

BRAND IMAGE & REFLECTIONS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN UAE WITH CAR BUYERS OF UAE NATIONALS

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Abstract

This particular study mainly focuses on the level of brand image influence the UAE nationals while purchasing cars. The primary objective of the study is to identify whether the brand name having a higher influence among the equal price range of cars. In the contemporary world, brand of a company / product not only demonstrating the identity, nevertheless many other significant factors associated like., perceived quality, lifestyle of the consumers, customer preferences & taste etc. The secondary objective of this study is to understand the driving force for the consumer motivation and decision making to purchasing cars in United Arab Emirates. This particular study has been conducted through both primary and secondary data. With the sample size of four hundred, the study has been executed through random sampling technique. The collected data were analyzed with statistical tools like chi square, Garrett ranking and factor analysis, etc., to fulfill the objectives and also to draw conclusions. From the study, it is exposed that when a consumer purchases a car, brand image do influence his/her choice. The study also reveals that branded cars have a great place in the consumer mind, when customers go for purchasing a car; they prefer to purchase a well-known branded car instead experiment the new brand. The study definitely adds benefit to the marketing literature as a whole and specific to the brand branding of automobiles.

Keywords: Brand, Brand Image, Consumer Behavior, Purchase Decision, Level of Involvement

INTRODUCTION

Brands can have a huge impact on the purchasing decisions of a consumer. Also the features, benefits derived by owning and using a brand will influence the preference towards a particular brand. In this contemporary world, due to the growth of technological innovation and aesthetic design in the automobile sectors the automobile industry is flourishing in the market. The stiff competition in the market leads to incredible offering of wide choices to the customers. In UAE due to less crude oil prices and higher per-capita income, the car and buyers are plenty in this region. Importing vehicles from every part of the world become very common due to tax exemption in this country, eventually the customer behavior towards purchasing a car is very dynamic in nature. Frequently changing models depends on the trend is quite common among the customers. The used car business also plays substantial business contribution in the automobile industry. During the consumer decision making process while purchase, Brand is one among the major influencing factor in the selection. This paper attempts to identify the factors that influence brand image.

Statement of the Problem

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has become one of the favourite markets for automobile companies around the world, primarily as the Middle East has been one of the more resilient regional markets for automobile manufacturers compared with North America and Europe. Today, automobile industry in UAE is worth 12.84 US\$ billion. It is expected to grow to 15.45 US\$ billion by 2014. The industry is highly competitive with more than 25 distributors of different brands available in the market. In the given scenario of automobile industry in UAE, market share growth or maintenance depends to a large extent on the way a firm positions itself on those aspects which are most important to the customers. This study was conducted to devise suitable market entry strategy to build customer equity by enhancing customer value in a competitive scenario. In order to do so, an attempt was made to identify the underlying factors which result in the adoption of a particular Marketing Strategy. The present study provided insight into the different factors that affected the customer purchase decisions in the UAE automobile market.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the level of brand name influence on car purchase
2. To understand the driving force behind the consumer motivation on selective automobile brands in UAE

3. To critically analyze the significant factors influenced for purchasing behavior of automobiles like car

Chen et.al (2008) analyzed the connections between brand value, brand inclination, and buy expectations on worldwide air travelers' choices in Taiwan. The discoveries showed that there was as positive connections between brand value, brand inclination, and buy expectations with a control impact of exchanging cost influencing the relationship between brand value and buy aims. All the more particularly, the impact of brand value on buy aims is not huge for travelers with low exchanging costs.

Nayum et.al (2014) gathered information from a web study, which was directed in 2012 among 1421 proprietors of another inside burning motor auto and 372 new battery electric auto proprietors in Norway. The information were utilized to test an adjusted rendition of the thorough activity determination model to clarify private buyers' buy of fuel-proficient autos. It was initially inspected whether the normal fuel proficiency varies among interior ignition motor auto classes. Therefore, with battery electric autos being viewed as the most fuel-proficient gathering, five auto bunches requested by fuel productivity were held. The consequences of ensuing auxiliary comparison displaying demonstrated that goal to purchase a fuel-proficient auto, brand unwaveringness, number of autos and driver's permit holders in the family unit, family unit size, and family wage had noteworthy direct impacts on picking a more fuel-productive auto.

Rijnsoever et al (2009) measured the relations in the middle of expressed and uncovered auto inclinations and the utilization of data sources in the auto acquiring process, taking into account an overview of family units in the Netherlands. The investigation demonstrated that attitudinal and behavioral develops are found for ecological, execution and accommodation inclinations, yet that there is a hole in the middle of disposition and conduct. The outcomes demonstrated that individuals with a constructive natural state of mind that additionally indicate ecologically well disposed conduct have more contribution with autos than individuals who don't make an interpretation of their ecological disposition into the comparing conduct.

Sahin et.al (2011) led field study with real shoppers, tending to the inquiry whether diverse purchasers incline toward various experiential offers and whether experiential sorts make the connections between brand encounters, fulfillment, trust and faithfulness. Brand experience is conceptualized as sensations, emotions, insights, and behavioral reactions evoked by brand-related boosts that are a piece of a brand's configuration and character, bundling, interchanges, and situations. Brand experience influences fulfillment, trust and dedication. From the client perspective, brands are relationship manufacturers. In this examination, the creators proposed the impacts of brand encounters to assemble durable brand

and client association with brand trust, fulfillment, and dedication. The aftereffect of this study indicated brand encounters, fulfillment, trust have decidedly influences brand unwaveringness.

Catalin et.al (2014) analyzed the part of brands in the circumstances where purchasers pick marks that are viewed as suitable for their mental self-view and to highlight the conceivable ramifications. Utilizing two distinct examinations, the creators gave solid confirmation that clients depend on brands with an attractive brand character to express their own particular personality and they have a tendency to incline toward brands that are focalized with their way of life as the essential mean of communicating a one of a kind picture about their own way of life. The outcomes likewise uncovered strong proof that brands can be utilized as legitimate instruments for status motioning in regular circumstances.

Mandel (2006) analyzed the effect of media delineations of achievement (or disappointment) on purchasers' craving for extravagance brands. In a pilot study and three extra studies, the writers exhibited that perusing a tale around a comparable/effective other, for example, a business major from the same college, expands buyers' assumptions about their own future riches, which thusly builds their craving for extravagance brands. Be that as it may, perusing around a unique fruitful other, for example, a science real, brings down customers' inclinations for extravagance brands.

Laforet et.al (2012) analyzed Chinese and English buyers' assessments of Chinese, and universal brands, and variables influencing their image decision. The outcomes bolstered discoveries of a decrease in Western brands' inclination in China. Be that as it may, these are ascribed to a few variables. The discoveries show nation of inception does not influence Chinese brand decision, greatly affects English decision in the middle of Chinese and different brands; brand esteem and brand commonality impact Chinese decision though mark notoriety and brand trust decide English decision.

Sauer (2012) proposed and tried an integrative hypothetical structure of the precursors of consumer–brand recognizable proof (CBI). 6 drivers of CBI, for example, a mediator and 2 results are set and tried with study information from a huge specimen of German family unit shoppers. The outcomes affirmed the impact of 5, in particular, brand–self comparability, brand peculiarity, brand social advantages, brand warmth and noteworthy brand encounters. Further, it is observed that each of the 5 of these forerunners have more grounded causal associations with CBI when customers have higher contribution with the brand's item class.

Alcala et al (2014) broke down the potential exchange off between item assortment and shopper data and the suggestions this exchange off has for item quality. The creators presented a straightforward data gathering process in a flat separation model with inconspicuous quality. As the quantity of brands increments, per-brand buyer data diminishes, which prompts lower

normal quality. In the end, the diminishment in quality can exceed the negligible welfare advantages of more noteworthy item assortment. Therefore, the consistent increment in the quantity of brands requires a parallel change in purchaser data components.

Zehir et al (2011) investigated the relationship among brand correspondence and administration quality in a social setting with an accentuation on comprehension of the connecting part of brand trust and dependability. General thought, car industry was chosen as the social trade setting for this examination. Information were gathered through arbitrary polls from the arbitrarily chose 258 customers. The study depended on the improvement and organization of a self-managed review and directed in Turkey. The discoveries showed that impression of brand correspondences and administration/item quality can be seen as precursors to brand trust, thusly influences brand dependability.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The data were collected from the car buyers in United Arab Emirates (UAE). The sample size of the study is 400 car buyers who were selected based on simple random sampling technique. The tool used for data collection was self-designed questionnaire which comprised of categorical and rating questions pertaining to different brands of cars. Pilot study was conducted to test the clarity of questionnaire by administering the same to 10 respondents. Statistical tools such as factor analysis, Garrett ranking and chi-square test were used for analyzing the data collected.

ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Categorical Variables

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	21-30 Years	60	15.0
	31-40 Years	180	45.0
	41-50 Years	110	27.5
	More than 50 Years	50	12.5
Qualification	Below plus two	40	10.0
	Diploma	90	22.5
	UG	210	52.5
	PG	60	15.0
Family size	<4	80	20.0
	5-6	180	45.0
	7-8	85	21.3
	>8	55	13.8

Income level	>10000 AED	30	7.5
	10001-20000 AED	70	17.5
	30001-40000 AED	240	60.0
	Above 40001 AED	60	15.0
Occupation	Self Employed	55	13.8
	Private employment	40	10.0
	Govt. employee	290	72.5
	Others	15	3.8
Awareness about leading automobile manufacturers around the world	Yes	240	60.0
	No	160	40.0
Car brand	BMW	42	10.5
	Mercedes Benz	45	11.3
	Toyota	130	32.5
	General motors	53	13.3
	Others	65	16.3
	More than one brand	65	16.3
	Country of origin COO and purchase decision	Yes	290
No		110	27.5
undergoing lots of research for buying a car or you just compared the car brands you are aware of	Intensive research	110	27.5
	Intensive research only to available brands	160	40.0
	Just compared with available brands	90	22.5
	No	40	10.0
own decision or a collective decision when buying a car	It was my own decision	140	35.0
	It was a joint family decision	50	12.5
	It was my friend decision	70	17.5
	Opinion leader influence	110	27.5
	Others	30	7.5
	Do you trust incentive schemes offered by the automobile distributors in UAE	Yes	270
No		130	32.5
How do you know about the availability of these products in UAE	News paper	65	16.3
	Radio	20	5.0
	TV	110	27.5
	Internet	80	20.0
	Magazine	35	8.8
	Posters	45	11.3
	Billboards	25	6.3
	Mobile	20	5.0

It can be found from the table 1, majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 31-40 years.52.5% (majority) of the respondents are undergraduates. This implies that this group of respondents makes efforts to undergo lot of research before purchasing a car. This can be understood from the table that 40% of the respondents do intensive research on available brands. Majority (32.5%) of the respondents own Toyota brand of car, followed by Mercedes Benz and BMW.35% of the respondents make their own decision while buying a car. Maximum (60%) of the respondents are aware about leading automobile manufacturers around the world. 27.5% of the respondents have knowledge of product availability through television followed by internet, newspaper, posters and so on. This implies that internet can be further utilized to improve the information on product availability. Maximum numbers (45%) of respondents have family size between 5 and 6.

Garrett Ranking Analysis

The consolidated Garrett Ranking score for important attributes considered when buying the car is given in the above table. Higher the total score/weight, higher is the preference given to a particular variable/item.

Table 2: Garrett Ranking Score for Important Attributes Considered When Buying the Car

Attributes	Total Garrett Score based on frequency and Garrett value	Rank based on Garrett Score	Weight assigned by respondents
A well-Brand name	22181	1	10.360%
Quality	21512	2	10.047%
Service facility	21496	3	10.040%
Price	21378	4	9.985%
Luxury	21362	5	9.977%
Technical	21352	6	9.972%
Availability of	21323	7	9.959%
Re-sale value	21207	8	9.905%
Design	21162	9	9.884%
Total	214111		100

The consolidated Garrett Ranking score for important attributes considered when buying the car is given in the above table 2. Highest score (Weight) is assigned to a well-Brand name. Second highest score is assigned to quality. Third highest preferred is service facility. Next highest preferred attribute is Price. Fifth most preferred attribute is luxury. Next most preferred attribute

is technical specification. Seventh most preferred is availability of spare parts. Eighth most preferred attribute is Re-sale value. Least preferred attribute is design.

Table 3: Garrett Ranking Score for Motivating Factors

Motivating factors	Total Garrett Score based on frequency and Garrett value	Rank based on Garrett Score	Weight assigned by respondents
Country of origin effect	25620	1	25.245%
Distributor	25406	2	25.034%
Celebrity endorsement	25346	3	24.975%
Advertising	25115	4	24.747%
Total	101487		100

The consolidated Garrett Ranking score for motivating factors is given in the above table 3. Highest score (Weight) is assigned to country of origin effect. Second highest score is assigned to distributor. Third highest preferred method is celebrity endorsement. Least preferred is Advertising.

Table 4: Garrett Ranking Score For Factors Influencing Selection of High End Models of Cars

Reasons for selecting high end models of cars	Total Garrett Score based on frequency and Garrett value	Rank based on Garrett Score	Weight assigned by respondents
Status symbol	25808	1	16.857%
Pleasure driving	25766	2	16.829%
Safety	25751	3	16.819%
Large family	25383	4	16.579%
Comfort	25250	5	16.492%
Peer pressure	25145	6	16.424%
Total	153103		100

The consolidated Garrett Ranking score for factors influencing selection of high end models of cars is given in the above table 4. Highest score (Weight) is assigned to status symbol. Second highest score is assigned to pleasure driving. Third highest preferred method is safety. Next highest preferred method is large family. Fifth most preferred method is comfort. Least preferred is peer pressure.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is done for these variables to reduce into number of dimensions and to reduce irrelevant variables.

Table 5: KMO and Bartlett's Test for Purchase Behavior of Automobiles

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.616
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	303.487
	Df	66
	Sig.	.000

From the above table 5, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin(KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy is tested and this value shows 0.616(which is closer to one).The sample units in the study (400) are enough to apply factor analysis for purchase behavior. From same table, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is used to test the null hypothesis of unit correlation matrix is rejected (since $0.000 < 0.05$) at 5% level of significance. This implies that the factor analysis is adequate for the study.

Table 6: Variance Explained for Purchase Behavior and Factors

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.913	15.940	15.940	1.913	15.940	15.940	1.525	12.706	12.706
2	1.640	13.663	29.604	1.640	13.663	29.604	1.428	11.904	24.609
3	1.184	9.864	39.468	1.184	9.864	39.468	1.425	11.876	36.486
4	1.035	8.625	48.093	1.035	8.625	48.093	1.393	11.607	48.093
5	.970	8.086	56.179						
6	.917	7.645	63.824						
7	.866	7.217	71.041						
8	.816	6.803	77.844						
9	.755	6.288	84.133						
10	.696	5.798	89.931						
11	.636	5.303	95.234						
12	.572	4.766	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

The number of factors (components) extracted is identified by Eigen value approach (Eigen values more than 1 are taken),So from table 6,4 factors have Eigen value more than 1 and indicated 4 factors can be extracted among 12 variables. The total variance explained by the four factors is 48%.

Table 7: Rotated Component Matrix of Purchase Behavior

S, No.	Variables	Factors				Naming of factors
		1	2	3	4	
1.	It's safe to buy a branded product as they always come with better quality	.684				Perceived quality
2.	I believe that a well-known branded car is always better in quality than a lesser-known brand	.632				
3.	A lesser-known brand does not necessarily mean inferior quality	.530				
4.	The brand image enhances your self esteem		.512			Brand Image
5.	I believe that using a branded product signifies social class		.801			
6.	A well-known branded car is a status symbol		.668			
7.	Role and level of intensity of opinion leader with your purchase decision			.539		Buyer decision
8.	The aesthetic value of the show room influence your decision			.776		
9.	Influence of technical richness of the sales personnel on purchase decision			.678		
10.	Importance of brand name to you alongside your desired attributes				.638	Brand awareness
11.	I always go for the well known branded products				.795	
12.	I believe that logo of a well-known brand is important as it tells who you are				.527	

Principal Component Analysis and Varimax procedure are applied for finding the factors in rotated component matrix, in table 7. Factor loading of individual variables on various components (with more than 0.5) are considered for the determination of factors. Variables numbered as 1, 2, 3 are grouped into first factor and named as *Perceived quality*. Variables numbered as 4, 5, 6 are grouped into second factor and named as *Brand Image*. Variables numbered as 7, 8, 9 are grouped into third factor and named as *Buyer decision*. Variables numbered as 10, 11, 12 are grouped into fourth factor and named as *Brand awareness*.

Table 8: KMO and Bartlett's Test for Service related Variables

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.684
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	209.283
	Df	28
	Sig.	.000

From the above table 8, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin(KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy is tested and this value shows 0.684 (which is closer to one). The sample units in the study (400) are enough to apply factor analysis for service related variables. From same table, Bartlett's Test of

Sphericity is used to test the null hypothesis of unit correlation matrix is rejected (since $0.000 < 0.05$) at 5% level of significance. This implies that the factor analysis is adequate for the study.

Table 9: Total Variance Explained for Service Related Variables and Factors

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
	1	2.012	25.147	25.147	2.012	25.147	25.147	1.532	19.150
2	1.171	14.637	39.784	1.171	14.637	39.784	1.521	19.007	38.158
3	1.003	12.538	52.322	1.003	12.538	52.322	1.133	14.164	52.322
4	.905	11.311	63.633						
5	.847	10.593	74.225						
6	.734	9.172	83.397						
7	.682	8.520	91.917						
8	.647	8.083	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The number of factors (components) extracted is identified by Eigen value approach (Eigen values more than 1 are taken), So from table 9, 3 factors have Eigen value more than 1 and indicated 3 factors can be extracted among 8 variables. The total variance explained by the three factors is 52%.

Table 10: Rotated Component Matrix of Service related Variables

Variables	Factors			Naming of factors
	1	2	3	
Overall after sales service	.538			Service Quality
Time taken for service	.760			
Technical guidance	.574			
Re sale opportunities	.566			
Financial guidelines		.766		Service Support
Test drive mechanism		.666		
Appointment setting			.724	Customer Interaction
Customer relations			.696	

Principal Component Analysis and Varimax procedure are applied for finding the factors in rotated component matrix, in table 10. Factor loading of individual variables on various

components (with more than 0.5) are considered for the determination of factors. Variables numbered as 1, 2, 3, 4 are grouped into first factor and named as *Service Quality*. Variables numbered as 5, 6 are grouped into second factor and named as *Service Support*. Variables numbered as 7, 8 are grouped into third factor and named as *Customer Interaction*.

Chi-square Test of Association

Table 11: Chi-square test of Association between Car Brand and Categorical Variables

Dependent Variable: Car brand owned				
S.No.	Variables	Chi-Square Value	Significance value at 5% level	Null Hypothesis Accepted/ Rejected
1.	Individual/Collective decision when buying a car	844.64	0.000	Rejected
2.	Research work done before buying a car	757.12	0.000	Rejected
3.	Country of Origin	77.28	0.000	Rejected
4.	Income	52.29	0.000	Rejected
5.	Ranking of price	34.49	0.716	Accepted
6.	Ranking of Well brand name	56.22	0.046	Rejected
7.	Ranking of Quality	42.10	0.380	Accepted
8.	Ranking of Design	36.86	0.612	Accepted
9.	Ranking of Technical specification	37.01	0.606	Accepted
10.	Ranking of Luxury	33.02	0.775	Accepted
11.	Ranking of Availability of spare parts	26.16	0.955	Accepted
12.	Ranking of Service facility	55.62	0.032	Rejected
13.	Ranking of Re-sale value	47.72	0.018	Rejected

Null hypothesis in the table 11 is that there is no association between car brands and categorical variables. If the significance value is less than 5%, it can be inferred that there is a significant association between car brand and categorical variables. It can be found from the table 11 that there is a significant association between car brand and variables such as decision making while buying a car, research work done before buying a car, country of origin, income, ranking of well brand name, service facility and re-sale value. The rest of the variables do not have a significant association with car brand.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

It is found that majority of the respondents own a branded car of Toyota followed by other brands. Maximum numbers of respondents do intensive research on available brands before purchasing cars. Next to television, internet is the most widely used source of information about product availability. Maximum numbers (35%) of respondents decide on their own to choose

cars to buy. Based on overall Garrett ranking score for attributes, well-brand name has the highest ranking score followed by quality, service facility, price, luxury, and technical specification, availability of spare parts, re-sale value and design in an order. Based on overall Garrett ranking score for motivational factors that drive respondents to buy, country of origin effect has the highest ranking score followed by distributor, celebrity endorsement, advertising in an order. The results of factor analysis revealed that perceived quality, brand image, buyer decision and brand awareness are the factors that influence purchase behavior. The results of factor analysis revealed that perceived quality, brand image, buyer decision and brand awareness are the factors that influence purchase behavior. Also the factor analysis for service related variables revealed that service quality, service support and customer interaction are factors that influence purchase behavior. The association between car brand owned and variables such as decision making while buying a car, research work done before buying a car, country of origin, income, ranking of well brand name, service facility and re-sale value are statistically significant.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The majority of the respondents own a branded car of Toyota. The other manufacturers can concentrate on benchmarking the features of Toyota cars to improve their brand image. Apart from television, Internet can be used further to improve the information about products, distributors, price and availability, etc. Factors that influence individual decision to buy a branded car can be focused to satisfy the requirements of this segment of customers. A well brand name can be positioned in the minds of customers by improving the features, service facility, and luxury and so on. The brand image can also be improved by making information available in a timely manner so that it is easy for customers to make clear decision by making an in depth analysis before buying a car. Also service related variables such as service quality, service support should be continuously extended to improve confidence on the brand. The impact of motivating factors such as country of origin, distributor, celebrity endorsement and advertising can be analyzed periodically to improve the motivation levels in selecting the brands. Thus the customers using the existing brand can be interacted to get useful feedback so that the same can be improved to suit the requirements of different segments of customers. This enables manufacturers to increase the date of existing without passing much of cost increase to the customers and at the same time, customers can also be delighted in terms of not only price but also the required features in the product.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The study was led just in UAE and mostly concentrating on respondents of Emiratis. The survey was managed to gather information just from four hundred respondents. Thus, the outcomes touched base from the study may or may not possible be pertinent to other nation. Further, the review technique which was embraced for gathering the information in this study has its own confinements. Out of the aggregate population, just four hundred respondents were chosen for inspiring direct data. In perspective of time and financial imperatives, it was impractical to contact more than the chose number of respondents. Certain respondents had given data about their monetary foundation such as yearly income, wealth, and so on, from their memory, as they had no record of them. Thus, the speculation of the discoveries of the study is liable to these impediments.

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