

Effect of Negative Brand Experience on Brand Avoidance with the Mediating Effect of Brand Trust with the Special Reference to Mobile Telecommunication Industry in Sri Lankan Context

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On par with the claimed research gaps found in the telecommunication sector, this study examined the influence of negative brand experiences on brand avoidance within the mobile telecommunications sector in Sri Lanka, emphasizing the mediating role of brand trust. Negative brand experiences encompass poor product quality, customer service issues, pricing dissatisfaction, and network or connectivity problems, while brand avoidance manifests through experiential, identity, moral, and advertising-related drivers. The research was based on a positivism paradigm and a deductive approach, supported by primary data collected from 400 respondents via a structured questionnaire. The data collection was aligned with the convenient sampling method.

The findings reveal a significant positive correlation between negative brand experiences and brand avoidance. Furthermore, brand trust partially mediates this relationship, indicating its critical role in mitigating the adverse effects of negative brand encounters. The study underscores that dissatisfaction stemming from service failures, substandard product performance, or perceived unfairness intensifies brand avoidance behaviors among consumers.

Practical implications for Sri Lanka's mobile telecommunications industry include the necessity of efficient complaint management systems, enhanced customer service frameworks, and proactive strategies to rebuild trust. Companies should address these factors to retain customers and reduce brand switching. The research also expands the theoretical understanding of brand avoidance by integrating psychological and emotional dimensions, focusing on the interplay between consumer-brand relationships and adverse brand experiences.

Key contributions of this study include highlighting the importance of addressing the gaps in the literature referring to Sri Lankan context, providing actionable insights for brand managers for implications whilst addressing to the empirical gaps . Limitations of the study include the sector-specific focus and reliance on non-probability sampling, restricting the generalizability of the findings. Future research should explore broader contexts and additional factors influencing consumer behavior to develop a comprehensive understanding of brand dynamics.

Keywords: *Brand Avoidance, Brand Trust, Negative Brand Experience, Telecommunications Industry*