain time frame just to get an insight and deepen the knowledge about the issue (Beri, 2008). The data was collected in two ways: by printed questionnaires which were directly distributed to respondents and by online questionnaire distributed via various social media channels and email.

It is important to mention that this study can encounter a few possible research limitations. First of all, due to the fact that non-probability sampling is used no generalization to the target population can be made. Also, convenience sample can lead to the under-representation or over-representation of particular groups within the sample (e.g., over-representation of young people as it is easier to reach them by online surveys). Linguistic and cultural aspects can contribute to the research limitations as well. Some misinterpretations of the survey results can be caused by translation of the questionnaire from English to the Lithuanian language. Also, previous studies of consumers' negative emotions toward brands and their behavioural effects were carried out in Italy where people might be more emotional than Lithuanians, so it is possible that the level of valid responses might be lower. Finally, in this study only intention to brand avoidance behaviour is measured so it is not clear whether consumers act this way in reality as well.

5.3. Characteristics of respondents

The survey was conducted in Lithuania and took 3 weeks at the end of 2014. In total 328 respondents completed the questionnaire of which 275 filled in the online questionnaire and 53 – the printed version. However, 67 (20.4%) respondents indicated that they do not feel any negative emotions toward any specific brand, 1 respondent marked the same values in all the questions and 3 respondents completed the questionnaires too quickly. Hence, it was decided not to include their responses in the analysis, leaving a total of 257 valid responses. Overview of the characteristics of survey respondents is presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4. **Overview of characteristics of survey respondents**

Respondents	N	%
All respondents (53 completed a printed questionnaire, 275 – online)	328	100.0%
Respondents who do not feel negative emotions toward brands	67	20.4%
Respondents who filled in the questionnaire too quickly	3	0.9%
Respondents who marked the same values everywhere	1	0.3%
Valid respondents	**257**	**78.4%**
Valid respondents by gender:		
Male	126	49.0%
Female	131	51.0%
Valid respondents' age:		
Mean	29.61	
Minimum	19	
Maximum	65	

Compiled by the Authors.

6. Results

6.1. Brands towards which respondents feel negative emotions

The study of the survey results showed that of all 328 respondents almost 80% do feel negative emotions toward specific brands. 257 respondents have indicated in total 145 different brands. The brands most frequently mentioned by respondents (more than 7 times) included "Norfa" (4.3%) (retail chain), "Lukoil" (3.9%) (petrol stations), "Maxima" (3.9%) (retail chain), "McDonald's" (3.1%) (fast food restaurants), "Optima linija" (3.1%) (low price private label), and meat products branded by name "Tarybinės" (2.7%).

It is worth mentioning that there are significant differences in brands indicated by male and female respondents. Some of the brands were indicated more than once by both genders. These brands include "Norfa" (retail chain), "Lukoil" (petrol stations), "Optima linija" (low price private label), "McDonald's" (fast food restaurants), "Maxima" (retail chain), meat products named "Tarybinės", "Čili pica" (pizza restaurants), and "iPhone" (electronics). However, there are a lot of brands which were mentioned more than once only by women or by men. The brands which were mentioned more than once only by men include "Adidas" (sports clothing), "Omnitel" (telecommunications), "pigu.lt" (e-commerce), "Lada" (automobiles), "Samsung" (electronics), "Apple" (electronics), "Bitė" (telecommunications), "Blackberry" (electronics), "Coffee Inn" (cafes), "Ford" (automobiles), "Hesburger" (fast food restaurants), "Nintendo" (computer games). Women on the other hand indicated the following brands: "BMW" (automobiles), "Coca – Cola" (soft drinks), "Alita" (alcohol), "Amway" (home care and cosmetics), "Avon" (cosmetics), "Carskoje Selo" (restaurants), "Fairy" (home care), "inte.lt" (e-commerce), "Olialia!", "Opel" (automobiles), "rde.lt" (e-commerce), "Red Bull" (energizing drinks), "Ryanair" (air carrier), "Tele2" (telecommunications), and "Tide"

(home care). Hence, the list provided by men is dominated by brands from categories of sports, telecommunications, e-commerce, automobiles, and computer games. Nevertheless, the women also list brands from automobiles and e-commerce sectors; they also include brands from more "feminine" categories such as cosmetics, soft drinks or home care.

Furthermore, top 4 most frequently indicated brands are completely different in the men's and women's responses. Male top 4 included "Maxima", "Adidas", "Omnitel", and "pigu.lt", while that of women – "Norfa", "Lukoil", "Optima linija", and "McDonald's". Therefore, it can be seen that both, women and men, most frequently feel negative emotions towards retail brands, however, men disfavour "Maxima", while women – "Norfa".

6.2. Comparison of research model elements evaluations

To find out how respondents evaluated each of the element used in the research model, new variables were created and the means for each of the emotions, stimuli and brand avoidance constructs were calculated. Overview of the means of these research model elements is presented in Table 5. In order to analyse if there are any statistically significant differences in respondents' evaluations of different constructs used in the research and keeping in mind that in all constructs the scale type used was a 7 point Likert scale, the method of Repeated Measures ANOVA was chosen for the analysis. As Mauchly's Test of Sphericity $p<0.05$, the Greenhouse-Geisser criterion was used and it showed that there is a statistically significant difference among the compared means ($F=175.523$, $p<0.05$). The pairwise comparisons showed that the statistically significant differences exist among all the pairs ($p<0.05$) except 3 cases: dislike (ED), anger (EA) and symbolic incongruence (SSI) ($p>0.05$); unmet expectations (SUE) and unacceptable trade-off (SUT) ($p>0.05$); symbolic incongruence (SSI) and ideological incompatibility (SII) ($p>0.05$). Hence, respondents equally evaluate the compared elements in these cases.

Table 5. Overview of means of research model elements

	M	Std. Deviation	N
Dislike (ED)	4.4968	1.88633	257
Anger (EA)	4.4630	1.75904	257
Worry (EW)	2.6809	1.92464	257
Embarrassment (EE)	1.9611	1.46346	257
Unmet expectations (SUE)	5.2270	1.46928	257
Symbolic incongruence (SSI)	4.2807	2.15985	257
Unacceptable trade-off (SUT)	5.1401	1.35763	257
Ideological incompatibility (SII)	3.9387	2.02255	257
Brand avoidance (BA)	6.0191	1.18631	257

Compiled by the Authors.

The previously mentioned mean of research model elements comparison analysis showed that among the four negative emotions consumers feel toward brands, dislike (M_{ED}=4.4968) and anger (M_{EA}=4.4630) were the strongest, meaning that the respondents somewhat agree that they experience these emotions. Looking at the stimuli part, it was determined that the respondents somewhat agree that the brands towards which they feel negative emotions have not met their expectations (M_{SUE}=5.2270) and provided unacceptable trade-off (M_{SUT}=5.1401). However, the respondents could not confirm if symbolic incongruence exists between them and their indicated brands (M_{SSI}=4.2807); besides, they neither agree nor disagree that there is an ideological incompatibility between them and the indicated brands (M_{SII}=3.9387). Finally, the study showed that survey participants mostly agree that they avoid brands towards which they feel negative emotions (M_{BA}=6.0191).

Two independent sample t tests showed that statistically significant differences exist comparing evaluations of worry (EW), embarrassment (EE), unmet expectations (SUE) and brand avoidance (BA) variables by gender ($p<0.05$). The analysis showed that female respondents feel stronger worry emotions toward brands (M=3.0483) than male respondents (M=2.2989) as t=-3.175, $p<0.05$. Also, female respondents feel stronger embarrassment emotions toward brands (M=2.0814) than male respondents (M=1.836) (t=-1.346, $p<0.05$). Female respondents also tend to agree more (M=5.4046) than male respondents (M=5.042) that brands toward which they experience negative emotions have not met their expectations (t=-1.987, $p<0.05$). In addition to that, female respondents statistically significantly more tend to avoid brands (M=6.1756) than male respondents (M=5.8563) (t=-2.165, $p<0.05$). No differences were found comparing the evaluations of the rest variables. Hence, looking at the analysis results, it can be said that either evaluations of variables by women and men are equal, or women evaluations are higher than men. This might be explained by the fact that there were significant differences in brands indicated by women and men towards which respondents feel negative emotions.

6.3. Results of brand-related stimuli, negative emotions, and brand avoidance analysis

In order to confirm or reject the research hypotheses, the relationships among various stimuli, negative emotions, and intention for brand avoidance behaviour were examined. This was done by conducting a correlation analysis. Summary of research results is presented in Table 6.

Hypotheses **H1a** and **H1b** were confirmed. Correlation analysis showed that statistically significant positive but very weak ($p<0.05$, Pearson's r=0.194) relationship exists between unmet expectations (SUE) and dislike emotion (ED) consumers feel towards brands. Hence, this means that the more brand fails to meet consumer's expectations, the stronger dislike emotions consumer will feel towards the brand. Also, analysis showed that statistically significant relationship exists between unmet

TABLE 6. **Summary of research results**

	Hypothesis	Sig. (2-tailed)	Pearson's r	Confirmed/ rejected
H1a	The more a brand fails to meet a consumer's expectations, the stronger dislike emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand	0.002	0.194	confirmed
H1b	The more a brand fails to meet a consumer's expectations, the stronger anger emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand	0.000	0.308	confirmed
H1c	The more a brand fails to meet a consumer's expectations, the stronger worry emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand	0.747	0.020	rejected
H1d	The more a brand fails to meet a consumer's expectations, the stronger embarrassment emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand	0.614	0.032	rejected
H2a	The stronger symbolic incongruence exists between a consumer and a brand, the stronger dislike emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand	0.000	0.265	confirmed
H2b	The stronger symbolic incongruence exists between a consumer and a brand, the stronger anger emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand	0.111	0.100	rejected
H2c	The stronger symbolic incongruence exists between a consumer and a brand, the stronger worry emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand	0.000	0.233	confirmed
H2d	The stronger symbolic incongruence exists between a consumer and a brand, the stronger embarrassment emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.	0.000	0.393	confirmed
H3a	The more unacceptable trade-off a brand is offering, the stronger dislike emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.	0.000	0.358	confirmed
H3b	The more unacceptable trade-off a brand is offering, the stronger anger emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.	0.000	0.284	confirmed
H3c	The more unacceptable trade-off a brand is offering, the stronger worry emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.	0.119	0.097	rejected
H3d	The more unacceptable trade-off a brand is offering, the stronger embarrassment emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.	0.111	0.100	rejected
H4a	The stronger ideological incompatibility between a consumer and a brand exists, the stronger dislike emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.	0.000	0.542	confirmed
H4b	The stronger ideological incompatibility between a consumer and a brand exists, the stronger anger emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.	0.000	0.399	confirmed
H4c	The stronger ideological incompatibility between a consumer and a brand exists, the stronger worry emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.	0.000	0.417	confirmed

TABLE 6 (continued). **Summary of research results**

Hypothesis		Sig. (2-tailed)	Pearson's r	Confirmed/ rejected
H4d	The stronger ideological incompatibility between a consumer and a brand exists, the stronger embarrassment emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.	0.013	0.154	confirmed
H5a	The stronger dislike emotions a consumer feels toward the brand, the stronger is the consumer's intention to avoid this brand.	0.001	0.211	confirmed
H5b	The stronger anger emotions a consumer feels toward the brand, the stronger is the consumer's intention to avoid this brand.	0.685	0.025	rejected
H5c	The stronger worry emotions a consumer feels toward the brand, the stronger is the consumer's intention to avoid this brand.	0.127	0.095	rejected
H5d	The stronger embarrassment emotions a consumer feels toward the brand, the stronger is the consumer's intention to avoid this brand.	0.143	0.092	rejected

Compiled by the Authors.

expectations (SUE) and anger emotion (EA) consumers feel towards brands; the relationship is positive but weak ($p < 0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.380$), meaning that the more brand fails to meet consumer's expectations, the stronger anger emotions the consumer will feel towards the brand.

Hypotheses **H1c** and **H1d** were rejected. Analysis showed that statistically significant relationship does not exist between unmet expectations (SUE) and worry emotion (EW) consumers feel towards brands ($p > 0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.020$). No relationship has been found between unmet expectations (SUE) and embarrassment emotion (EE) consumers feel towards brands ($p > 0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.032$). It can be stated that survey results provided only some support for the expectation that positive relationship exists between unmet expectations as brand-related stimuli and negative emotions consumers feel towards brands. Research findings that the more brand fails to meet consumer's expectations, the stronger dislike and anger emotions consumer will feel toward this brand are in line with Bryson et al. (2013) and Delzen (2014) findings that the higher consumer dissatisfaction with negative experience with brands exists, the stronger brand hate consumers will feel. However, no significant relations have been found between unmet expectations and worry or embarrassment emotions. This shows that unmet expectations tend to make consumers angry and motivate them to dislike brands, but they do not make consumers feel worried or embarrassed.

Hypotheses **H2a, H2c** and **H2d** were confirmed. Correlation analysis showed that statistically significant relationship exists between symbolic incongruence (SSI) and dislike emotion (ED) consumers feel towards brands; the relationship is positive and

weak (p<0.05, Pearson's r=0.265), which means that the stronger symbolic incongruence exists between the consumer and the brand, the stronger dislike emotions the consumer will feel towards the brand. Also, analysis showed a statistically significant positive but weak (p<0.05, Pearson's r=0.233) relationship between symbolic incongruence (SSI) and worry emotion (EW) consumers feel towards brands, which indicates that the stronger symbolic incongruence exists between the consumer and the brand, the stronger worry emotions the consumer will feel towards the brand. Moreover, statistically significant positive but weak (p<0.05, Pearson's r=0.393) relationship between symbolic incongruence (SSI) and embarrassment emotion (EE) consumers feel towards brands shows that the stronger symbolic incongruence exists between the consumer and the brand, the stronger embarrassment emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

Hypothesis **H2b** was rejected. Analysis showed no statistically significant relationship between symbolic incongruence (SSI) and anger emotion (ED) consumers feel toward brands (p>0.05, Pearson's r=0.111). Analysis of brand avoidance literature has shown that consumers create their self-identities by rejecting brands which have some negative symbolic meanings (Banister & Hogg, 2004; Hogg et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2009a; Lee et al., 2009b), hence symbolic incongruence is one of the motivations/stimuli for brand avoidance which should also have some positive relation with negative emotions consumers feel towards brands (Dalli et al., 2007; Gilboa & Rafaeli, 2003; Romani et al., 2009; 2012; Sherer, 1994; 2005; Watson & Spence, 2007). However, from research results it can be seen that this is true only in the case of dislike, worry and embarrassment emotions. The stronger the symbolic incongruence between the brand and self-identity of the consumer, the stronger dislike he will feel toward the brand as it can represent the opposite to the wanted self-identity. Also, the stronger the symbolic incongruence, the more worried or embarrassed the consumer might feel because the brand might create association with the kind of person they do not want to be associated with. However, analysis of survey results revealed that no relationship exists between symbolic incongruence and anger emotion. The reason for this might be that anger is an emotion quite similar to dislike, as one of anger descriptors is feeling annoyed, while feeling of hatred belongs to dislike descriptors. Therefore, with regard to symbolic incongruence the consumers probably feel the more intense, harder emotion of dislike than anger.

Hypotheses **H3a** and **H3b** were confirmed. Analysis showed that statistically significant positive but weak (p<0.05, Pearson's r=0.358) relationship exists between unacceptable trade-off (SUT) and dislike emotion (ED) consumers feel towards brands. This indicates that the more unacceptable trade-off brand is offering, the stronger dislike emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand. Also, statistically significant positive but weak (p<0.05, Pearson's r=0.284) relationship exists between unacceptable trade-off (SUT) and anger emotion (EA) consumers feel towards brands. Therefore, the more unacceptable trade-off brand is offering, the stronger anger emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

Hypotheses **H3c** and **H3d** were rejected. Analysis showed that statistically significant relationship does not exist between unacceptable trade-off (SUT) and worry emotion (EW) consumers feel towards brands ($p>0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.097$). There is no statistically significant relationship between unacceptable trade-off (SUT) and embarrassment emotion (EE) consumers feel towards brands ($p>0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.100$). Therefore, correlation analysis results showed that relations exists only between unacceptable trade-off and dislike and anger emotions, however, no relations have been identified with worry and embarrassment emotions. The findings with regard to dislike and anger emotions are in line with literature stating that relationship between stimuli and negative emotions exists (Dalli et al., 2007; Gilboa & Rafaeli, 2003; Romani et al., 2009; 2012; Sherer, 1994; 2005; Watson & Spence, 2007). However, it can be assumed that relationships should exist with all various negative emotions consumers feel towards brands – relations might exist between stimuli and only some specific emotions. Also, it is important to mention that results of the analysis of relations among unacceptable trade-off and various negative emotions are very similar to those of unmet expectations when relations were identified only with dislike and anger emotions.

Hypotheses **H4a, H4b, H4c** and **H4d** were confirmed. Correlation analysis showed that statistically significant positive and averagely strong ($p<0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.542$) relationship exists between ideological incompatibility (SII) and dislike emotion (ED) consumers feel towards brands, which indicates that the stronger ideological incompatibility between consumer and brand exists, the stronger dislike emotions consumer will feel toward the brand. Also, the analysis revealed that there is a statistically significant positive but weak ($p<0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.399$) relationship between ideological incompatibility (SII) and anger emotion (EA) consumers feel towards brands. Therefore, the stronger ideological incompatibility between the consumer and the brand exists, the stronger anger emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand. Moreover, statistically significant positive and averagely strong ($p<0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.417$) relationship exists between ideological incompatibility (SII) and worry emotion (EW) consumers feel towards brands, meaning that the stronger ideological incompatibility between consumer and brand exists, the stronger worry emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand. Finally, it was found that statistically significant positive but very weak ($p<0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.154$) relationship exists between ideological incompatibility (SII) and embarrassment emotion (EE) consumers feel towards brands. Therefore, the stronger ideological incompatibility between the consumer and the brand exists, the stronger embarrassment emotions the consumer will feel toward the brand.

Results revealed that relations exist between ideological incompatibility and all negative emotions consumers feel towards brands – dislike, anger, worry, and embarrassment. These findings are in line with analysed literature, stating that emotions are a mediator between stimuli and consumers' behaviour (Dalli et al., 2007; Gilboa & Rafaeli, 2003; Romani et al., 2009; 2012; Sherer, 1994; 2005; Watson & Spence, 2007), so there should be relationship between ideological incompatibility and negative emotions towards brands. Also, the case with anger emotion matches the findings of

Rindel et al. (2013) qualitative research, which showed that relationships exist between brands which act unethically and anger emotion. In addition, these findings are in line with Delzen (2014) study where relations between ideological incompatibility and brand hate (which is equal to dislike emotion in this study) were identified. What is more, it is very important to note that ideological incompatibility is exceptional as this is the only brand-related motive/stimulus which has positive relations with all the negative emotions consumers feel towards brands.

Hypothesis **H5a** was confirmed. Analysis showed that statistically significant positive but weak ($p<0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.211$) relationship exists between dislike emotion (ED) consumers feel toward brands and brand avoidance (BA). Therefore, the stronger dislike emotion the consumer feels toward brand, the stronger is the consumer's intention to avoid this brand.

Hypotheses **H5b, H5c** and **H5d** hypotheses were rejected. Analysis revealed that statistically significant relationship does not exist between anger emotion (EA) consumers feel towards brands and brand avoidance (BA) ($p>0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.025$). There is no statistically significant relationship between worry emotion (EW) consumers feel towards brands and brand avoidance (BA) ($p>0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.095$). Moreover, analysis revealed that statistically significant relationship does not exist between embarrassment emotion (EE) consumers feel toward brands and brand avoidance (BA) ($p>0.05$, Pearson's $r=0.092$).

After analysing the literature it was thought that the stronger negative emotion consumers feel towards brands, the stronger their intention will be to avoid these brands (Delzen, 2014; Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Romani et al., 2012). However, research results do not completely support this idea. Romani et al. (2009, 2012) studies showed that dislike, anger, worry/fear, and embarrassment emotions towards brands have effect on brand switching/rejection behaviour. However, the findings of this study suggest that relationship between negative emotions and consumers' intention to avoid brands exists only in the case of dislike emotion. There might be a few reasons why these differences in findings emerged. First of all, this can be explained by the fact that respondents of this study tend to feel very weak worry and embarrassment emotions, while dislike emotion is quite strong. Moreover, it is known that cultural differences do have an impact on consumer behaviour (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Besides, Mesquita and Walker (2003) state that culture also has impact on emotions, and emotions tend to vary across different cultures. As studies of Romani et al. (2009, 2012) were carried out in Italy, it might be that Italians feel different emotions than Lithuanians because of these cross-cultural differences. Also, it is important not to forget that other countries have different brands to which specific emotions might be especially characteristic.

Therefore, results of this research do not support the expectations based on the theoretical basis that relations exist between all different brand-related stimuli and various negative emotions, or between all various negative emotions and intention to avoid brands. Visualisation of existing relations with Pearson's r coefficients is provided in the revised research model in Figure 2.
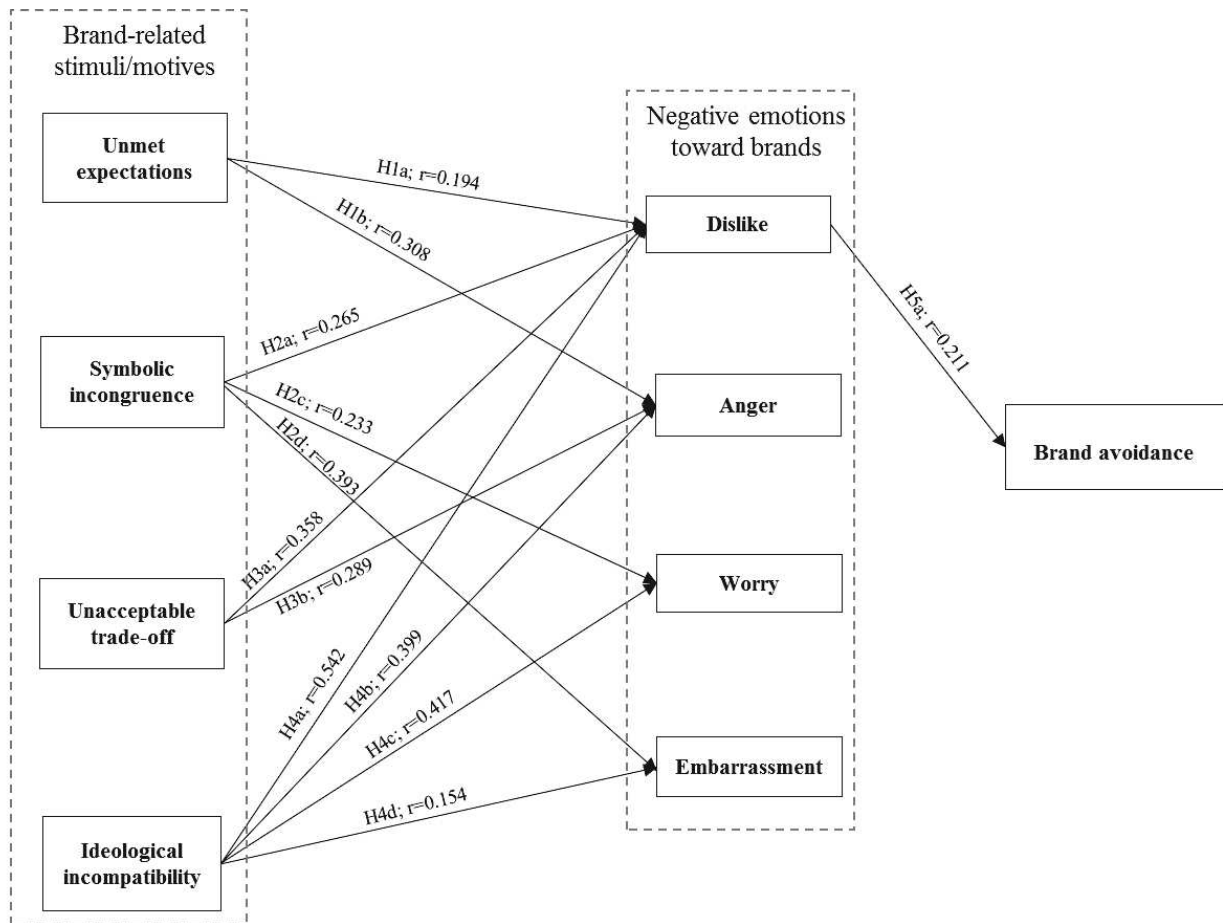
FIGURE 2. **Revised model based on empirical research results
demonstrating only existing relations**

Compiled by the Authors.

6.4. Regression analysis

In order to analyse what impact various stimuli have on dislike emotion consumers feel towards brands, regression analysis was carried out. Two regression models were composed. The first model with equation consisting of 5 elements (dislike emotion and the four stimuli: unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence, unacceptable trade-off, and ideological incompatibility) is appropriate as ANOVA's $p < 0.05$. 33.3% of the response variable variation is explained by the linear model ($R^2 = 0.333$). However, t-test showed that unmet expectations (SUE) and symbolic incongruence (SSI) are not suitable to explain the impact of dislike emotion, hence, these elements were removed from the model (t-test $p > 0.05$).

Regression model of dislike emotion and 4 stimuli

Model Summary

Model	R	R Sguare	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.577a	.333	.322	1.55307

a. Predictors: (Constant), Ideological incompatibility, Unmet expectations, Symbolic incongruence, Unacceptable trade-off

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	303.085	4	75.771	31.414	.000[b]
	Residual	607.829	252	2.412		
	Total	910.914	256			

a. Dependent Variable: Dislike

b. Predictors: (Constant), Ideological incompatibility, Unmet expectations, Symbolic incongruence, Unacceptable trade-off

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.140	.462		2.468	.014
	Unmet expectations	0.32	.076	.025	.417	.677
	Symbolic incongruence	.021	.052	.024	.404	.686
	Unacceptable trade-off	.272	.084	.195	3.250	.001
	Ideological incompatibility	.433	.056	.465	7.727	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Dislike

After the removal of these elements, a new model was composed. The remaining elements explain 33.2% of the variation ($R^2 = 0.332$) and all of them are suitable to explain the impact on dislike emotion (t-test $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the regression equation is **ED= 1.268+ 0.288*SUT+0.444*SII.**

Prerequisites of regression model existence were tested. No multicollinearity (VIF<4), outliers (Cook's coeficient < 1, DFBetas < 1), and autocorrelation (Durbin-Watson coeficient = 2.004) were found.

Regression model of dislike emotion, unacceptable trade off and ideological incompatibility

Model Summary

Model	R	R Sguare	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.576[a]	.332	.327	1.54779

a. Predictors: (Constant), Ideological incompatibility, Unacceptable trade-off

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	302.420	2	151.210	63.119	.000[b]
	Residual	608.494	254	2.396		
	Total	910.914	256			

a. Dependent Variable: Dislike

b. Predictors: (Constant), Ideological incompatibility, Unacceptable trade-off

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.268	.386		3.282	.001
Unacceptable trade-off	.288	.075	.207	3.834	.000
Ideological incompatibility	.444	.050	.476	8.804	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Dislike

Regression analysis was also used to find out what impact dislike emotion has on the consumers' intention to avoid brands. Analysis between dislike emotion and brand avoidance showed that regression equation can exist as ANOVA's p < 0.05. Dislike emotion is suitable to explain brand avoidance (t-test p < 0.05). However, it is important to mention that only 4.4% of the response variable variation is explained by dislike emotion ($R^2 = 0.044$). Therefore, the regression equation is **BA= 5.424 + 0.132*ED.**

Prerequisites of this regression model existence were tested as well. No multicollinearity (VIF<4), outliers (Cook's coeficient < 1, DFBetas < 1) or auto-correlation (Durbin-Watson coefficient =1.979) were found.

Regression model of dislike and brand avoidance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Sguare	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.211[a]	.044	.041	1.16198

a. Predictors: (Constant), Dislike

ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	15.975	1	15.975	11.832	.001[b]
Residual	344.301	255	1.350		
Total	360.277	256			

a. Dependent Variable: Brand avoidance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Dislike

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	5.424	.188		28.897	.000
Dislike	.132	.038	.211	3.440	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Brand avoidance

7. Conclusions

Scientific literature on anti-consumption and brand avoidance topics states that brand avoidance is a form of consumers' deliberate anti-consumption behaviour targeting brands due to some societal or personal motivations, excluding the cases when consumers cannot afford them, are unable to buy them or have no access to them.

Analysis of brand avoidance literature revealed that two categories of brand avoidance motives/stimuli exist based on personal and societal motivations. The first category includes brand-related stimuli of unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence and unacceptable cost to benefit trade-off, while the category of societal motivations includes the stimulus of ideological incompatibility.

Furthermore, the analysis of the literature about negative emotions leads to the conclusion that consumers *do* experience specific negative emotions towards certain brands that make the consumers avoid the brands. These emotions include dislike, anger, worry, and embarrassment.

Based on the literature about brand avoidance and negative emotions, assumption that negative emotions toward brands play a role in the relation between brand-related stimuli and brand avoidance behaviour was developed, stating that the stronger brand-related stimuli exist, the stronger negative emotions consumers will feel towards brands; and the stronger negative emotions consumers feel toward brands, the stronger their intention will be to avoid these brands.

The study revealed that respondents from Lithuania feel negative emotions toward many different brands from various product and service categories. However, it can be noticed that a few brands were mentioned more frequently than others and the top 5 most frequently mentioned brands include "Norfa" (retail chain), "Lukoil" (petrol stations), "Maxima" (retail chain), "McDonald's" (fast food restaurants), and a low price private label "Optima linija".

A study of survey results showed that consumers think unmet expectations and unacceptable trade-off are equally characteristic of the brands towards which they feel negative emotions. What is more, brands make consumers feel dislike and anger emotions toward them. Therefore, consumers *do* tend to avoid brands, but in general women tend to avoid brands more than men.

Research confirmed that positive relations exist between unmet expectations and dislike as well as anger emotions consumers feel toward brands. However, unlike the analysed literature, no relationship has been identified between unmet expectations stimuli and worry or embarrassment emotions.

Results of the research supported the hypothesis that the stronger symbolic incongruence exists between the consumer and the brand, the stronger dislike, worry or embarrassment emotions consumers feel toward the brand. However, in contrast to the analysed literature and the findings of other studies, no statistically significant relation has been found between symbolic incongruence and anger emotion.

Research confirmed that positive relations exist between unacceptable trade-off and dislike as well as anger emotions consumers feel toward brands. However, no

relationship has been identified between the unacceptable trade-off stimuli and worry or embarrassment emotions.

Research confirmed that positive relations exist between ideological incompatibility and each of the negative emotions consumers feel towards brands – dislike, anger, worry and embarrassment. These findings fully matched the ideas of the analysed literature and the findings of other studies.

Results of the research did not support the expectations that each of the negative emotions consumers feel towards brands has positive relationship with consumers' intention to avoid brands. The study showed that relationship exists only between dislike emotion and brand avoidance, while no relations have been found between anger, worry or embarrassment emotions and brand avoidance.

Regression analysis confirmed that unmet expectations and symbolic incongruence are not suitable to explain dislike emotion, and only unacceptable trade-off and ideological incompatibility explain the impact of dislike emotion by 33.2%. On the other hand, dislike emotion is suitable to explain brand avoidance, but to a very limited extent (4.4%).

On the basis of this research, it can be concluded that brand managers should try to prevent or at least minimize the extent of dislike emotion consumers feel toward brands as this is the only negative emotion which has positive relations with all the brand-related stimuli and consumers' intention to avoid brands.

This research was one of the first attempts to analyse brand avoidance phenomenon in emerging markets, however, this research should be expanded further including other emerging countries and applying probability sampling to overcome research limitations.

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