

**THE FACTOR INFLUENCING EUROPEAN CAR PURCHASE
FOR THAI CONSUMERS**



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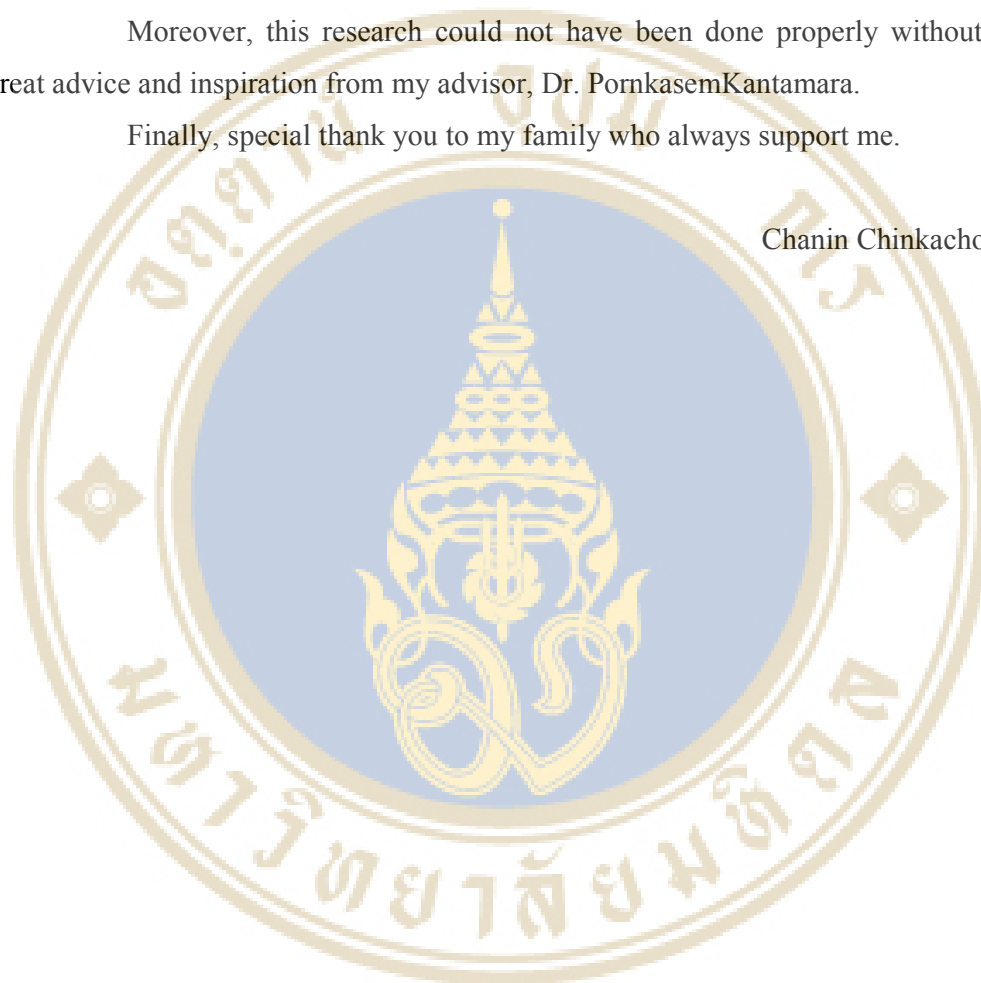
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ABSTRACT

There have been many studies relating to the purchasing decision for European automobile brand in vary of countries. This study aims to better understand the purchase decision of consumers and evaluate the factors that affect a consumer's choice of brand when they purchasing car. The factors in this study are divided into five main parts; brand awareness, brand image, emotion, product quality and product price. The qualitative research method and collect data by in-depth interviews were gain deeper information and insight into the consumers' choices. It used gender as the main point when comparing the differences among them. This research was conducted in Bangkok, Thailand with six female and six male interviewees. The findings show the emotions are main effect on a consumer's purchasing decision, followed by brand image, brand awareness, product quality and price, respectively. Therefore, European car companies can use this study as part of their strategy when improving their popularity and therefore hopefully elevate their brand to be the number one brand in a consumer's mind when they decision to buy a new car.

KEYWORDS: Brand awareness, Brand image, Emotion, Product Quality, Price

40 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Thailand has many brands of car in automotive market. Each brand also came from many countries in Asia, Europe, and America. For example Toyota, Honda, and Nissan these brands are the huge brand of manufacturing cars in Asia. Mercedes Benz, BMW, Volvo are brand originated from Europe. Chevrolet and Ford is brand form America. Not only do the stated car brands play an important role in the market, but other lesser known Asian brands do too, such as Proton and Cherry. These two brands are also able to draw attention from some Thai people. In addition, there are many dealers of imported cars; imported cars to sell in Thailand such as BRG, SEC, TSL etc.

Thailand's auto industry received thousands of hits two years ago because in 2012, the Government of Thai promoted Campaign for "First Car Policy", so the car sales increase in every brand. (Manager,2013)However, this only affects the car industry only for short term, since the beginning of 2013, when the first car campaign finished, the number of cars sold dropped significantly (9Carthai, 2014). Therefore, every car brand in Thailand competes massively in the market by launching new attractive promotions, creating and advancing the technology for their cars and making new colors available for each car model. Moreover, many brands advertise via a variety of media channels. For example, television advertisements, bus stops, department stores, the BTS sky-train, the MRT subway, billboards on express-ways, etc.

In this year, the car market in Thailand is expected to shrink by 20-25 %, with sales only 1 million -1.06 million in April this year, which is the most wanted a camper with the campaigns in various forms to inviting the audience to buy more cars. They have sold only 73,242 units, down from 33.2 % a year ago and have accumulated sales from January to April at 297,413 units, down dramatically from 43.1%.Foreign carmakers will launch promotion campaigns over the past varied and intense such as

no need for a down payment, installments up to 84 months, 0% interest free monthly installments, etc. (Marketeer, 2014)

Nowadays what Thai people think when they want to buy a car? First of all, consumers have no brand loyalty. Consumers wishing to buy a new car with up to 37 %, with the idea to switch to another brand, and 83 % would switch to a new brand. This shows that consumers currently have no Brand Loyalty, and this is something of a concern for marketers to change this behavior. Second, find data of the cars from media and believe other people. For the prices of car is high value then the target may be a future customer behavior, it is for all brands from different sources. Before the source of the information is responsible for most consumers is that friends, family and colleagues , 81 % from television , 76% search engines, 75% on social sites, 62% of the media on the road, 59% video sites. Magazines 56% of dealer sales, 54% newspapers, 52% dealer showrooms. When it comes to consumer purchasing decision, they decide for information only and brands again. And an incredible source of information that consumers first choice to find information is a source of friends. Family and colleagues up to 82%TV, 77% show, 76% of their sales staff, dealers, 73% search engines, 65% Magazines, 57% of the production car, 55% materials by road, 55% newspapers, 54% represented and 52% of the production, which shows that consumers continue to search for data from all media. The traditional media still has an important role. The online media channels are interested as well. And we see that consumers are using search engines for the first channel in the online medium to search for desired information via different keywords and consumers are expected to be answered according to the key words. Third, once thought to foreshores offers consumers up to 28% , it only takes one month to buy a car one way and takes about 1-3 months to up to 39 % for a period of 3-6 months, 6-12 months, 10% and 20% Only 3% use more than one year to decide, and when looking at the average. Thai Consumers decide to buy 1 car at 3.2 months. Fourth, they have available showroom the consumers are still search. The growth of the smart device and mobile Internet has changed consumer behavior, search for information through a smart device more. The survey found that as many as 64% of consumers search for information through the computer via a smart phone, 24% and 12% via tablets and most consumers continue to search for information from the PC. It has a tendency to diminish and smart phone

connect to the online world at any time has been modified to a more discerning consumer, although consumers are interested in viewing the car in the showroom. It will check the price from the showroom through smart device up to 33% for the contact hours of the dealer 32% and get information about the prices 31% this behavior has become challenges of the modern marketer. Even though consumers are standing in the showroom and then decide to buy it but they can change quickly. Fifth, Online but they want to touch the real car before buying, although Thai people are behavior searching for information on the internet, they also want to touch and test drive the car by them before they buy. In Thailand there are more than 96% of all car dealer showrooms, with at least one of the three rounds and as many as 64% of the car dealer with more than two average 2.4 times before making a purchase. And sixth, test drive before buying it. A final decision on the test drive before buying a car, with 68% of consumers has a test drive before deciding. Most of the test drives, and 2.2 times the average channel asking them test Drive remained a channel that has been the most popular way to 76% and 29% online. (NattakitMarketeer, 2014)

According to the (*Thailand Auto Institute*, <http://www.thaiauto.or.th/2012/th/news>), European car segment in Thai automotive industry was negatively affected by the first car policy. Since the first car buyer policy which does not affect the majority of the European car market in Thailand, primary due to the price range which set to be higher than the qualifying price range of the policy. (*Sanook auto*, <http://auto.sanook.com/6237>) When comparing European car industry in Thailand for both 2012 and 2013, it can be interpreted that consumers who are willing to pay for European car chose to purchase car from other region which is eligible for first car buyer policy. Therefore it is inevitable to re-evaluate consumer purchasing behavior and its factor of influence as follows: Brand awareness, Brand Image, Emotion, Price, Product quality.

Research Question

- What are the factors influencing European car purchase among Thai consumers?

Purpose:

- To understand the customer behavior for purchasing European cars in Thailand.

- To further contribute towards future research for understanding purchasing behavior of Thai consumers.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW & FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter the literature related to different factors that affects consumers purchasing decision will be reviewed. And the research framework will be presented.

Based on the literature 'Key drivers of automobile brand choice in sub-Saharan Africa: the case of Ghana' (Bedman, Raphael, Mahama and Samuel, 2012) a model was developed to study the above questions.

2.1 Brand Personality and Materialism

Brand personality is an attractive and appealing concept in the marketing of today. Aake, (1996) described it as one of the core dimensions of the brand identity and perhaps as the closest variable to the consumers' decision making process on buying. The personality idea responds to the tendency in contemporary society to value personal relationships. It also refers to the idea that relationships are important in social life. In terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it tries to lift products to higher levels of need satisfaction, like belongingness, love and esteem. Brand personalities are created in different ways and with different tools.

The perception of each consumer is different because the motivation, expectation and experience are sensitive to distortion advertising strategy. One reason is young adults are not in the position to make a mature rational judgment Smith and Cooper-Martin, (1997). Thus it is possible that different characteristics of consumers moderate the effect of status products on materialism. Additionally, each country has different social and economic situations and the characteristics of population in each country are different. Thais' are very proud of their financial success and let it be known to other people Hoon and Lim, (2001). The materialistic Thais may seek status from products that people can observe more than those other countries.

2.2 Brand Awareness

Many researchers Jiang, (2004) have found brand awareness to be an important element that plays a vital role to consumer's choice of brands. Lin and Chang, (2003) established in their study that brand awareness has the most powerful influence on consumers' purchase decisions and ultimately leads to consumer brand loyalty. Keller, (2009) argue in order to gain the customer-based brand equity, the consumer must be aware of, and be familiar with the offering and hold brand associations that are strong, favorable and unique in comparison with other brands offered in the same category. Similarly, Esch, (2006) confirm that customer based brand equity occurs when the consumer is aware and familiar with the brand and holds positive associations about the brand in memory. In discussing the concept of brand awareness, Keller, (2009) refers to it as the strength of the brand node in memory, which explains how easy it is for the consumer to remember the brand. The companies has to set the brand concept and image clearly before revealing it to consumers in order to get their point across and avoid any confusion that may arise along the communication line. Once consumers are aware of the brand, they will bring that brand into their awareness set which will include all the brands that particular consumer is aware of Crowly and William, (1991).

Nowadays consumers with high brand awareness do not always spend a great deal of time or cognitive effort in making purchase decisions. They often try to minimize decision making by using heuristics such as "I buy the brand I have heard of" or "choose the brand I know" or purchase only familiar, well-established brands Keller, (1993).

2.3 Brand Image

Brand image is an important cue during the process of consumers' purchase decision making. Favorable brand information positively influences perceived quality, perceived value, and consumers' willingness to pay Dodds, Monroe and Grewal, (1991), Monroe and Krishnan, (1985). Consumers are more likely to purchase well-known brand products with a positive brand image, because a brand

with a more positive image does have the effect of lowering consumers' perceived risks Akaah and Korgaonkar, (1988) Rao and Monroe, (1988) or increasing consumers' perceived value Loudon and Bitta, (1988), Fredericks and Slater, (1998), Romaniuk and Sharp, (2003), Aghekyan, Forsythe, Kwon, and Chattaraman, (2012).

Nowadays consumers thus have more intangible requirements to be fulfilled such as style, image and status. Consumers look to brands for signals which will help them make the right choice for the image they wish to project. All brands give messages about the products they are associated with and to varying degrees these messages attract or repeat purchasers. For some people, the influence of a brand is so powerful they refuse to drive anything but top brand cars. Hence, the importance of getting brand image right. The title of Trout and Rivkin's (2000)

For the American Marketing Association defines brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol, design or combination, intended to identify goods and services to differentiate them from the competition". Kotler, (2000) claimed that "brand is a name, term, symbol, design or all the above, and is used to distinguish one's products and services from competitors". Keller, (1993 and 1998) defined brand image as "perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations' hold in consumer memory". Accordingly, brand image does not exist in the features, technology or the actual product itself, but rather it is something brought out by advertisements, promotions or users. Brand image is often used as an extrinsic cue when consumers are evaluating a product before purchasing Zeithaml, (1988), Richardson, Dick and Jain, (1994).

When the car's company have clear image then it must be injected into a product in order to link everything under a brand image. Some companies' brands have a clear image but cannot emulate this in its products.

2.4 Emotion

According to recent studies indicate that consumers connect emotionally with their brands Aggarwal, (2004), Algesheimer and Dholakia, (2005), Lynch, (2004), Thompson et al.,(2006). The concept has been labeled "emotional brands" because consumers may form an intimate bond with a brand, a bond that is passion,

similar to the emotional bond a consumer experiences with close circle of friends or family Aggarwal, (2004). Consumers' perceived "emotional value" refers the affective reactions to the brand Supphellen, (2000). In feelings for brands are often reported in meeting (e.g. "this brand makes me feel good"). The feelings about brands can be negative or positive Keller, (2001). Morris et al. (2002) found that emotional response to a brand is a strong predictor of purchase intention.

Gobe (2001) emphasizes the importance of emotions and proposes the use of emotional branding as a methodology to connect the consumer to the product in an emotionally way. Thus, emotional branding, the firm will creates and controls the consumer's emotions and makes them better receive to brands Travis, (2000), Gobe, (2001). Some consumers also become emotionally attached towards a particular car brand based on their personal ethical value considerations. In this regard, several car brands now prefer to enter new markets with emotional promises rather than with assurances of reliability Menges, (2003), Rindfleisch et al., (2009). A good experience with a car brand will remain in the consumer's emotional memory to connection made on a level far beyond their basic transportation needs.

It usually starts with branding when the company designs the product with great feature and capability better than their competitors are offering. The company has a "position" in a product distinct category against competitors. The problem will increases when neither of the groups have made efforts to create emotional bond between the customers and the company and its product. Emotional branding is fine to approach that clarifies the values of the company to customers Marken, (2003).

When the company wants to know how consumer feels about them, they have to build a personal communication with the customers. This is the good way for the company can consider itself because customer perception is very important for companies. However a company can learn a lot by listening to its customer views. It is essential for companies to correspond by their product by relating to their customers emotionally; otherwise product can be a product and become a brand image in the customer's minds. Emotional Branding also consider brand name which influence consumers decision making process.

2.5 Price

Kotler and Wong V. (2001) describes for the customer buying behavior as the buying behavior of the customers who purchase goods and services for personal consumption. A company can get the great advantages by understand how customers respond to market stimuli that include the four P's: product, price, place and promotion. For the other stimuli in the customer's environment such as economic, technological and cultural also affect all customers' buying decision.

Now is and Simonson, (2000) notice to provide evidence that price affects consumers' choice of brands. Generally, it is accepted that consumers are willing to pay higher prices for brands that they perceive to have high value Erdem and Swait, (1998), Hermann et al., (2007). Mcdonald and Sharp, (2000) stated that price can be used a reason for brand choice in two ways; either by going for the lowest price in order to escape financial risk or the highest price in order to achieve product quality. According to Soderlund, (2000) price, place and brand are three important factors when deciding on consumers' purchase choices in product brands.

Cadogan and Foster, (2000) argue to the price is the most important consideration for the average consumer. Consumers with high brand loyalty are willing to pay a premium price for their favorite brand, so, their purchase intention is not easily affected by price. Consumers' satisfaction may be built by comparing price with perceived costs and values.

Nowadays car purchases are typically characterized by longer inter-purchase intervals. Prices of other cars considered 'external reference prices' are more intensely used for price judgments than prices of previous car purchases 'internal reference prices' Mazumdar et al., (2005). Lowengart, (2002) also reports the high relevance of external reference prices in durable goods to purchases. Bearden, Carlson, and Hardesty, (2003) highlight these external reference prices do have an impact on purchasing decisions in the automotive sector.

The position of a new vehicle are also includes the explicit determination of alternatives and competitors respectively. This includes aspects like pricing competitively or offering equipment levels that combine to the specific of car segment.

For premium cars, non-technical product attributes like brand image, design, and so on are key purchasing motives see, e.g., de Mooji, (2004).

However, it is very difficult to compare significant variables across the vehicle type choice models because each model has a different set of vehicle type categories such as vehicle classes and makes or models. Not surprisingly, the most common variable is vehicle price, which is significant across all models except Kitamura et al., (2000). That is, all else equal, the more a vehicle costs, the lower its choice probability. Of greatest interest to the present study is the impact of demographic variables on vehicle type choice, with income, age, gender, and number of household members positively affect to the choice probability of vehicle type in one or more models.

2.6 Product quality

For the product quality attributes refer to the cues that could be consumers to infer some expected and experienced product quality; 'experienced quality' refers to the result of physical evaluations of the product when experiencing or consuming the product, while "expected quality" refers to the point of purchase, before experiencing or consuming the product. Although, experienced product quality are two different terms, however, due to their usage in perceiving different levels of product quality though both intrinsic and extrinsic cues, they are somewhat correlated and often used in the visual demonstration of product quality attributes valuations. Acebron and Dopico, (1999)

Product quality attributes are also called product quality criteria by Grunertetal., (1996). They refer to the functional and psychological benefits provided by the product Steenkamp, (1990) that are hardly observable prior to consumption. Prior to consumption, benefits are unclear and sometime even unknown. For this reason, consumers may use many cues in comparing the available alternatives and rate their evaluations of the various product quality attribute dimensions before making the purchase or consumption decision Steenkamp, (1990). Accordingly, firms often modify their product attributes. Other factors such as diversities in consumer preferences, advances in technological capabilities, changes in manufacturing costs,

and competitions among the brands also drive the firms to modify and improve their product quality attributes to find a more competitive position Ofek and Srinivasan, (2002).

Table 2.1 Literature Review Summary



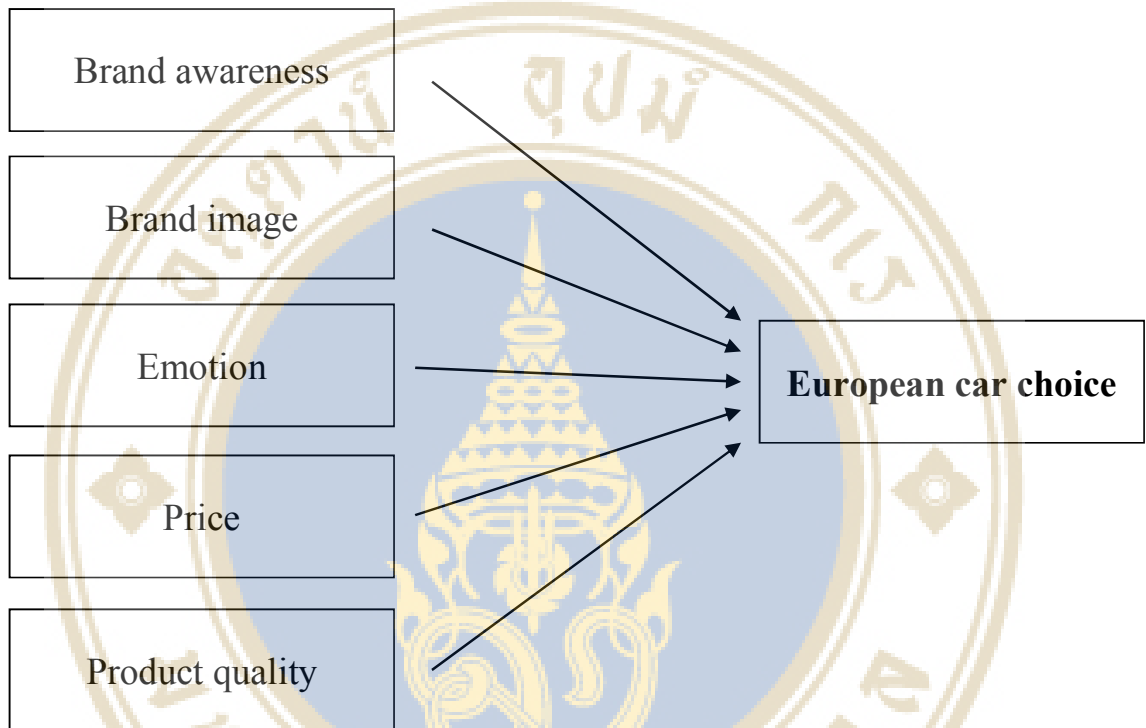
Theory and Concept	Logic	Main Aspect	Example of Studies
Brand awareness	Brand awareness are the most powerful influence on consumers purchase decisions.	When the brand communicates to consumers, it can motivate them to purchase this brand.	<u>Jiang</u> , (2004); <u>Lin and Chang</u> (2003); <u>Keller</u> (2009); <u>Crowly and William</u> , (1991); <u>Esch</u> , (2006)
Brand image	Brand image is a symbol that can fulfill style and status to the customers.	Consumers choose the brand by thinking about what the brand give to them for example the look when they choose that brand to fulfill their need and all of these can attract to purchases.	<u>Dodds, Monroe and Grewal</u> , (1991); <u>Monroe and Krishnan</u> , (1985); <u>Akaah and Korgaonkar</u> , (1988); <u>Romaniuk and Sharp</u> , (2003); <u>Kotler</u> , (2000); <u>Trout and Rivkin's</u> , (2000)
Emotional	Emotional value is about how consumers feel to that brand; it can be positive or negative.	Emotional can lead the product to good or bad experience of customers. It can create the image of brand that can against competitor,	<u>Aggarwal</u> , (2004); <u>Algesheimer and Dholakia</u> (2005); <u>Lynch</u> , (2004); <u>Thompson et al.</u> , (2006); <u>Supphellen</u> , (2000);

Table 2.1 Literature Review Summary (cont.)

		the company can know how consumers feeling by communicate with them.	<u>Gobe</u> (2001); <u>Menges</u> , (2003);
Price	Price can be used for brand choice in two ways; lowest price for escape the financial risk and higher price for achieve product quality.	The price can affect the average consumers who have to think about which cars be worthwhile with their money, but price cannot afford with high brand loyalty consumers who can effort to pay a premium cars for their favorite brand, to meet their ambition.	Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., Saunders, J. and Wong, V. (2001); <u>Nowlis</u> and <u>Simonson</u> (2000); <u>Erdem</u> and <u>Swait</u> , (1998); Hermann et al., (2007); <u>Mazumdar</u> et al., (2005); <u>Lowengart</u> (2002); Bearden, Carlson, and Hardesty (2003)
Product quality	Product quality refers to customers' expected standard and previous experience of the car though its long history.	Consumer may use many cues in comparing to the alternatives and rate of their evaluation can lead to their purchasing decision.	<u>Acebron</u> and <u>Dopico</u> , (1999); <u>Grunertetal</u> , (1996); <u>Steenkamp</u> , (1990); <u>Ofek</u> and <u>Srinivasan</u> , (2002).

2.7 Framework

According to theory cover, all of the factors whether brand awareness, brand image, emotion, price and product quality could have an influence on to the consumers when they want to purchase a cars. The following model explains the framework to be used in this study.



Based on: Bedman Narteh, Raphael Odoom, Mahama Braimah and Samuel Buame (2012). Key drivers of automobile brand choice in sub-Saharan Africa: the case of Ghana.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Collection

In order to answer research proposed in this study, the suitable methodology for conducting research is by using qualitative analysis. Since qualitative data is rich, full of detail, holistic and real. Firstly, the interview is a chance that the interviewer and the interviewee found which will allow the examiner to observe the demeanor and body language of the interviewee, which can be seen to translate their thoughts or emotions. Feelings of the people, it is easy for interviewer to control the conversation and time. It can also be controlled within the scope of the study. This approach also allows interviewers to use open-ended questions to explore the answers to the research questions and get more details. Be able to get the information into the minds of those interviewed in-depth interview to the interviewee a chance to speak their opinion makes talking. It is more openly, so they should not feel shy to express their ideas out, the interview will be add more information as well. (Miles, 1994)

In other words, in-depth interview should take the time to interview completed because only one person can take to be interviewed, it is difficult to be applied to the sample size is large if only one interview moreover, if the conversation is lively and the interview will get bored and give answers. In addition, in -depth interviews, the interviewer must be skilled in interviewing to get the best answer possible. (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002).

The research conducted in this study includes in-depth interviews which have an advantage compared to the survey. The in-depth interviews provide important additional information and details about the person's thoughts and behavior also more likely to discover new trends. Therefore, in-depth interview is the most suitable for this study due to the fact that it delivers a more complete picture of consumer insight along with additional comments which could possibly show new trend from the interviewee. (Boy et la, 2006).

In qualitative interview research, the discussion between the interviewer and interviewee can be stimulating more than qualitative group interview research. Furthermore, the interview can also be used for getting new ideas when brainstorming. Even though the skills set required in order to control the interview and to conduct the research interviewee may feel uncomfortable. Sharing personal experiences or positive information about the Thailand Cultural somewhat restrain from giving the information fully. When sharing personal information to other people, it is solely depended on the interviewer and interviewees' cooperation during the interview to answer the research questions.

3.2 Discussion and Research question

After interviewing and selection techniques. In regards to specifics of the data collection process about choosing the sample size. It is decided to use the number of respondents from both genders with the total sample size of 12 people which is divided into 6 males and 6 females.

In regards to the criteria of choosing participant for this research, the participant must currently be using and/or in the process of considering to purchase a European car. In addition, the participant must not be related to the automobile industries by employment to prevent bias. In order to obtain information and opinions on the European car. In Brand awareness, brand image, price and product quality of European cars feel in a different perspective and will be those who decide to buy a European car or a used a European cars, primary because they are able to comment about the important factors involved in buying and source of awareness information.

All of the above criteria help to select a person with knowledge of the different brands of European cars and also the perception of each brand. It also is easy to find a reason related to how brand awareness, brand image, emotion, prices and product quality had an impact on the individual and the final choice of the individual perception.

3.3 Interview Questions

The following are some examples of interview questions to be used for this study.

Introduction

1. What is your current car brand?
2. Are you a main decision maker when you bought this current car model?

Probing question

3. Why did you buy? Probe: brand awareness, brand image, emotion, prices and product quality?

Brand awareness

4. When you are talking about European car brand, which brand comes to your mind first?
5. How brand advertisements affect your car purchasing?
6. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?

Brand Image

7. What type of car image would you buy?
8. How European car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?

Emotion

9. How European brand of car stands for something important to you?
10. How European car brand socially connects you to other people?
11. Would you buy a unique and admirable car?
12. Would European car make you feel good?

Product quality

13. How do the qualities of the car affect your car purchasing?
14. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?
15. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?
16. How does durability of car affect your car purchasing?

Price

17. How does European car price range impact with your car purchasing?
18. How do you feel about value of money that European car offer to you?

Based on: BedmanNarteh, Raphael Odoom, MahamaBrimah and Samuel Buame (2012). Key drivers of automobile brand choice in sub-Saharan Africa: the case of Ghana



CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND LIMITATION

In this chapter the research finding related to different factors that affects consumers purchasing decision will be reviewed. And the result will be presented.

4.1 Research finding

This study contains five important factors which are; brand awareness, brand image, emotion, product quality and price. Each factor contains questions to extract the following information: Brand awareness has three questions concerning advertising of European cars, well-known of European cars brands, and particular brands of European cars in consumer's mind. Brand image has two questions concerning the image of European cars and European cars maintenance expenses. Emotion has four questions concerning the European cars can show something important to customers. European cars can socially connect customers with other people. Product quality has four questions concerning the quality of the European cars, the attractive and the design of the European cars, safety equipment of European cars and durability of the European cars. Price has two questions concerning the European cars price range and value for money of European cars. The researcher will finish with a wrap up question focus up on finding the overall important factor that interviewee considered when they purchase European cars.

The interviews were conducted with 6 Thai males and 6 female aged between 25 and 35 years old. All of them pass the screening factor, which specify that they must correctly drive European cars or planning to buy a European car. Some of the interviewees were cut off from the interview. To be exact, two men and one women were cut off because they did not pass the screening factor.

After collecting the data from the 12 interviewees with the following criteria; 6 males and 6 females, all over 25 and have had their own car for at least 1

year and are currently the main decision maker for the car purchase. The European car brands of the interviewees in question include Mercedes Benz, BMW, Porsche, Volkswagen and Mini cooper.

All of the interviewees who were asked to participate in the interview were asked about their approval to be included in the research. The table below shows the interviewees profile. All of them are Thai nationality. Youngest interviewee was 25 and the oldest was 33 years old. The average age of interviewed men was 29 years old dividing the gender of interviewee into two categories, male and female.

Interviewees' Profile

Name	Occupation	Gender	No. of years
Interviewee 1	Business Developer	Male	3
Interviewee 2	Business Owner	Male	2
Interviewee 3	Sales Manager	Male	3
Interviewee 4	Sales Manager	Male	3
Interviewee 5	Business owner	Male	2
Interviewee 6	Business owner	Male	5
Interviewee 7	Business Developer	Female	4
Interviewee 8	Business Owner	Female	3
Interviewee 9	Business Owner	Female	3
Interviewee 10	Air Hostage	Female	5
Interviewee 11	Business Development	Female	2
Interviewee 12	Project Developer	Female	2

4.2 Brand Awareness

According to the result analysis of this study, European car brand awareness deem important in consumer's perception. Even though it plays a significant role for purchase decision.

4.2.1 Brand awareness: Name of European car brand in customer's mind

At first when talking about European car brands, the interviewees were answer to the name brands of European cars. They came up with similar answers, but the list rankings varied between male and female interviewees. Male interviewee said the following brands; BMW, Mercedes Benz, Jaguar and Porsche. Female interviewee said; Mercedes Benz, BMW, Volkswagen and Mini cooper, respectively. The analysis of the interview data shows that remembering of the name of the European car brands does not affect the interviewee to select brands. Most of the interviewee said that it does not affect their purchasing decision. Most of male interviewees said it definitely do not affect their, choice even if they can remember the name of a car brand. Those brands might or might not be the brand they are considering to buy. According to the analysis of the data it can be concluded that the purchasing decision may not occur right away, since the customers have to consider other factors such as the performance, the design, the unique and admirable of the cars. On the other hand, for the majority of the female interviewee, affects them but they do not decide to purchase suddenly either additional information is required such as the feelings and opinions of the people around them towards this brand, extra information found on the internet, and finally a test drive of the car to get a feel of how it drives. However, the brand that they remember does not affect their purchasing decision of a new car.

4.2.2 Brand awareness: Advertisement affects

The advertisements are the main way to promote the brands of European cars to let the customers know about product, promotion and history of brands. Sources of car advertisement that interviewees acknowledged were television, billboards, internet banners, radio spots and newspaper. The brand advertisement is the factor that a bit affects to the interviewees about the decision to select the brands of

European cars. The advertisement inform consumers of new models that have been launched on the market, showing car features or attributes, car design, and promotions but most of the customers they have the brands of European car in their mind. The male interviewee said they would search for information via the internet, go to a car showroom or request a test drive in order to test the performance of the car first-hand. Some male interviewee also said they would take a car brochure back home from the showroom and study the car specifications. Female interviewees also said they would search for information via the internet or go to a car showroom to see the car for real. Price and promotion are also essential factors considered by interviewee because they would like to compare with other models that they are also interested in. Some dealers give more discounts or have more interesting promotions than others.

4.2.3 Brand awareness: Well-known of brand

The well-known of a brand is a factor that affects the interviewees' decision to select the brands of European cars. However, well-known of brand holds different meanings among the interviewee. For male interviewee, the name of a brand is perceived as a seal of trust and quality as they see a European car brand in terms of car quality because they believe famous brands are top-quality. Some male interviewee said that well-known brands were used by people around them and close to them, so they frequently saw this brand on the road and therefore it picked their interest. Besides, it reflects the coverage of the car dealer and service centers across the country, and equally it highlights the service quality of this brand, which the customers assume to be impressive or people would not keep using this brand. Some male interviewee said that once a brand is popular and great deals of people are driving in one, then it is easy to find reliable information about it, such as advantages and disadvantages of the brand itself or a certain model. Some male interviewee said well-known brands are good because they can find spare-parts relatively easily and they mentioned along with this that the pricing of the repair work is competitive. In additionally, one male interviewee said that the well-known of the brand didn't affect his purchasing decision because he did not care about the brand but he mainly focused on the attributes and price of the car instead. Female perspective, a majority interpreted well-known of brand as meaning reliable and credible and trusted what was claimed in advertisements or brochures. Some female interviewee said it means the European car

is mean the high quality and gives the comfortable to her when using this brand. Some female interviewee said it is all about after-sales service; it is imperative that the brand has the best service standard possible. The reason for this particular need is because after purchasing the car they know that service are important so as to keep the car running smoothly and reduce the risk of to pay for expensive repairs. However, one female interviewee said she does not focus on the well-known of the brand but pays attention to the car's design. In her opinion, some well-known brands did not guarantee the well design of their cars.

4.3 Brand Image

Brand image can be interpret as part of the motivation in purchasing decision of European car where consumers seems to build an important connection between the specific car brand and consumer's characteristics that they wish to portray that varies depending on the type of characteristics that they want to deliver.

4.3.1 Brand image: European car image

Brand image is one factor that motivate to the interviewee for purchasing decision. All of male interviewee, they preferred a car that look sporty, great performance engine and well design car. They explained that an appealing sporty look is a car with a suitable body size, an aero-dynamic design, a powerful engine. Some male interviewee preferred a car more suited for city-use, is easy to park and has an array of functions to make their life easier when they driving in urban areas. One male interviewee preferred luxury cars though he stated he would want a brand and model that still retained a 'young' look at the same time, such as a Mercedes Benz C-class or BMW series3. Female interviewee also said they preferred the sporty car image and the unique car that suitable their character. They said that it fits with the new generation, like themselves. They mentioned the design, color and body size are attributes to make a car look good. Some female interviewee only preferred cars that had an overall nice design, did not have high maintenance costs and could be used for work, travel and city-use. One female interviewee preferred luxury cars that came with a multitude of features and had an overall attractive design. One female interviewee

said she preferred family cars because she could use it in any situation e.g. working or travelling.

4.3.2 Brand image: European car maintenance expenses

The maintenance cost is another factor that has an effect on the interviewee for purchasing decision. Most of them look for cars that have reasonable maintenance costs because they will use it for long time. They will have to maintain it and guarantee that the dealer has spare part to repairs it in the future. For male interviewee, most of them choose the cars that didn't have high maintenance expenses. For the spare parts are easy to find and service centers must serve them with good service. If the car had high maintenance costs, the interviewee said they don't want to pay them for a long time. In the same time, most female interviewee said they prefer reasonable costs too. Some female interviewees think that if their car has an accident, it would pay a lot of cost to repair it. Some female interviewee said some brands of European cars have lower maintenance costs and spare parts are easier to find too. However, some male and female interviewees are not concerned about the maintenance expenses at all. They said that if they have decided to use European car brand then they would sacrifice low maintenance costs so they could use a car that they preferred.

4.4 Emotion

Emotions of customers effect to purchasing decisions. Most important, it shows when they are used in European cars. For European car brands such as Mercedes Benz, BMW, Porsche, etc. A society of each brand of the car in the club society can connect with others who use the same brand. What an adorable European car affect both male and female interviewee of different levels. For European car, the majority of interviewee did not take into account the need to buy unique, however. In turn, these interviewee said that European cars are unique in themselves already. Including the sense that the European car impact on all interviewee when they used both male and female Europeans agreed to make comments.

4.4.1 Emotion: European car stand something important

According to the result analysis from this study shows that emotion factor affects interviewee in buying decision the most. It show something important of interviewee in term of feeling and character when they using the cars. For all male interviewee they agree with this factor, one of male interviewee said that when he driving chosen European car to bidding project work this car can show the character of him in term of power to decision in his project. Another male interviewee said that European car can show charisma of him. Regarding to female interviewee agree in this factor as well. One of female interviewee said, when she drive European cars she feel young. One of the female interviewee said, European car can be expressed to her lifestyle which is smart and unique.

4.4.2 Emotion: European car brand socially

For the brands of European car such as Mercedes Benz, BMW, Porsche etc. In each brand have brand social club for people who using this cars. The club can make connection to other people who is using same brand. All male interviewee agrees with this factor because it can make them known to other people who join in the club and they can make an appointment to travel in many places. One of male interviewee stated that, he drives BMW and he joined BMW society club. He joined with club every time when the club had an appointment. It makes him to know many people who joined in BMW society. Not only male interviewee agree in this factor but some female interviewee agree in this factor as well. One of female interviewee said she know BMW society from her brother and she joined in this club too. Not at all female interviewee agrees in this factor. Some female interviewee don't care for this factor. They said they prefer to use European car for their satisfaction.

4.4.3 Emotion: Unique and admirable of European car

In terms of unique and admirable of European car affect interviewee both male and female in different degree for using European car. Most of interviewee did not take into account the need to buy a car that is unique, but on the other hand, those interviewee said that European cars are unique in itself already including the subject of

the appeal. Even though, almost male interviewee said they want to use, what they considered as, market car such as Mercedes Benz C-class, BMW series3 etc. however, there are strong emotional intention for Thai male car owner to connect with people who uses similar car brand. For example, BMW society is unique in itself which tailored towards group of people who drive only BMW. There are many variations of such society exists in Thailand which are unique within itself which could suggested that collectivism countries such as Thailand affect the emotional perception for uniqueness. In the other hand one of male interviewee said, now he using Porsche. He loves this brand and he don't care about price of this brand and cost of maintenance. Porsche is higher price of car and maintenance when compare to the other brand in European car. For some women interviewee, they want to use a unique car such as Volkswagen Beetle and MINI cooper. They said that these car have a great design and suitable for them. They satisfy to use this car. Therefore, it is suggested that the uniqueness factor of European car affect the majority of Thai male interviewee in a sub-conscious level rather than female interviewee whom consciously aware of the factor itself.

4.4.4 Emotion: European car can make feeling

The feelings towards European car affects to all interviewee when they using European car. Both of male and female interviewee are agree in this factor. They told many opinion of feeling when they use European car. For male interviewee, they told it is very excite when they drive. They feel safety when they drive. They feel the great performance of engine etc. For female interviewee, they said it is very comfortable, it very suitable for them etc.

4.5 Product quality

According to the analysis of this study, the quality of European car shows reasonable contribution towards consumer purchasing decision process. The attractiveness and well design of the car shows similar degree of significance for both male and female interviewee. In contrast, the safety equipment for European car, interviewee on both male and female do not considered as important factor due to

industrial standards. In addition, the life cycle of European car is expected to be around 5-8 years which also relate to maintenance cost which agreed among the majority of the interviewee.

4.5.1 Product quality: Quality of European car

The quality of European car is another factor that affects the interviewee to buying decision. It is an important factor that interviewee really pay attention to because it considers their quality of cars. For male interviewee, a high quality car is one that comes with good safety and the car materials that use to make a car should be good for drive in high speed. In their opinion, the material should be strong, durable and light weight. Some male interviewee said that car quality can found out by asking friends or family about their quality of car brand in which type of model and that brand suitable safe to use it. They believe those people would give more truly comments and they would get more accurate information than from ask another person on the internet who they didn't know. Conversely, some male interviewee do not pay attention to the quality of European car, they told about when you talk about European car, the standard of quality should be high level. Regarding to female interviewee, all of female interviewee are majorly concerned about the quality of a car because they say they spend a great deal of time in their car per day. Therefore, the safety of the car is the top priority. One female interviewee said she tested the quality of a car by going to see the real car at a showroom and tested it by opening and closing car doors at different speeds. She did this as she wanted to test the sound when the door open and close because it is a good indicator of high quality materials and craftsmanship.

4.5.2 Product quality: Attractive and well-designed of European car

An attractive and well-designed of European car is another factor that affects the interviewee to buying decision. All of interviewee agreed that a well-designed car including both exterior and interior design affects their car purchasing decision. For all of male interviewee, some prefer sporty cars and some prefer elegant and luxury cars. Besides body design, they evaluated the head lights and rear lights, front hood and rear end, spoiler, bodyline and the front grill which all of accessories can give sporty look. They also inspected the interior features and whether there is a comfortable room for driver and passengers and the important features are within the

driver's reach, digital console, genuine leather seats, the functions are easy to use, a paddle shift and buttons to control the radio and air conditioning on the steering wheel. Not only for male interviewee, female interviewee focus on the overall car design and color, head lights and rear lights, side mirrors and spoiler. They also mainly looked at these interior design features, the console, there are genuine leather seats and also feel comfortable when their sitting, the color, the material used to make other features, amount space inside for driver and passengers, whether the functions of the car are easy to use and there are buttons to control the radio and air conditioning on the steering wheel.

4.5.3 Product quality: Safety equipment of European car

Safety equipment is the one other factor that affects the interviewee to buying decision. This is one of the factors that most interviewee look carefully and closely because these features that protect them and could effectively save their life. When asked the interviewee about the minimum required the interviewee required ABS, safety-belts, and airbags. For male interviewee said when they checking for safety features they look for airbags covering the driver and the rest of the passengers, auto brake system (ABS), parking assist, safety belt, GPS and good quality suspension system, which all of safety equipment. Some male interviewee said the standard safety equipment present in all of European cars are sufficient for them. They think it is adequate protection never find for extra safety equipment to install in their car. All of female interviewee said they seek ABS, airbags for the driver and passengers, fog lights and a good quality suspension system. One female interviewee said she always purchased top model cars because they come with fully comprehensive safety features.

4.5.4 Product quality: Durability of European car

When asked about the importance of durability most of interviewee said they see it as an important factor when choosing a car brands. They think about how long they can use the car. All of interviewee estimated their average the lifetime of car are around 5-8 years. Therefore, they believe that the car should perform at the same standard for at least the number of years mentioned. Moreover, it relates to maintenance costs and periodically the car maintenance program. For some male interviewee said durability does not have an effect on their purchase decision, the

reason they said, "It is just a car". They think it is purchased just for utilitarian purposes and it makes life easier but it has to be repaired and ultimately replaced as time goes. Some male interviewee said that Japanese cars are not as durable as European cars, that why European cars are generally more expensive. No male interviewee said that the peak performance of a car can last longer than 8 years, they said "It is a rule of thumb that car users have to accept". In the opposite, some female interviewee said they always buy a brand new car and use it for no more than five years. The reason for this change is to ensure their safety and catch a trend. They said after five years the car cannot perform like it used to and it might be quite dangerous for them to continue using and they believe if they will have to pay a lot of money in maintenance costs when the car is more than five years.

4.6 Price

Price range for choosing European car does not directly affect the purchase decision of interviewee, however the approximate price range for both male and female interviewee for European car 2-3 million baht. In terms of value for money trade off, male and female interviewee shows clear differences in their perception.

4.6.1 Price: European cars price range

The prices of European car are not effects interviewee in term of buying decision. All of them not concerned about car price range. They said they focus on value for money instead of the price of European car by comparing the feature offered with the price. The Male interviewee told about the average - thought that an appropriate price for a car was around 2.5-3.5 million baht. On the other hand, the female interviewee compares the price of the car with the unique and admirable of the car. They told about the average - an appropriate price range was from 2-3 million baht.

4.6.2 Price: Value for money of European cars

The value for money is the last factor that affects the interviewee in term of buying decision. All of male interviewee said that the car has to be value for money, in terms of; durability, engine type, quality of the internal and external materials, the attributes of the car and the technology included. In the opposite, most of female interviewee are concerned about the value for money in terms of; after-sales service, safety of the car, design of the car, quality of the car and fuel efficiency. Conversely, some female interviewee who mentioned that they change cars every 5 years said they did not pay attention to the value for money as they would be changing the car in 5 years anyway.

Table 4.1 Summary of Data Analysis

Questions	Male	Female
Brand awareness		
<i>Name of European car brand in customer's mind</i>	The interviewees were answer to the name brands of European cars. They came up with similar answers but the list rankings varied between male and female interviewee.	
<i>Advertisement affect</i>	Males search for information in general via many media channels, such as the internet, going to car showrooms and request test drive.	Females collect car information more than males. They are look at car in detail and try to get any information they able to reach, such as car brochures, read the review about car on internet or asking others.
<i>Well-known of brand</i>	The well-know of a brand is a factor that affects the interviewee about the decision to select the brands of European cars. However, well-known of brand holds different meanings among the interviewee.	
Brand image		

Table 4.1 Summary of Data Analysis (cont.)

<i>European car image</i>	All of male interviewee, they preferred a car that look sporty, great performance engine and well design car.	Female interviewee also said they preferred the sporty car image and the unique car that suitable their character.
<i>European car maintenance expenses</i>	The maintenance cost is another factor that has an effect on the interviewee for purchasing decision. Most of them look for cars that have reasonable maintenance costs because they will use it for long time.	
Emotion		
<i>European car stand something important</i>	The result analysis from this study shows that emotion factor affects interviewee in buying decision the most. It show something important of interviewee in term of feeling and character when they using the cars.	
<i>European car brand socially</i>	All male interviewee agrees with this factor because it can make them known to other people who join in the club and they can make an appointment to travel in many places.	Some female interviewee agree in this factor and some female interviewee don't care for this factor. They said they prefer to use European car for their satisfaction.
<i>Unique and admirable of European car</i>	Unique and admirable of European car affect interviewee both male and female in different degree for using European car. Most of interviewee did not take into account the need to buy a car that is unique, but on the other hand, those interviewee said that European cars are unique in itself already including the subject of the appeal.	

<i>European car can make feeling</i>	Both of male and female interviewee are agree in this factor. They told many opinion of feeling when they use European car
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Table 4.1 Summary of Data Analysis (cont.)

Product quality		
<i>Quality of European car</i>	For male interviewee, a high quality car is one that comes with good safety and the car materials that use to make a car should be good for drive in high speed.	All of female interviewee are majorly concerned about the quality of a car because they say they spend a great deal of time in their car per day. Therefore, the safety of the car is the top priority.
<i>Attractive and well-designed of European car</i>	All of interviewee agreed that a well-designed car including both exterior and interior design affects their car purchasing decision.	
<i>Safety equipment of European car</i>	For male interviewee said when they checking for safety features they look for airbags covering the driver and the rest of the passengers, auto brake system (ABS), parking assist, safety belt, GPS and good quality suspension system, which all of safety equipment.	All of female interviewee said they seek ABS, airbags for the driver and passengers, fog lights and a good quality suspension system.
<i>Durability of European car</i>	All of interviewee estimated their averages the lifetime of car are around 5-8 years. Therefore, they believe that the car should perform at the same standard for at least the number of years mentioned.	
Price		

<i>European cars price range</i>	All of them not concerned about car price range. They said they focuses on value for money instead of the price of European car by comparing the feature offered with the price.
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Table 4.1 Summary of Data Analysis (cont.)

<i>Value for money of European cars</i>	All of male interviewee said that the car has to be value for money, in terms of; durability, engine type, quality of the internal and external materials, the attributes of the car and the technology included.	Most of female interviewee are concerned about the value for money in terms of; after-sales service, safety of the car, design of the car, quality of the car and fuel efficiency.
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4.7 Limitation and Recommendation for further study

The current study is separated by the gender of the interviewees which is not representative of the overall European cars market in Thailand. It just only demonstrates one direction to European cars companies to look at in-depth interviews is also difficult to conduct in terms of appointment time. Many interviewees refused to share their opinions fully during this study, because it consumed too much of their time. Thus, future research should set an extra criteria: age range. This is in order to cover all age groups; therefore, a variety of different customers. Moreover, an online survey can also be more appropriate because the interviewees can give their opinion at a time of their choosing. And right now it is very easy to access the internet anywhere. Then survey can get a larger total sample size since it is convenience for the interviewees.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

5.1 Conclusion

After collecting the data from in-depth interviews, based upon the findings to the research questions. The results of the study are shown below:

1. How was brand awareness of European car brand impact to consumers in term of buying decision among males and females?

According to the results of the research findings, found that it is the least important factor that affect to consumers but it still plays some role among consumers buying decision. Firstly, it makes consumers aware of brands or new product models and draws their attention to find information about it, particularly females who look into more details about product more than males. Secondly, well known of European car brands can gain more potential to be able to approach in consumers' minds in terms of trust, reliability and credibility. This factor can drives the brand to be registered by consumers in their brand recognition and thus more chance of becoming one of buying decision.

2. How was brand image of European car related to consumers in term of buying decision of car among males and females?

This factor was affects some parts of consumers for buying decision because each consumer has their own preference of car image or dream car. However, even though they have a certain preference they have to consider car maintenance expenses and find spare parts of the preferred cars as well. The reason is one car will stay with them for quite a few years so they prefer to spend money in a sensible way and proportionately in order to keep their car in good condition.

3. How was emotion of European car affect consumers in term of buying decision of car among males and females?

This factor is the most important for the consumer buying decision because emotion is something unique and sensitive in somebody. From the interview I can catch that everybody has their own styles likes in male they choose sporty car, luxury car because their satisfaction in that style, but all of them also have their own style in color, performance of cars that they have the image in their mind. For female, they use their emotion to be reason of buying the cars such as the European cars like Mini Cooper, Volkswagen Beetle because they think it's come with cute design and suitable with their lifestyles.

4. How was product quality of European car affect consumers in term of buying decision of car among males and females?

From the interview, this factor has important role for the consumer buying decision they believe that the car with high quality can create the safety when they drive in high speed. The function of car system like ABS, safety belt, parking assist, airbags and also GPS of the cars can make then trust in the European cars brand. Moreover, the high quality cars come with well design of the model that is interior and exterior or we can said like comfortable for driver and passenger while sitting inside and good looking in other people eyes for body outside.

5. How was price of European car affect consumers in term of buying decision of car among males and females?

According to the interview this factor is the last factor that they think about. They think that the price range is about 2 million – 3.5 million, but in male and female are different in the reason for male the cars should be value for money, in terms of; durability, engine type, quality of the internal and external materials, the attributes of the car and the technology included. In contrast for female, are concerned about the value for money in terms of; after-sales service, safety of the car, design of the car, quality of the car and fuel efficiency.

5.2 Managerial Implication

European car companies should focus on improving the quality of the car by developing more advanced technology, due to the fact that most interviewees are concerned about this area. Meanwhile, each car also has to provide highly more than standard and safety equipment such as; auto parking, auto brake etc. In order to assure consumers of the quality of the new safety technology, the companies should demonstrate how the new safety equipment works and broadcast it in an advertisement. Moreover, this safety equipment should show the name of the laboratory. Thai consumers are willing to believe once the advertisement provides enough credible sources.

After that, companies should offer a delivery test drive for all consumers so they can try the car before purchasing it and also it can help make the decision making process easier. On top of that, once consumers have been for a test drive the companies should give them a gift to entice them because they may still be hesitant after the test drive even if they like it. Once the companies have chosen the best safety equipment, they should reiterate to consumers that their safety is the most important factor and even though they will pay a little more their lives will be safe in this car because of the new safety equipment. After this companies are able to link their car prices to other areas that consumers will get after buying this car, such as; good after-sales service, 24 hour call center, availability of car parts, expert staff and low maintenance expenses. All the mentioned areas are what consumers consider when they are thinking of purchasing a new car. Once they feel this car is value for money then they will be willing to pay a higher price.

Refer to above recommendation. It helps to advertise the brand and car model with the new safety equipment at the same time. Furthermore, companies have to advertise new safety equipment via many channels, such as; TV, radio spot, billboards and trading events in order to reach consumers through every media channel which in turn will catch the consumers' attention and make them eager to find more information.

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