

**KEY DRIVERS OF AUTOMOBILE BRAND CHOICE IN  
BANGKOK**



**A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
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entitled  
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IN BANGKOK**

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Miss. Phattanut Chiemprapha  
Candidate

Asst. Prof. Kannika Leelapanyalert,  
Ph.D.  
Advisor

Dr. Detlef Reis,  
Ph.D.  
Chairperson

Assoc. Prof. Annop Tanlamai,  
Ph.D.  
Dean  
College of Management  
Mahidol University

Asst. Prof. Dr. Prattana Punnakitikashem,  
Ph.D.  
Committee member

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## **APPENDIX A : Discussion guide**

1. What is your current car brand?
2. How long would you buy it?
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?

### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?

### **Product attributes**

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?
12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?
13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?
14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?

### **Price**

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?
16. How was car brand offer you value of money?
17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?

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

### **Respondents Number 1**

1. What is your current car brand?  
Chevrolet Optra
2. How long would you buy it?  
6 – 7 years ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
First: Price is not high at that time  
Second: Good performance in term of efficient fuel consumption  
Third: Brand image similar to US car's brand

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
  1. BMW
  2. Jaguar
  3. Toyota
  4. Honda
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Not at all. I just got information from my friends
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes... It's a main criteria. It also relate to easy to find spare parts and service center
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
No

### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Sporty car. Does not have big car body and have good engine performance.
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. It is a first thing that I concern.

### Product attribute

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?

Yes. It comes with good material.

12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?

Yes. I'm also looking for both exterior and interior design. Exterior should be streamline and not big body. Interior should have light at control panel.

13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?

Yes. I'm looking for standard safety equipment which is airbag and rear sensor.

14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?

Yes. Car should be able last-long for 5-6 years

### Price

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?

Yes. And right now car price is getting lower than past. Price range should be around 800,000 – 1,000,000

16. How was car brand offer you value of money?

Yes. It means maintenance cost and durability.

17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?

First: Design both exterior and interior

Second: Brand and car's quality

Third: Car's performance

### **Respondents Number 2**

1. What is your current car brand?  
Toyota Fortuner
2. How long would you buy it?  
4 years ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
First: Brand image which should be long and durable  
Second: International brand which is well-known of brand

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
  1. BMW
  2. Mercedes Benz
  3. Toyota
  4. Honda
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes in term of showing car design. It totally attracts me and then, I will go test-drive. Mostly I see car advertise from TV and billboard.
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. It comes with guarantee of high quality and trust.
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
Yes and then evaluate others aspects later. It could say it become one brand in my consideration set.

### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Function car which is city use and make my life easier.
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I'm totally concern about this issue.

### Product attribute

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. It relate to safety.
12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes but not that much. Exterior design should look huge and elegant. Function is easy to use. Interior design should have genuine leather seat and have control button of function on steer wheel.
13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I'm looking for front air bag and curtain airbag and also automatically brake. It is pre-catch that helps driver.
14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and normally car can use around 5-7 years

### Price

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?  
Yes. My affordable car price range around 1,500,000 – 2,000,000Baht
16. How was car brand offer you value of money?  
Yes. It relates to car performance and durable of car.
17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?  
First: Multifunction  
Second: Performance and car's quality  
Third: Design

### **Respondents Number 3**

1. What is your current car brand?  
BMW series 3
2. How long would you buy it?  
3 years ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
At that time Thailand just passed big flooding through country. Then, I'm looking for brand that can deliver car to me as fast as they can. Finally, I choose BMW because I know this brand for long time and my closed friend uses it. It also the first car brand of my father.

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
  1. Mercedes Benz
  2. BMW
  3. Nissan
  4. Honda
  5. Toyota
  6. Acura
  7. Lexus
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes but in term of giving information about new model to me. I normally see advertise on youtube and TV
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and it means people around me use this brand, and it makes me interested in.
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
No. It just becomes one brand in my consideration set.

### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Sporty car by looking at headlight. It should connect with me at the first place
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
Yes because it already used this car brand before. (BMW)

### **Product attribute**

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?  
No. I will acknowledge it after I bought it.
12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. Exterior design should look aero-dynamic and look nice. Interior should have sufficient room to move around when driving. Everything should not be full arm reach because it dangerous when driving.
13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?  
Yes for standard safety equipment which is airbag and ABS.
14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?  
No because it has to be change after use it for a while.

### **Price**

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?  
Yes and I'm looking for the maximum cost at the beginning. The price should not higher than 2 million baht
16. How was car brand offer you value of money?  
Yes. And if I pay 2 million baht as I said, I will convert everything into money and evaluate that is it value of my money.
17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?  
First: Price  
Second: Car's design should be connect to me at the first time  
Third: Brand reputation and maintenance cost

#### **Respondents Number 4**

1. What is your current car brand?  
Ford Focus
2. How long would you buy it?  
7 months ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
First: European car is good in safety  
Second: It has auto parking  
Third: Design is modern, young and it is hatchback car

#### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
  1. Honda
  2. Toyota
  3. Ford
  4. Chevrolet
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. Normally I look at car's design, car's function that stated in advertise. The advertise channel that I saw car's advertise are TV, youtube and on BTS.
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
No because some well-know brand is not safety like they advertise.
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
No. I usually search on pantip at the first step and if it's not enough, I go test drive.

#### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Just nice design and use it in everyday life such as go shopping.
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
Yes because this is my first car. If it crash, I have to pay maintenance cost



### Product attribute

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?

Yes. It means car should high quality and it relates to my safety.

12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?

Yes. It should look modern and nice design. I prefer hatchback car and looking for available of car's color and headlight. For interior, I focus on front console.

13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?

Yes. It should have function that makes my car balance and some equipment to repair when car has flat tire.

14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?

Yes because it long-term investment. Car is supposed in good performance around 5-6 years.

### Price

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?

Yes and it should not expensive. The price should be around 600,000 – 800,000 Baht

16. How was car brand offer you value of money?

Yes in term of after-sale service.

17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?

First: Safety

Second: Design

Third: Price

### **Respondents Number 5**

1. What is your current car brand?  
Mitsubishi Mirage
2. How long would you buy it?  
1.5 years ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
First: Useful because it has small body and easy to park in city  
Second: Price

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
 

1. Chevrolet	6. Honda
2. BMW	7. Toyota
3. Mercedes Benz	8. Land rover
4. Mitsubishi	9. Ferrari
5. Nissan	
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. It shows car's function or feature, promotion and present newest model.  
Mostly, I see advertise on TV and billboard
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes but also look for others aspects such as price, car's function and model
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
Yes but also compare with price and car's function

### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Sporty car. It has to look nice and suit with men in term of color. It should be black.
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
No.

### Product attribute

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?  
Yes by asking feedback from friends and family.
12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. Car should look nice and attractive for both exterior and interior. For exterior, look at front hood and rear hood. For interior, look at console should be digital and easy to see. Seat should be genuine leather.
13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?  
Yes because accident can happen anytime. I'm looking for airbag, safety-belt, rear sensor, GPS
14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes because use my own money. Durable of car should around 5-7 years

### Price

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?  
Yes. Affordable price range is around 700,000 – 1,200,000 Baht
16. How was car brand offer you value of money?  
Yes in term of durable of engine. It should not have problem.
17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?  
First: Price  
Second: Brand is be the one that I like  
Third: Car's model

### **Respondents Number 6**

1. What is your current car brand?  
Toyota Hilux Vigo
2. How long would you buy it?  
Last year
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
First: Car's function  
Second: Government first car campaign

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
  1. Mercedes Benz
  2. Honda
  3. Toyota
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and it talks about car's prices, function which is big engine, utility, audio.
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. It is easier to find service center across the country.
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
No

### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Family car. I can use this car for working and travelling.
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and it is the first thing that I'm looking for. It should still have low maintenance cost after 5 years

### Product attribute

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and car should be strong enough to get through every surface. For example, under construction road.
12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes because I have to spend a lot of time in car. I'm looking for both exterior and interior design. Exterior design should have nice design and I mainly focus on interior design. It is console, audio player, air conditioner and genuine leather seat. Moreover, seat should suit with body curve.
13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?  
Yes for standard safety equipment such as Airbag, Seat-belt, ABS
14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. It relates to maintenance cost, good service. The appropriate range is around 5 years

### Price

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?  
Yes. Affordable price is around 1 – 1.5 million baht
16. How was car brand offer you value of money?  
Yes and value means satisfy with engine and does not design.
17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?  
First: Functional use  
Second: Maintenance cost  
Third: Design

### Respondents Number 7

1. What is your current car brand?  
Honda Civic
2. How long would you buy it?  
7 years ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
First: Brand which is perception and expectation  
Second: Safety  
Third: Design

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
  1. Toyota
  2. Honda
  3. Mercedes Benz
  4. Volvo
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes because it creates perception and attitude among customers. And I can decide is it fit with my character or not, and begin to search information of that model. Channel of car advertise that I see are newspaper and television.
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes because well-known of brand means acceptable in market and make me feel confidence
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
Yes in term of become brand in my consideration set.

### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Sporty car by looking at color and overall design.
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and it links to spare part.

### **Product attribute**

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. It is relate to safety as well.
12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and I'm looking both exterior and interior design. For exterior, I'm looking in overall that should be nice design and more availability of color. For interior, seat should be genuine leather.
13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I am looking for standard equipment and another safety feature is fog lamp.
14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and durable comes with quality and relate to maintenance cost

### **Price**

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?  
Yes by comparing with quality. The appropriate price should between 1,500,000 – 2,000,000 Baht
16. How was car brand offer you value of money?  
Yes and it relates to maintenance cost.
17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?  
First: Brand awareness  
Second: Safety  
Third: Design

### **Respondents Number 8**

1. What is your current car brand?  
Toyota Yaris
2. How long would you buy it?  
6 years ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
First: Car design and function  
Second: Price

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
  1. Toyota
  2. Honda
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I can remember car's attributes and design of the advertisement. Usually I see advertise via TV and radio.
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. Many people use it and able to know advantage and disadvantage of car easily.
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
Yes because my family always use Japanese car brand.

### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Function car. It's suitable with city use.
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and service quality should be high.



### Product attribute

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and also have small car body.
12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I'm looking at bumper, headlight and spoiler, and look at console and genuine leather seat.
13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?  
I'm looking for standard safety equipment which is airbag and ABS
14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?  
No because my preference car brand is Japanese and it's not durable like European car. I admitted that.

### Price

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?  
Yes and my affordable price should be around 400,000 – 600,000 Baht.
16. How was car brand offer you value of money?  
Yes and I compared it with car's function.
17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?  
First: Car's function  
Second: Price  
Third: Design

### Respondents Number 9

1. What is your current car brand?  
Honda Civic
2. How long would you buy it?  
3 years ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
First: Design  
Second: Popular brand in Thailand  
Third: Resale price

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
 

1. Toyota	7. Ford
2. Honda	8. Lamborghini
3. Mazda	9. Ferrari
4. Chevrolet	10. Bentley
5. Mercedes Benz	11. Jaguar
6. BMW	
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I know about new model and it builds my awareness at the same time. My awareness brings me to see real car at showroom. I usually see advertisement on TV, brochure, billboard, and internet.
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I usually use only brand that I know. Well-known brand reflect network and service quality.
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
No.

### Brand Image

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Luxury car but also look young and feel fun when drive it. For example, Honda accord, BMW and Mercedes Benz.
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
Yes because it is cost for user. It also relate to easiness of finding spare part.

### Product attribute

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. Material should be strong, tough and durable which provides safety to me.
12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. Mainly focus on front grill, headlight should look sexy, have bodyline and curve. Cabin room should big and full of feature.
13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I always concern about safety equipment because I use car everyday and sometimes I have passenger in car. I'm looking for good suspension system, ABS, driver and passenger airbag.
14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?  
No because every car should replace within 5-7 years.

### Price

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?  
No. I'm just looking for value for money.
16. How was car brand offer you value of money?  
Yes in term of technology in car.
17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?  
First: Exterior design  
Second: Engine performance  
Third: Brand  
Forth: Price  
Fifth: Interior design

**Respondents Number 10**

1. What is your current car brand?  
Honda City
2. How long would you buy it?  
2 years ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
First: Popular model  
Second: Reasonable price  
Third: Design

**Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
  1. Toyota
  2. Honda
  3. Mercedes Benz
  4. BMW
  5. Chevrolet
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and searching information via internet by going to official website. I can read review from others at the same time. Sometime, I went to showroom and grab car's brochure
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes because it means quality standard
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
No.

### Brand Image

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Sporty car because it matches with new generation like me.
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
Yes because I used to use European car and maintenance cost is so high.  
Besides hard to find service center and have to wait for long time in order to get spare part.

### Product attribute

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and it means trust in brand
12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. It should have sporty look which is aero-dynamic and console should have black color.
13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I always buy top model that provided full safety equipment. Moreover, standard equipment is airbag and ABS
14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?  
No

### Price

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?  
Yes. Price range should be around 700,000 Baht
16. How was car brand offer you value of money?  
Yes. It should be worth for money. I'm looking at overall car's performance, engine size, safety equipment and design in order to evaluate value for money.
17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?  
First: Price  
Second: Design

### **Respondents Number 11**

1. What is your current car brand?  
Toyota Altis
2. How long would you buy it?  
Almost 4 years ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
First: Design  
Second: Car's size

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
  1. Toyota
  2. Honda
  3. Mercedes Benz
  4. BMW
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes because it shows new exterior and interior design attracting my attention.
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and it means easy to find service center.
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
Yes in term of become one brand in my consideration set. After that I will compares car's price, promotion and detail of model.

### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Luxury car in term of function and design.
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. A maintenance expense for Japanese's car is much cheaper than European's car. It saves my money for other thing.

### Product attribute

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?  
Yes because I spend time in car a lot then, quality is one aspect protecting my life.
12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. Firstly, I consider exterior design in overall and if I ok with that, I start looking at interior design such as console and genuine leather seat.
13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I normally compare safety equipment among each brand. Standard safety equipment is airbag and ABS.
14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?  
No because I normally use car not longer than 5 years for safety reason.

### Price

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?  
Yes. Have to compare between function that brand provides and price that I have to pay in order to maximize my value of money
16. How was car brand offer you value of money?  
Already said about it in the above question
17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?  
First: Design  
Second: Brand  
Third: Safety  
Fourth: Price

### Respondents Number 12

1. What is your current car brand?  
Honda Civic
2. How long would you buy it?  
7 years ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
First: Well-known brand  
Second: Model that suit in Bangkok  
Third: Cost efficient

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
 

1. Honda	4. BMW
2. Toyota	5. Nissan
3. Mercedes Benz	
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. It convinces consumers to believe in term of car's feature, credible of brand ambassador. After that, I start searching information via internet and go to showroom if I interested in that model. I usually see advertise via TV and radio spot.
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. It makes me believe what brand promised to me.
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
Yes. I will search information about that brand and also ask others people comment about that brand too. However, that brand become in my consideration set.



### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Sporty car and it should efficient fuel consumption and environment friendly too.
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and it quite very important to me. I don't want to waste money in maintenance expenses much.

### **Product attribute**

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and quality means brand credibility.
12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I mostly look at headlight, side mirror, console and car's functions.
13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and I takes it as additional benefit for other safety equipment. Actually, car always provides standard safety equipment which is airbag and ABS.
14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. It should use it without problem.

### **Price**

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?  
Yes and I consider my budget first. It should not higher than 1,000,000 Baht
16. How was car brand offer you value of money?  
Yes and compare it with car's quality
17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?  
First: Price  
Second: Car's attributes  
Third: Brand image

### **Respondents Number 13**

1. What is your current car brand?  
Honda Freed
2. How long would you buy it?  
2 years ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
Would like to buy family car which able to pack 6-7 people within one car.

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
 

1. Honda	4. BMW
2. Toyota	5. Nissan
3. Mercedes Benz	6. Mitsubishi
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and I know that have new model. I will search information via internet and look for both interior and exterior design. Then, read comment and compare price. The last process, I go to showroom in order to collect car brochure and ask about promotion at that time.
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. It makes me feel confident and it implies about after-sale service.
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
Yes. It will be brand in my consideration set.

### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Nice design in overall.

10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?

Yes because my previous car quite have many problem and I spend a lot of money in maintenance it.

### **Product attribute**

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?

Yes. I always go to showroom or motor show in order to check car's quality. She always opens and closes the door and listen the noise which imply about material quality.

12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?

Yes. Exterior in overall should have big car body. Interior design should make driver feel convenience and function is easy to use.

13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?

Yes. I'm looking for standard safety equipment such as airbag and ABS

14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?

Yes. Normally, car able to use without problem for 5 years

### **Price**

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?

Yes and I always set price in my mind. Price is about 1 million baht

16. How was car brand offer you value of money?

Yes and I compare it with resale price, fuel consumption and big car body that able to contain 6-7 people.

17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?

First: Design

Second: Brand

Third: Price

### **Respondents Number 14**

1. What is your current car brand?  
Toyota Vios
2. How long would you buy it?  
3-4 years ago
3. Are you a main decision maker when bought this current car model?  
Yes
4. Why you bought this car? Probe : brand awareness, brand image, product attribute and external influence  
Family member would like to change car model that have energy saving, and also got recommendation from friends.

### **Brand awareness**

5. When you are talking about car brand, which brand comes to your mind?
 

1. Toyota	6. Kia
2. Honda	7. Lexus
3. Ford	8. Porsche
4. Mercedes Benz	9. Isuzu
5. BMW	
6. How brand advertise affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I got aware from it and start look for further information via internet, showroom, and brochure. Normally, I see advertise from TVC and radio.
7. How well known of brand affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I have to know car brand before decide to buy that brand. Well-known relate to brand credibility and reliability.
8. Would you buy car that you can remember the brand name first?  
Yes and it is one brand in my consideration set.

### **Brand Image**

9. What type of car image would you buy?  
Eco-car because I'm looking for energy-saving car.
10. How car maintenance expenses affect your car purchasing?  
No

### **Product attribute**

11. How car's qualities affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and it relates to after-sale service and car maintenance.
12. How attractive and well-designed car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes. I'm looking at rear light and spoiler for exterior design, and looking at genuine leather seat and brake.
13. How car safety equipment provided affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and very important.
14. How durable of car affect your car purchasing?  
Yes and I normally use it for 7-8 years

### **Price**

15. How car price range impact with your car purchasing?  
Yes and compare with car's quality. Average price is 700,000 – 1,000,000 Baht
16. How was car brand offer you value of money?  
Yes and expect something in return. I concern about car's quality, after-sale service, safety and maintenance cost.
17. As we discussed all the attributes, could you please rank the attribute from most important to less important?  
First: Safety  
Second: Durable  
Third: After-sale

## BIOGRAPHY

<b>NAME</b>	Ms.Phattanun Chiemprapha
<b>DATE OF BIRTH</b>	18 December 1984
<b>PLACE OF BIRTH</b>	Bangkok, Thailand
<b>INSTITUTIONS ATTENDED</b>	Bachelor of Business Administration, Marketing Major, Bangkok University, 2007, Master of Management, majoring Marketing and Management, College of Management, Mahidol University, 2014
<b>RESEARCH GRANTS</b>	-
<b>HOME ADDRESS</b>	8/3 Soi Charoenjai, Sukhumvit 63 rd., Klongtun nua, Wattana, Bangkok 10110, Thailand
<b>EMPLOYMENT ADDRESS</b>	Acorn Marketing and Research Consultant., Co.,Ltd. 12 <sup>th</sup> Fl, Mercury Ville Tower, Ploenchit, Pathumwan, Bangkok 10540,Thailand
<b>PUBLICATION / PRESENTATION</b>	-

**KEY DRIVERS OF AUTOMOBILE BRAND CHOICE IN BANGKOK**

PHATTANUN CHIEMPRAPHA 5549304

M.M.(MARKETING MANAGEMENT)

THEMATIC PAPER ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ASST.PROF. KANNIKA  
LEELAPANYALERT, Ph.D., DETLEF REIS, Ph.D., ASST.PROF.PRATTANA  
PUNNAKITIKASHEM, Ph.D.,

**ABSTRACT**

There have been several studies relating to the key drivers behind automobile brand choice in a variety of countries such as sub-Saharan Africa. This study aims to better understand consumers and evaluate the factors that affect a consumer's choice of brand when purchasing a car. The factors in this study are divided into four main parts; brand awareness, brand image, automobile attributes and product price. In-depth interviews were conducted in order to gain deeper information and insight into the consumers' choices. It used gender as the main criteria when comparing the differences among them. This research was conducted in Bangkok, Thailand with seven female and seven male participants. The findings show that automobile attributes are the main effectors on a consumer's brand choice, followed by product price, brand awareness and brand image, respectively. Therefore, car companies can use this study as part of their strategy when improving their brand image or popularity and therefore hopefully elevate their brand to be the number one brand in a consumer's mind.

**KEYWORDS:**Brand awareness / Brand image / Automobile attributes / Product price  
/Bangkok

65 pages

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There are many players in the Thailand automotive industry, for example; Toyota, Honda, Nissan and Isuzu, which are the main competitors (Marketeer, 2014). Others include Mitsubishi, Nissan, Mazda, Ford, Chevrolet, Suzuki, Hyundai, Mercedes Benz, Volvo and so on. 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 2 are also able to draw attention from some Thais. The biggest dealers of imported Asian cars in Thailand are BRG, SEC, Teddy auto sales, TSL, and DAD Yontrakit.

The Thailand automotive industry boomed 2 years ago almost solely because in 2012 the government introduced/ promoted the 'First Car Buyer' campaign. Throughout the year 2012, the number of car sales in Thailand increased dramatically for every brand and car types (Manager, 2013). However, there were 2 main regulations of the 'First Car Buyer' campaign. Firstly, the car had to be valued at 1 million baht or less. Secondly, the engine had to be no more than 1,500 CC (except pick-ups). Thirdly, the buyer had to be older than 21 and had to have never registered a car in their name. In addition, the car had to be brand new and the owner had to use the car for at least 5 years. Thus, taking into account both price and engine size, the eco car market grew more than other types of car. However, many questions came up about the benefits to the purchaser. Is the tax rebate the most attractive benefit to purchaser for this campaign?

From 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/advancing the technology for/of 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, radio spots; out-of-home media including; bus

stops, department stores, the BTS sky-train, the MRT subway, billboards on expressways etc.

Nowadays, the new generation of car user seems not only to choose a car to represent his/her own identity or character, but also one that matches their lifestyle. Therefore, most of the car brands tend to create a unique character so to dominate the others and to find an association between their brand and consumers. In order to build a strong brand preference, the first strategy should be to develop a “need association” along with creating brand awareness (Alerk and Settle, 1999).

It is important that general consumers acknowledge the car brand first, then they then can differentiate between brands. As a result, brand awareness has become incredibly important and therefore the focus when introducing the brand to consumers. The car brands have to develop their own unique character as well as creating a good image of themselves in the consumers' minds.

It is normal that consumers graduate towards a brand with a good reputation first more than a brand with a slight or bad reputation. On the other hand, consumers are able to recognize some brands clearly in a negative sense, for example if the consumer had a problem or unfavorable experience with that particular brand in the past. This negativity will probably last for a long period of time and be difficult to revert back to a positive attitude towards the brand. Therefore all touch points of a brand are very significant because it affects a consumer's feelings, thoughts and overall attitude at all times.

Considering brand awareness, it provides a powerful influence, especially at the purchasing stage as it contributes to brand loyalty among consumers in the future (Lin and Change, 2003). As mentioned earlier, most car brands advertise through many media channels in order to gain brand awareness. Besides, each brand is continually seeking the most effective communication channels to reach consumers. In addition to direct media, some brands choose a covert style of advertising which refers to embedding a product or a brand subtly or indirectly into media. Consumers are bombarded by many advertisements, which can confuse and/or frustrate them. Many times consumers watch one car brand advertisement, but they remember another brand instead. It is because they are more familiar with the first car brand. It is similar to

using a brand representative who is the face of a variety of products and/or services; it confuses consumers and they may memories the wrong brand as well as product.

Moreover, car price is also one of the interesting factors that consumers look at when deciding to purchase a car. A lot of brands develop promotions focusing on the car price. Toyota was the first brand to launch a campaign targeting government officers in Thailand, when purchasing a car. This campaign offered the choice of paying a down payment of 5% or to pay 84 monthly installments when purchasing a Toyota Vios or Toyota Hilux Vigo. Honda provided a special promotion for general consumers, too. This consisted of a 0% interest rate with a 25% down payment and 48 monthly installments. At the same time, Mitsubishi also had a 0% interest rate or a the choice to get a free fleet card (at certain amount) or a 5% down payment with 84 monthly installments. Chevrolet also had a happy deal campaign when purchasing a Chevrolet Sonic (Sanookauto, 2013).

Car functions are another area that consumers pay attention to. Many car brands try to show their car functions in advertisements so as to excite consumers and grab their attention. For example, the New Honda Jazz is advertised to consumers focussing on functionality. Multi-utility functions include: a seat that can be adjusted into 4 ways allowing consumers to have more trunk space. A number of switches on the steering wheel, such as a seven speed paddle shift, a hands free telephone switch, a siri eyes free mode switch, an audio control switch, and a cruise control switch. It also features a 7 inch touch- screen audio system, and multi-drive with an i-VTEC 1.5 L engine with an eco-coaching driver assist that helps the driver develop a more eco-friendly driving style and thus decrease fuel consumption. Multi-safety functions include; a multi-angle rearview camera, six airbags, an extra safe car structure, and G-Force Control (Honda, 2014).

According to Kotler (1997), a purchasing decision process consists of five stages which are; problem recognition, information search, evaluation, selection of alternatives, a decision implementation, and a post-purchase evaluation. This research mainly focuses on the information search step since a variety of factors are involved and draw a great deal of attention from Thai consumers which impacts consumers' brand choices. Some academic papers found that brand awareness (Keller, 2001; Srinivasan et. al., 2010; Huang and Sarigollu, 2012) and brand image (Erdem and

Swait, 2004; Freling and Forbes, 2005; Baek *et. al.*, 2010) play an important role in a consumer's decision. Meanwhile, other academic papers have found that price is one of the key drivers that impacts the car purchasing decision process (Erdem *et al.*, 2006; Chattopadhyay *et.al.*, 2009; Ching *et. al.*, 2009).

However, all of these factors (brand awareness, brand image, car attributes and price) have not been consistent and therefore this study aims to find the crucial factors prevalent in the Thai customers minds in Bangkok compared with key drivers of brand choice of those in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, the differentiation among genders may provide a difference and therefore, this study will conduct a survey by separating the respondents' by gender. The study explores four main questions for research:

1. How does brand awareness impact consumers' brand choices among males and females?
2. How does brand image relate to consumers' brand choice of car among males and females?
3. How do car attributes affect consumers' brand choice of car among males and females?
4. How does car price impact customers' brand choice among males and females?

To address the above issues, Section 2 reviews the literature of brand awareness, brand image, car attributes and price. Followed by section 3, a research methodology of this study and then the next section presents the research results and compares them with the research model. The last section is the research conclusion and implications.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW & FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT**

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. Table 1 summarizes the literature used in this study.

#### **2.1 The concept of brand**

A definition of brand concept or branding has been given by many people from different angles. For example; A Brand is a name and/or a symbol aiming to sell products or services (Miller & Muir, 2004); A brand is a symbol that allows consumers to categorize one product from others and to find out the quality of the product and the manufacturer's information (Bertilsson, 2009). On the other hand, Aaker (1991), and Kotler & Keller (2009) argued that a brand attempted to create a unique character rather than be identified only by a name, a term, a sign, a symbol, a design but a grouping of these used to clarify a seller or a maker of product or service. It creates an intricate symbol that stands for many ideas and attributes. It communicates a number of things to consumers not only by the way it sounds but with more focus on it being a brand built on quality and a rich history and therefore acquired as a public object from time to time (Gardner and Levy, 1955). Thus, a Brand can be seen beyond the physical component that the brand represents and implies a brand image and attributes that are significant and also effective towards swaying a consumer's brand choice. As a result, many car brands are creating strong brand images or brand characters which benefit them by increasing their market shares, attracting skilled employees to work with them, catching consumers' attention and also planting their brand name/s directly into the consumers' minds.



## 2.2 Brand awareness

It is a brand manager's responsibility to create and enhance brand awareness by predicting future trends and changes in consumer tastes so to maximize future sales and widen their market share (Pitts & Katsanis, 1996). Initially the first step that every brand has to apply into their marketing strategy is creating brand awareness. According to Keller, brand awareness is the fundamental step towards establishing brand knowledge (Keller, 1993) which has been confirmed by many researches that relate to consumers' decision processes. Thus, Brand awareness is the most essential when reaching out to consumers during the communication process (Nakanishi, 1971). 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 & William, 1991).

Aaker (1991, in Graham et al., 1994) stated that there are four types of awareness; Top-of-Mind awareness, brand recall, brand recognition, and unawareness of brand. Top-of-Mind brand is the brand the consumers think of first and that is at the forefront of their conscious. Brand recall is a mental imitation or a reaction to items that have been experienced and learned of before (Adams, 1980; in Monroe *et al.*, 1986). Meanwhile, brand recognition is the identification of a particular brand by sight or sound. (Singh *et al.*, 1988). The last type of awareness is unawareness of brand. This is a brand that consumers have never seen, heard of or touched before. As a result, nowadays most brands hardly aim to become a Top-of-Mind brand because most of the brands that have become Top-of-Mind brands have already dominated the market. They gain high sales volumes and have amassed a large market share so it is nearly possible to compete at their level straight away. It is also true that Top-of-Mind brands are big brands with large advertising budgets. They advertise in every media channel and focus on peak times, and that is the reason why they have garnered a high brand awareness. If a brand can't compete with the main player/s then they prefer only to be registered in consumers' minds in any positive way because once in a while consumers may search for information about their brand and feel familiar or even think about their brand as a possible brand choice in the future.

## 2.3 Brand image

Brand image is a collection of beliefs held about a specific brand by consumers; for example a car design, a car price, an advertisement, a brand ambassador, a showroom, a campaign, a staff character and/or uniform, a brand logo, a unique association of the brand to the consumers' mind etc. The main objective of creating brand image is to gain awareness among consumers (Akaah, 1988). Consumers tend to purchase a well-known, branded product, which also has a good brand image, as it has a lower risk of purchase than that of an unbranded product. A Brand with a positive image leads to lower consumer product perception risks, as well as positive comments from consumers (Rao and Monroe, 1988). A good brand image affects consumer recognition and also relates to product quality (Grawea et al., 1998). If a brand has a negative image, consumers are more likely to doubt the quality of the product. Hence, once there is a negative image of the brand then action should be taken immediately in order to regain a positive brand image.

Any good brand image needs to be strong and clear. This is because the stronger the image, the more difficult it is for other brands to copy or mimic its success and/or look. A further step towards building a strong brand image is to give the product a strong brand position. To do this company must set it aside clearly from others in the market and in the consumer's mind. A brand image helps consumers to acknowledge a brand, evaluate the quality of the product, lower purchasing risk, and perceive the experience and satisfaction of alternatives (Thakor et al, 1997).

When a company has a 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. For example, if a company branded itself as a low priced fast food restaurant but it began selling gourmet food, then consumers would be confused as they believe they are going to eat cheaply but actually find the menu has expensive items. In the long run this would hurt the brand image. Most of the time, a problem occurs when a brand does not have a strong or clear image at the beginning. Thus, brand image is the first touch point for consumers. This creates the first impression before a product or service trial, the success of which is inextricably linked to brand credibility.



## 2.4 Automobile attributes

Product attributes combine three elements: features, functions and benefits (benefits can be generating from a number of areas) (Crawford and Benedetto, 2000). On the other hand, quality attributes are an integral part of brand identity (Uggla, 2004). The quality of a product combines many aspects of the product, such as, the product itself, standard services, and product functionality. Product quality is described as “fitness for use” or “conformance to requirement” from the consumers’ perspective of brand standard (Russell and Taylor, 2006). Some consumers also see product design as one of the product's attributes; a product’s design and style are favoured by all consumers (Kuksov, 2004). Thus, it is to the marketer's advantage if a new design of car is eye-catching and so attracts customers when they see it for the first time. Many cases confirm that product style and design tend to have a greater effect on the consumer's perception of a brand when compared with advertising (Hofmeyr and Rice, 2000). However, advertising is still popular and it is used in order to alert consumers of a product's attributes. At the same time it spreads throughout the population's consciousness, and therefore it catches the customers’ attention and drives them to discover more information about the car's attributes and the brand or model of car later on.

Besides car design, most car brands also present their new advances in technology, whether it be in the engine, safety equipment or energy saving. The main purpose of presenting all of a car's attributes is the wish to target certain customers. In the meantime, some brands come up with marketing campaigns to support their car's attributes. Take the Nissan Pulsar for example. Nissan created a viral marketing campaign which consisted in driving a Nissan Pulsar through Siam Center (a shopping mall in central Bangkok) with an ostrich inside and its head protruding through the sun roof. This was done to highlight the large interior of the car and show its ability to hold a large object trouble-free.

## 2.5 Product price

The most important factors that consumers consider when purchasing a branded product are price, place and brand (Soderlund, 2000). On average, consumers consider price as the most important factor when purchasing a product (Cadogan and Foster, 2000). So whether price is the most significant factor or in the top-three factors consumers consider when purchasing a product, companies should pay more attention on setting the product price because consumers definitely notice and compare it. Some sources have confirmed that price does affect consumers' choice of brand (Nowlis and Simonson, 2000). Nonetheless, some consumers believe that a product with a higher price will be of a greater quality (Tellis, 1987). As a result, some marketers use price as an indicator of product quality (Shugan, 1985). Luxury brands always set their prices higher than normal in order to set themselves apart from cheaper alternatives and also to assure consumers of the supreme product quality. Conversely, normal brands compete with each other by focusing on offering a lower priced product and convincing consumers that it is value for money. Some companies try to offer extra features making consumers think it is value for money, even though they are just standard features of the car that other companies don't necessarily promote.

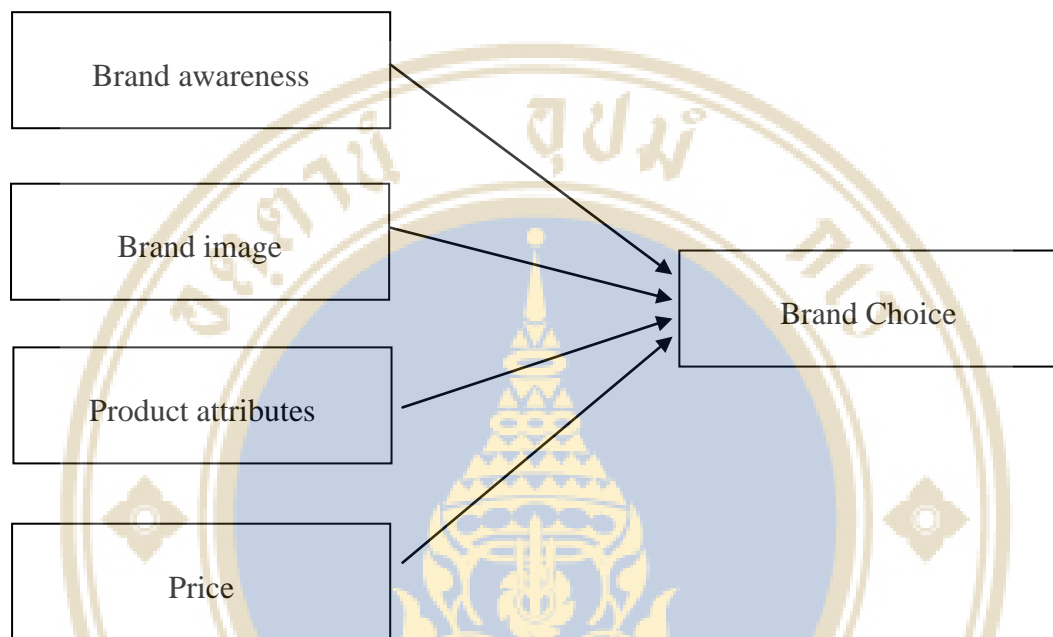
However, price is not as important to the consumers' consideration if they become loyal to a brand. It is normal that when consumers are delighted with a particular product or brand and think it is value for their money, then they are willing to pay as much as they can in order to purchase that product because it satisfies their wants and needs. Therefore most companies attempt to make general consumers loyal to their brand/s because they know price will not have as much an influence on these buyers.

**Table 2.1 Literature Review Summary**

Theory and Concept	Logic	Main Aspect	Example of Studies
Brand awareness	Brand awareness occurs when a brand communicates to customers through media channels in order to make customers aware of it.	When a brand communicates to consumers, it registers in their mind and also motivates them to purchase this brand	(Keller, 1993; Nakanishi, 1971; Aaker, 1991; Singh, 1988; Adams, 1980)
Brand image	Brand image links to product quality and a lower purchasing risk for consumers.	A positive product image comes with a high product quality so that consumers are assured of their purchasing decision. It leads to their satisfaction and a positive experience with that product and/or brand	(Grawea <i>et al.</i> , 1998; Rao and Monroe, 1988; Thakor <i>et al.</i> ,1997)
Automobile attributes	It combines features, functions and benefits with product attributes. The consumer's requirements differentiate depending on the consumer's preference.	Product attributes have an effect on consumers because the product must meet certain requirements so that the customer will purchase said product	(Ugla,2004; Russel and Taylor, 2006; Kuksov, 2004; Hofmeyr and Rice, 2000)
Product price	Price has an impact on the consumer's brand choice. A higher quality product, more often than not, will be of a greater cost.	Price has an influence on consumers' insofar as it is - on average - the top factor considered when purchasing a product or choosing between brands.	(Soderlund, 2000; Cadogan and Foster, 2000; Nowlis and Simonson, 2000; Tellis, 1987; Shugan, 1985)

## 2.6 Conceptual Framework

According to all theory and concept that this study covers, all of factors whether brand image, brand awareness, product attributes or price could have relationship toward consumers when purchase new car. It can explain by model as following:



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**

In order to answer the research questions in this study I have choose in-depth interviews as the most suitable methodology of data collection since qualitative data is rich, full of detail, holistic and real (Miles, 1994). First of all, an in-depth interview is an occasion where interviewer and interviewee meet each other in person. It allows the interviewer to observe the gestures and body language of the interviewee which can be used to interpret the real thoughts or emotions of the person. It is easy for the interviewer to control the conversation and timing; furthermore, one can keep it within the research scope or area of study. This methodology also enables the interviewer to use open-ended questions in order to explore research questions in greater detail, and is able to probe deeper into the mind of the interviewee. An in-depth interview also gives interviewees the chance to speak their mind and speak more openly as it's conducted in private so they should not feel shy to voice their thoughts out loud.

On the other hand, in-depth interviews take time to finish because only one person at a time can be interviewed, therefore it is difficult to apply to a large sample size if there is only one interviewer. In addition, if the conversation is not lively then the interviewee could get bored and give short answers so to end the interview quickly. Moreover, in-depth interviews require a skilled and cautioned interviewer to get the best answers possible (Ghuri & Gronhaug, 2002).

If in-depth interviews are inconvenient then an alternative to this, where open-ended questions can also be asked, is a focus group. It creates lively conversation among a group of interviewees and it can also be used to obtain new ideas, when brainstorming. From another side, the reason a focus group is not applicable for this study is because it requires a skilled moderator in order to control all interviewees and lead the discuss within the research scope the whole time. Moreover, interviewees might feel uncomfortable when sharing personal experiences or information with the group. Plus, Thai culture is rather 'closed', when it comes to sharing personal

information with others, so it would be difficult to extract extended answers. One more point about a focus group is that it can't dig for deeper information since there is only a limited time per focus group, and therefore interviewees only have a short time to answer in.

When comparing in-depth interviews or focus groups with face-to-face interviews the main difference is that face-to-face interviews only get you basic answers because they normally use closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions are good when only a specific information is required so only a couple of choices are needed but it can't provide further information. Conversely, less time is spent on data collection because it is quick and easy to answer and can be completed.

After selecting the in-depth interview technique to collect data, I went about choosing the sample size. I have decided to use an equal, manageable number from both sexes. My total sample size is 14; 7 men and 7 women. The specifications have been set as follows:

Individuals not working in the automotive industry or have not have any relatives working in this industry in order to prevent bias in the interviews.

Aged 25 years old and above and also have had a car for at least 6 months. It is important the group of people have had experience in using an automobile for an extended period. Also this means they are able to answer relevant questions about and give positive and negative opinions towards current cars.

Equally mixed genders so as to find opinions on brand awareness, brand image, car attributes and car price among different sexes.

Must be the main decision maker and main user of the car because they are able to be more specific about the important factors involved when purchasing a car and sources of awareness when searching for information.

All of the above criteria helped select people who have knowledge of different car brands and also have a perception of each brand. Furthermore, it is easier to find relevant reasons why and how brand awareness, brand image, car attributes, and car price affected each individual final choice.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESEARCH FINDING**

#### **4.1 Research finding**

This study contains four important factors which are; brand awareness, brand image, product attributes and price. Each factor contains questions to extract the following information: Brand awareness has four questions concerning; awareness of car brand, brand advertising, well-known brands, and particular names of brands in the consumer's mind. Brand image has two questions which ask about; car image and car maintenance expenses. Product attributes has four questions which relate to; the quality of the car, attractiveness and design of the car, safety equipment and durability of the car. Price has two questions which consider; car price range and value for money. I will finish with a wrap up question focused towards finding the overall important factor that respondents considered when purchasing the car.

After collecting data from the 14 respondents with the following criteria; 7 males and 7 females, all over 25 and have had their own car for at least 6 months and are currently the main decision maker for the car. The car brands of the interviewees in question: Honda, Toyota, Ford, Chevrolet, Mitsubishi, and BMW.

#### **Overall brand awareness:**

When talking about awareness of car brands, respondents were asked to name brands of car. They came up with similar answers but the list rankings varied between male and female respondents. Male respondents said the following brands; (in order of mention) BMW, Mercedes Benz, Toyota, Nissan, and Honda whereas, female respondents answered; Honda, Toyota, Mercedes Benz, BMW, and Nissan, respectively.

### **Brand awareness: Brand advertisement**

Brand advertisement is the factor that affects the respondents' brand choice. Advertisements inform consumers of new models that have been launched on the market, showing car features or attributes, car design, and promotions. The respondents were asked what they would do if an advertisement attracted their attention and made them want to find out more information about the car in the advert. The male respondents 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.

Female respondents also said they would search for information via the internet and/or go to a car showroom to see the car for real so to see whether the attributes of the car are the same in the advertisement or not. Some female respondents also said they would take a car brochure back home from the showroom and study the car specifications carefully.

Price and promotion are also essential factors considered by female respondents 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. One female respondent said she read reviews from other consumers on the internet in order to know more about the car itself and also to get a more honest and unbiased view. Sources of car advertisement that respondents acknowledged were; television, billboards, internet banners, radio spots and newspaper.

### **Brand awareness: Well-known of brand**

The well-know of a brand is a factor that affects the respondents' brand choice as well. However, well-known of brand holds different meanings among the respondents. For male respondents, the fame of a brand is perceived as a seal of trust and quality as they see a car brand in terms of car quality because they believe famous brands are of a top-quality. Some male respondents 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 piqued 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 we assume has to be impressive or people would not keep



using this brand. Some male respondents 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 respondents 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, too. Conversely, one male respondent 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.

From the 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 respondents said it means the car is of a high quality and gives them confidence when using this brand. Some female respondents 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 servicing is extremely important so as to keep the car running smoothly and reduce the risk of needing to pay for expensive repairs. This is a good touch point and makes the consumer satisfied. However, one female respondent said she does not focus on the well-known of the brand but pays attention to the car's safety record instead. In her opinion, some well-known brands did not guarantee the safety of their cars enough. For example, some didn't have enough safety equipment or similar standard of quality as they stated in the advertisement.

### **Brand awareness: Name of brand in consumer's mind**

I found that remembering the name of the car brand does not affect the respondents' brand choice as much as the previous attributes. Half of the respondents said that it doesn't affect their purchasing decision, though the rest said it affects their choice of car brand. A majority of these were the female respondents. Most of the male respondents said it definitely does not affect their choice even if can remember the name of a car brand. There might be one brand they are considering buying but they said they would not purchase it right away as they have to consider other aspects, such as the price of the car, its attributes and the design. Then, they must evaluate every option again before coming to a conclusion. In opposition, the rest of the male

respondents said it completely affected their choice of car brand because their family used only one particular brand so they were inclined to also choose this brand.

Regarding the female respondents, most of them said it affects them but that they would not make a sudden purchase. They have to find out much more information such as current promotions, the feelings and opinions of the people around them towards this brand or model, extra information found on the internet, and finally a test drive in the car to get a feel of how it drives. However, the brand that they remember does affect and draws their attention once they started to think about purchasing a new car. Some of them ended up purchasing that brand. On the other hand, few female respondents said it did not affect their choice of car brand at all because they focused more on other things such as the attributes of the car and price.

### **Brand image: Car image**

Brand image is also one factor that influences the respondents' choice of brand. For male respondents, most preferred a car that had a sporty look or a multi-purpose car. They explained that an appealing sporty look is a car with a suitable body size, an aero-dynamic design, a powerful engine and black in color. Some male respondents preferred a multi-purpose 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 respondent said he preferred family cars because he could use it in any situation e.g. working or travelling. One male respondent 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 Honda Accord or BMW 3 series. He said that a Nissan Teana is a luxury car but in his opinion it has an old look.

Female respondents also said they preferred the sporty car image. They said that it fits with the new generation, like themselves. They mentioned that design, color and body size are the attributes that make a car look sporty. One female respondent said that a sporty car should come with efficient fuel consumption as well. Some female respondents 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 respondent preferred luxury cars that came with a multitude of features and had an overall attractive design. One female respondent said that she preferred eco-cars

because they are environmentally-friendly, generally have a small body and are easy to drive in the city.

### **Brand image: Car maintenance expenses**

Maintenance cost is another factor that has an effect on the respondents' choice of brand. Most of them look for cars that have reasonable or low maintenance costs because they will use it for long time and thus will have to maintain it and are guaranteed to have some repairs made to it in the future. For male respondents, most of them chose cars that didn't have high maintenance expenses. Spare parts had to be easy to find and service centers must delivery good service. If a car had high maintenance costs, then the respondents said they could not bear to pay them for long.

At the same time, most female respondents said they prefer reasonable or low maintenance costs. Some female respondents think that if their car has an accident, it would cost a lot to repair. Some female respondents said that Japanese cars have lower maintenance costs than European cars and spare parts are easier to locate, too. One female respondent mentioned that she only ever used Japanese cars for this reason. Some female respondents link maintenance costs to the availability of service centers. They said that even if a particular car brand has low maintenance cost but has few service centers, then it would not be advisable to use this brand. However, some male and female respondents are not concerned about the maintenance expenses at all. They said that if they have decided to use a particular car brand then they would sacrifice low maintenance costs so they could use a car they actually preferred.

### **Product attributes: Car's quality**

Car quality is another factor that affects the respondents' choice of brand. It is an important factor that respondents really pay attention to because it considers their safety. For men, a high quality car is one that comes with good safety and the car materials are what make a car safe to drive. In their opinion, the material should be strong and durable. Some male respondents said that car quality can found out by asking friends and/or family about their car brand or model and if it is suitably safe. They believe these people would give more sincere comments and they would get more accurate information than from say a person on the internet who they didn't

know. One male respondent said that a good quality car is one that is able to operate effectively on a number of different surfaces, such as roads under construction or rocky roads on a mountain as his job involved him travelling a lot so using a car that could cope with any surface and provide good safety is most important. Conversely, some male respondents do not pay attention to the quality of the car, they just find this out after they purchase it. Some just care about the car body size; one that is small and easy to park in the city. Regarding female respondents, all 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.

Safety actually includes all these areas: trusted brands, brand credibility, car maintenance programs and after-sales service, so all of these must be of a high quality to ensure a safe vehicle. If the car is off a good quality it won't break easily and therefore they don't have to pay money in order to fix their car. One female respondent tested the quality of a car by going to see the real car at a showroom or motor expo and tested it by opening and closing car doors at different speeds. She did this as she wanted to hear the sound when the door opened and closed because it is a good indicator of top-quality materials and craftsmanship.

### **Product attributes: Attractive and well-designed car**

An attractive and well-designed car is another factor that influences brand choice of the respondents. All respondents agreed that a well-designed car including both exterior and interior design affects their car purchasing decision. Regarding male respondents, some prefer streamline, sporty cars and some prefer elegant, luxury cars. Besides body design, they evaluated the head lights and rear lights, front hood and rear end, spoiler, bumper, bodyline, which can give it a sporty look, and the front grill. They also inspected the interior features and whether there is a large amount of room for driver and passengers and if important features are within the driver's reach, digital console, genuine leather seats; that the functions are easy to use, if there is a paddle shift and buttons to control the radio and air conditioning on the steering wheel. Meanwhile, female respondents 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, if there are genuine leather seats and also the comfort

level when sitting; 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 if there are buttons to control the radio and air conditioning on the steering wheel.

### **Product attributes: Safety equipment**

Safety equipment is the one other factor affecting the respondents' choice of brand, particularly the female respondents. This is one of the factors that most respondents look at carefully and closely as it is these features that protect them and could effectively save their lives. Most respondents agree that they normally spend plenty of time in the car every day, frequently in traffic jams. Male respondents said that when 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 counts as safety equipment. Some of the male respondents said that the standard safety equipment present in all cars is sufficient for them. They think it is adequate protection never seek for extra safety equipment to install in their car. Female respondents said they seek ABS, airbags for the driver and passengers, fog lights and a good quality suspension system. One female respondent said she always purchased top model cars because they come with fully comprehensive safety features. When asked about the minimum required the respondents required ABS, safety-belts, and airbags.

### **Product attributes: Durability of the car**

When asked about the importance of durability most said they see it as an important factor when choosing a car brand or model. They think about how long they can use the car for before exchanging it for a new one. The respondents estimated that their average car lifetime is around 5-7 years. A majority of the male respondents said it does matter to them because they use the money that they earned from working to pay for the car. 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 as well. For those male respondents who said durability does not have an effect on their brand choice, the reason given was, '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 by. Some male respondents said that Japanese cars are not as durable as European cars, which is why European cars are generally more expensive. No male respondent said that the peak performance of a car can last longer than 7 years. It is a rule of thumb that car users have to accept. Female respondents said that durability includes any problem that occurs during that time. Car durability also relates to maintenance expenses and service centers. Maintenance expenses should not be high and service centers easy to find. In opposition, some female respondents said that 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. They perceive that after five years the car can't perform like it used to and it might be quite dangerous for them to continue using. On top of this, they believe that they will have to pay a lot of money in maintenance costs when the car is over five years old.

#### **Price: Car's price range**

The price of the car also effects respondents' brand choice. Only one respondent is not concerned about car price range. He said he focuses on value for money instead of the price of a car by comparing the feature offered with the price. The rest of respondents confessed they pay attention to the price when they are considering a purchase. The Male respondents - on average - thought that an appropriate price for a car was around 1 - 1.5 million baht. On the other hand, the female respondents compare the price of the car with the quality of the car. They believed - on average - an appropriate price range was from 700,000 to 1 million baht.

#### **Price: Value for money**

Value for money is the final factor that affects the respondents' choice of brand. All male respondents said that the car has to be value for money, in terms of; durability, engine type, quality of the internal/external materials, the attributes of the car and the technology included. One male respondent claimed that he estimated the price of each part individually in order to evaluate the value for money. Moreover, most of female respondents were concerned about the value for money but in terms of; after-sales service, safety of the car, design of the car, quality of the car, engine size,

and fuel efficiency. Conversely, the female respondents who mentioned that they change cars every 5 years said that they did not pay attention to the value for money as they would be changing the car in 5 years anyway so it's irrelevant.

**Table 4.1 Summary data analysis**

Questions	Male	Female
<b>Brand awareness</b>		
Brand awareness in overall	The main brands the respondents mentioned were definitely not the brand of car they currently used or have ever owned in the past. It may be their dream car or car of preference.	
Brand advertise	Males search for information in general via many media channels, such as the internet, going to car showrooms and/or requesting a test drive.	Females collect and compare car information more than males. They are look at car in detail and try to gather any information they able to reach, such as car brochures, read people review about car on the internet or asking others about promotion campaigns in order to evaluate the cars fully.
Well-known of brand	In the respondents minds this translated as trust, reliability and credibility of brand. It also included after-sales service, car quality, dealer coverage and service center distribution. Also the number of car users of a particular brand or model of car equaled how famous a brand.	
Name of brand in consumers' mind	It affects respondents in terms of grabbing their attention so to get them to search for more information about the brand and/or model. However, it is not guaranteed that they will purchase this particular model or brand even if they remember it clearly because they have to consider other areas such as the attributes of the car, its price and promotions.	

**Table 4.1 Summary data analysis (cont.)**

<b>Brand image</b>		
Car image	Each respondent preferred different looks/style of car. It depends what purpose or image that they would like to perceive. Most respondents preferred city cars, which have a small body size, easy to drive or park, able to drive to work or travel in because it suits their city lifestyle. Many respondents prefer sporty cars, too. They described attractive cars as having an aero-dynamic body, nice design and color and fit with the image of their generation.	
Car maintenance expenses	This affects the respondents' choice of brand a lot because it is something they have to pay in the long term, and it can lead to high bills if maintenance costs are high. Moreover, maintenance cost relates to availability of spare parts, coverage of service centers, good quality service, and after sales service.	
<b>Product attributes</b>		
Car's quality	They are concerned about car quality because it means they feel safe in the car. A quality car is indicated by its materials which have to be strong and durable at the same time.	
Attractive and well-designed	Attractiveness and a good-designare what male respondents look at deeper in terms of each car part, such as the spoiler, bodyline and front grill.	The female respondents mainly look for a pretty color and overall design.
Safety equipment	The male respondents are able to name their requested safety equipment such as ABS and rear distance sensor.	A majority of the female respondents did not request special safety equipment, and they don't seem to know much about safety equipment like the male respondents. They are already satisfied with the standard safety equipment that every car brand provides.



**Table 4.1 Summary data analysis (cont.)**

Durable of car	The male respondents did not care about the durability of their cars too much but it links to safety and maintenance costs so if these become high then it would be a problem.	The female respondents were concerned about the durability of the car. Plus, it links to maintenance expenses and service centers.
<b>Price</b>		
Car's price	Car price is also plays an important role in the respondents' mind after the respondents considered the attributes of the car.	
Value for money	The male respondents convert value for money into durability of everything in/on the car, which relates to maintenance costs as well.	The female respondents convert value for money into the best after-sales service and safety.

**Table 4.2 Key drivers of automobile brand choice**

<b>Theory and Concept</b>	<b>Results</b>
Brand awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand advertisements grab the respondents' attention and pushes them to find out more information about the car model or brand (Singh et al.,1988)</li> <li>• Well-known brands stand for; trust, reliability, credibility, good after-sales service, car quality, coverage of dealers, and a large customer base.</li> <li>• Remembering a brand name just makes that brand become one of the respondents' consideration set (Adams, 1980; in Monroe et al., 1986)</li> </ul>
Brand image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone has their own dream car image in their mind and car design is the factor that generates car image</li> <li>• Maintenance expenses affect the respondents decision because it is long life product</li> </ul>

**Table 4.2 Key drivers of automobile brand choice (cont.)**

Automobile attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car quality to them was seen as level of safety among most respondents and they do pay attention to it.</li> <li>• The good-design of a car is the one factor that catches the respondents' attention. It includes exterior and interior (Kuksov, 2004)</li> <li>• Safety is another factor that respondents pay attention to it as it is linked to their lives and overall safety</li> <li>• Durability of a car relates to maintenance costs and safety. Most respondents are concerned about these issues</li> </ul>
Product price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car prices affect respondents' choice of brand (Soderlund, 2000; Cadogan and Foster, 2000; Nowlis and Simonson, 2000)</li> <li>• Value for money relates to durability and after-sales service</li> </ul>

Most of the factors affect the respondents' choice of brand and the purchasing path is a key driver that makes respondents consider different models or car brands.

## 1.2 Recommendation

Automobile companies should focus on improving the attributes of a car by developing more advanced technology, particularly safety equipment due to the fact that most respondents are concerned about this area the most. Meanwhile, each car also has to provide high quality, standard safety equipment such as; airbags for all passengers, ABS, rear parking sensors and safety-belts. 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 where it was invented. Thai

consumers are willing to believe once the advertisement provides enough credible sources.

After that, companies should offer a 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 discount to entice them because they may still be hesitant after the test drive even if they like it. The discount should have a limited time period as well because then consumers will feel they are getting a special offer that they can't miss.

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.

Referring to the above recommendation, that companies should offer consumers a test drive and pair it with discount; to maximize its effectiveness it is vital to be the talk of the town so that people will share it on social media. 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. As a result, their brand will hopefully be in the consumers' consideration set.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND LIMITATION

#### 5.1 Conclusion

After conducting the in-depth interviews I applied my findings to the research questions. The results of the study are shown below:

1. How does brand awareness of a car brand impact consumers' brand choice among males and females?

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

2. How does brand image relate to consumers' brand choice of car among males and females?

It affects some parts of consumers' brand choice 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 of the preferred car brand 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 but not spend outside of their means.

3. How does car attributes affect consumers' brand choice of car among males and females?

Car attributes play the most important role and can be seen as the first factor that affects consumers' brand choice. Consumers' pay attention into all the attributes of a car whether it be the car quality, car design, car safety equipment or durability of the car. Most consumers are concerned about the safety and the quality of the car, especially females. However the design of the car is one area that all consumers' look into the most detail about in order to represent their character as they believe image to be extremely important.

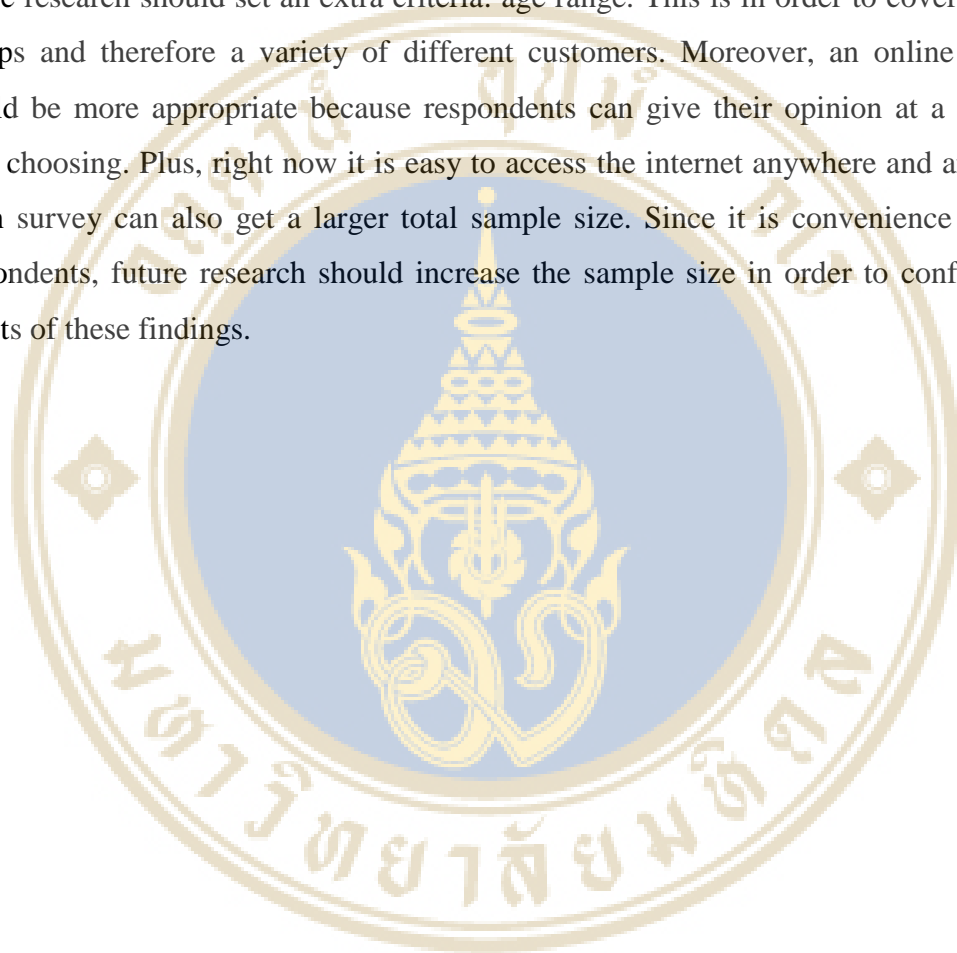
4. How does the car price impact consumers' brand choice of car among males and females?

Price is the second most important factor that consumers keep an eye on. Consumers normally have an expected budget in mind that is linked to value for money which in turn is divided into many areas. Value for money could be maintenance costs, after-sales service or the features that come with a car.

In summary, the attributes of a car have the most influence on respondents' brand choice, followed by car price, brand image and brand awareness. These findings are in line with the previous study in sub-Saharan Africa (Bedman, Raphael, Mahama and Samuel, 2012). Insofar that consumers' first focus is on the attributes of a car when deciding what to purchase. However, the second influencing factor in Thailand is price which is not the same with sub-Saharan Africa. According to the previous research in sub-Saharan Africa, consumers are more concerned with the brand rather than the price of the car.

## 5.2 Limitation and future research

The current study separated only the gender of the respondents which is not representative of the overall automobile market in Thailand. It just gives one direction to automobile companies to look in. In-depth interviews are also difficult to conduct in terms of appointment times. Many respondents 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 and therefore a variety of different customers. Moreover, an online survey would be more appropriate because respondents can give their opinion at a time of their choosing. Plus, right now it is easy to access the internet anywhere and anytime. Then survey can also get a larger total sample size. Since it is convenience for the respondents, future research should increase the sample size in order to confirm the results of these findings.



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