MANAGEMENT

VEHICLE BRAND PERCEPTION AMONG GENERATION X IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

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Abstract. This study sought to ascertain the general perceptions regarding the significance attributed to various passenger motor vehicle brands among Generation X, a demographic group that constitutes most car purchasers. The research was carried out in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, where data was gathered from four higher education institutions. A study was conducted utilising a quantitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional research design. The survey method was employed to collect data from a sample of 400 individuals affiliated with a university as either staff or students belonging to the Generation X cohort. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics by means of the SPSS version 23. The research examined distinct brand dimensions, specifically focusing on factors associated with quality, value, personal and group identity, status, and family traditions. The results of this study indicate that a significant proportion of the participants expressed agreement with the notion that their selection of a vehicle brand was influenced by factors such as perceived quality, value, individual and collective identity, social status, and family traditions This study could provide valuable insights to scholars, professionals in the industry, and motor vehicle brand manufacturers, enabling them to develop a comprehensive comprehension of the challenges faced within the industry, academia, and consumer domain pertaining to the perceptions surrounding various motor vehicle brands. Moreover, the results of this research can serve as a valuable tool for identifying a more suitable marketing approach to enhance consumer attitudes towards automotive brands.

The passenger motor vehicle industry is characterised by intense competition. Consequently, before finalising a purchase, consumers are presented with various alternatives to evaluate and scrutinise. In order to cater to the demands of consumers effectively, automakers must possess a comprehensive understanding of their needs and the influences exerted by their peers. Additionally, automakers must offer vehicles that align with the unique specifications of everyone. According to existing literature, motor vehicle manufacturers have the potential to enhance customer or user service through the implementation of contemporary and validated structures and procedures for customer connectedness management. The automotive industry in South Africa plays a crucial role in the overall economy by producing and exporting motor vehicles and their components (Mashilo

& Moothilal, 2022). According to Barnes, Black, and Duxbury (2016), the industrial sector in South Africa plays a crucial role in both the domestic and international economies, accounting for approximately 10% of the country's manufacturing exports. The automotive industry, characterised by the global distribution of goods and the oversight of prominent multinational corporations, is a highly internationalised sector. The manufacturing sector is the most significant industry globally, boasting a production output that rivals the economic scale of the sixth-largest national economy. The industry sector assumes a significant role as a primary contributor to research and development investments, influencing societal and technological advancements. According to Lamprecht and Tolmay (2017), the industry exhibits significant intensity and technical sophistication in its production processes and products. Gastrow (2012) asserts that the rise in industry competition has prompted automobile companies to relocate their production bases from developed to developing countries, aiming to capitalise on low-cost production advantages. The global distribution of car products has become extensive, with a limited number of internationally renowned companies exerting significant control over the market. With the increasing proliferation of vehicle models, it has become imperative for managers to prioritise growth and cost-reduction strategies to enhance the competitiveness and profitability of their businesses. Carrington, Neville, and Whitwell (2014) have noted that adopting green technology and eco-friendly motor vehicles is currently debated among scholars and practitioners. Consequently, motor companies must strategically advance, proficiently promote eco-friendly vehicles, and allocate resources towards consumer education. Hence, automotive manufacturers must furnish consumers with comprehensive information, enabling them to acquire the necessary knowledge to effectively comprehend the benefits and make informed comparisons between environmentally sustainable motor vehicles and their non-eco-friendly counterparts. According to the report by the Department of Trade and Industry (2015), there is a notable emphasis on the increasing complexity of vehicles. This complexity is driven by the need to meet customer expectations for enhanced safety, fuel efficiency, overall efficiency, and quality. The report emphasises the heightened pressure car manufacturers face to acknowledge consumer preferences, national preferences, and emerging market segments to sell vehicles and effectively enhance their market presence. The prospects of an entity in the industry are contingent upon its ability to exhibit adequate flexibility to adapt to the various pressures it encounters promptly. These trends have significant implications and are on the rise within the supply chain of automakers. Therefore, this study aimed to ascertain vehicle brand perception among Generation X in South Africa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generation X brand preferences and consumption patterns

Moore (2012) asserts that marketing firms and automobile manufacturers acknowledge the significance of technological advancements in motor vehicles, yet they persist in falling behind in integrating novel technologies to comprehend the preferences and behaviours of Generation X consumers. The author additionally highlights that in contrast to Generation Y, marketers in the motorsport industry tend to overlook and neglect the Generation X demographic. Generation X encompasses individuals born between 1961 and 1981, constituting a demographic cohort that exhibits comparatively smaller proportions when juxtaposed with Generation Y and the preceding baby boomer generation.

The characteristics exhibited by individuals belonging to Generation X bear certain resemblances to those observed among the Baby Boomers. The term "latchkey children" refers to the offspring of Generation X, who are currently of working age because predominantly women from the Baby Boomer generation entered the workforce and pursued employment in various industries. Generation X, situated amidst two prominent generations, is widely regarded as a transitional cohort between the preceding generation that upholds traditional values and the succeeding generation that embraces technology (Berkup, 2014). According to Varsha and Saumya

(2012), the Generation X demographic segment is responsible for acquiring various goods and services for household use and caring for young children. This demographic constitutes the most significant proportion of parents within the nation, with a substantial number of them having entered the housing market as first-time buyers during the period of the housing bubble. Automobiles, mainly those catering to families and luxury segments, significantly influence the market. The purchasers and proprietors of Generation X automobiles seek to comprehend the attributes of these vehicles and the rationale behind their necessity (Varsha & Saumya, 2012).

Branding

Dlamini (2016) posits that perception can be understood as a cognitive process whereby consumers construct and interpret mental representations, forming a comprehensive and significant understanding. Customers' evaluation of a product or service's utility is contingent upon their prior experiences and perceptions. According to the author, consumer perceptions are influenced by their prior experiences, motives, and beliefs about specific products and services they have encountered. In the study conducted by Stylidisa, Wickmana, and Söderberga (2015), it is argued that in the contemporary global economic landscape, automobile manufacturers must develop and manufacture products that align with the preferences and requirements of their customer base. The magnitude of this challenge is amplified within the premium segment of the automotive industry. Merely adhering to a "zero defects" quality standard is inadequate within this fiercely competitive industry. The optimal advantage will be attained when a customer possesses a comprehensive quality comprehension. To address the dimensions of perceived quality, numerous automotive manufacturers across various vehicle brands have prioritised comprehending customer preferences and requirements. Brand commitment pertains to how consumers perceive and engage with brands and the strategies employed to effectively communicate with different target generations within the brand communication process. Brand commitment is predicated upon various dimensions of customer behaviour, including but not limited to brand purchasing, brand usage, brand attitudes, fulfilment, and brand image (Kim et al., 2014)

Perceived brand quality

Quality refers to the evaluation made by customers regarding the overall excellence or superiority of a given product or service. The concept of perceived quality in the automotive industry pertains to cognitive recognition or brand performance, predominantly influenced by the automotive company (Polyakova & Mirza, 2015). The attainment of higher quality standards is also associated with cultivating a positive attitude among customers, particularly when these standards align with their preconceived expectations (Camacho et al., 2021). According to Alfakih et al. (2022), product consistency is the primary determinant of satisfaction in the luxury motor industry. Brand and value-added services are important factors in customer satisfaction among South African motor vehicle buyers. There exists a positive correlation between automobiles possessing superior brand quality and the loyalty exhibited by customers. The significance of this matter is particularly pronounced for manufacturers, as the quality of a brand can potentially decrease the likelihood of customers switching to a different brand of vehicle, encompassing both the core product and associated services.

Perceived value

Perceived value can be described as the comprehensive evaluation made by consumers, considering the benefits received and the sacrifices made concerning the usefulness of the product (Yusiana & Widodo, 2020). Empirical research conducted in marketing and the automotive industry has frequently embraced the utilitarian or functional perspective in assessing the value of products in terms of their quality relative to the prices paid, commonly referred to as value for money. By adopting this approach, companies that offer high-quality products at competitive prices can generate value that ultimately leads to customer satisfaction. The value component holds significant

importance within the luxury automotive industry, as it can generate optimal efficiency and substantially impact customer satisfaction. Return on investment holds particular importance within South Africa (Kapferer, and Valette-Florence, 2021).

The existing body of research on motor vehicles also highlights the impact of value on loyalty intentions. The selection of a motor vehicle is heavily influenced by its value, which encompasses both the benefits gained and the costs incurred. Value serves as a concrete measure of the vehicle's utility in fulfilling the requirements of the service meeting (Xie and Chen, 2014). This assertion holds relevance within the context of luxury automobile manufacturers, as the perceived value of their products substantially influences customer loyalty and intention to engage with the brand on social media platforms. The role of quality is crucial in shaping individuals' perceptions of value. Within the automotive industry, the attributes of quality and reliability hold significant importance as they directly influence the perceived value, particularly within the luxury vehicle segment. According to Coelho, Bairrada and de Matos Coelho, (2020), more positive brand performance and quality drivers will ultimately lead to increased customer value.

Personal identity

According to the study conducted by James, Kim, and Lee (2014), it has been observed that products possess distinct personality images, which can be categorised into two main categories: adult image and child image, also known as the product-age image. From a semiotic perspective, there is a scholarly curiosity in examining the function of products as conveyors of meaning, specifically the messages conveyed through products. Product imagery refers to the collection of meanings an individual retains in their memory, encompassing personal and social connotations. The term "branding" refers to the collection of meanings and associations that distinguish a product or service from its competitors. Brand personality or character entails attributing human-like qualities to a product or brand. It is commonly accepted that products possess a personality image akin to that of individuals. Brand image refers to the overall composition of an object, including its advertising, as well as the customer's disposition and the attitudinal screen through which they perceive it (Joshi & Gargi, 2021).

Group identity

The purchasing behaviour of customers in developing countries is influenced by their group identity. According to Bai, Wang, and Gong (2019), consumers establish distinct associations between brands and specific connotations, which subsequently contribute to forming group identities. Felix (2013) highlights various factors, including social history, sociological dynamics, and psychological mechanisms, that contribute to the development of brand loyalty. The author posits that brand loyalty can be attributed to a combination of nostalgia and a longing to recreate the favourable conditions of one's childhood. These factors are seen as influential in fostering brand loyalty, as they contribute to establishing family traditions associated with specific brands. The author suggests that a shift does not primarily influence this loyalty in the perceived trustworthiness of family members.

Wang and Li (2021) and Yang et al. (2020) assert that brands are frequently promoted within the familial framework, communicating connotations associated with family utilisation and customs. Certain familial connections to brands are established solely through exposure, while others are formed due to a family's deep emotional connections to specific brands. Moreover, scholarly investigations have provided evidence that intergenerational influence substantially impacts the decision-making process regarding product and brand selection and the development of brand loyalty. The researchers discovered that the presence of familiar brands originating from their home countries played a significant role in assisting newly arrived immigrants in coping with homesickness and addressing the challenges associated with their transition into a new environment (Strizhakova et al., 2008).

Mhlongo, B. & Msosa, S.K. (2023). Vehicle brand perception among generation X in the South African higher education sector. Management and Entrepreneurship: Trends of Development, 3(25), 19-29. https://doi.org/10.26661/2522-1566/2023-3/25-02

Family and tradition

According to Bresciani, Giacosa, and Vrontis (2016), family and tradition entail more than simply adhering to traditional production methods. Instead, it involves utilising contemporary techniques and equipment whenever necessary to ensure the creation of high-quality products and the provision of exceptional services. This approach fosters customer retention and satisfaction, enhancing overall business performance. The authors assert that companies allocate significant technological investments to meet customer demands. They argue that innovation and tradition are not mutually exclusive, but rather a combination of both has played a pivotal role in attaining and sustaining a competitive advantage that is environmentally and socially responsible.

The topic of how consumers utilise brand meanings to convey aspects of product identity has been extensively discussed by scholars. Bagozzi et al. (2021) emphasise that branded products serve as representations of the self. The authors elucidate that brands are symbolic entities contributing to consumers' self-perceptions and attitudes. The authors elucidate that brand personalities function as culturally specific and culturally shared beliefs. This phenomenon underscores the intricate interplay between individuals and their respective cultural contexts (Mao et al., 2020).

Status

The connotation and cost of branded merchandise frequently serve as indicators of social standing. Consequently, numerous organisations establish a connection between their brands and elevated social positions. Hence, acquiring a prestigious brand implies that the consumer also possesses a significant social status. Studies conducted in Western markets have revealed a significant association between conspicuous consumption and the utilisation of branded products to display one's social status. Moreover, several studies have provided evidence suggesting that consumers residing in developing nations prefer Western brands due to their function as indicators of social status (Karoui, and Khemakhem, 2019; Strizhakova et al., 2008).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive, quantitative, and cross-sectional research methodology. According to Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill (2009), quantitative research encompasses data collection techniques that support the utilisation of formally structured questioning, wherein the researcher predetermines response choices and administers them to a substantial number of participants. A sample size of 400 participants, consisting of both students and lecturers, was chosen through a simple random sampling method. The researcher employed a questionnaire as a measurement instrument due to the descriptive nature of the study and its convenience in collecting data from a substantial number of respondents concurrently. A structured questionnaire was formulated by drawing upon the findings of the literature review. The questionnaire was derived from a previously validated instrument on the significance of branded products, developed initially by Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price (2008). The researchers employed a seven-point Likert scale, as Bearden, Netemeyer, and Haws (2011) suggested. The present study employed Cronbach's alpha model to evaluate the reliability of the collected data. Reliability pertains to the frequency at which the measurements obtained from a data collection instrument are devoid of random errors. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is computed by partitioning the items of the measurement scale into two subsets, followed by calculating the average scores for each subset and subsequently correlating them. This procedure is employed to assess the internal consistency of the measures. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient values range between 0 and 1, where 0.6 and above indicate adequate internal consistency (Hao et al., 2022). Table 1 shows that all the reliability scores were above the acceptable threshold of 0.6.

Table 1

Reliability statistics

		N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
A	Quality factor and Items	5	0.799
B	Value factors and items	3	0.627
C	Personal identity factors and Items	5	0.832
D	Group Identity factor and items	5	0.776
E	Status factor and items	5	0.804
F	Tradition factors	5	0.762

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Generation X perceptions of the quality factors and motor vehicle brands

Based on the observed level of significance presented in Table 2, the Chi-Square test results suggest a statistically significant difference in the scoring patterns of the participants about the statements assessing quality factors and motor vehicle brands ($P < 0.05$). As an illustration, a significant proportion of the participants (88.2%) expressed concurrence with the assertion: "The brand name serves as a crucial means of obtaining information regarding the longevity and dependability of the automobile" (A1). When analysing the assertion, "I can infer significant information about a motor vehicle based on its brand name" (A2), it was found that 84.7% of respondents agreed with this statement. Furthermore, most participants, specifically 88.9%, agreed with the assertion, "I utilise brand name as an indicator of quality when acquiring motor vehicles" (A3). In addition, a significant majority (88.8%) of respondents indicated that their selection of a motor vehicle brand was influenced by the perceived quality associated with the brand (A4). In line with this finding, most respondents (81.2%) agreed that a motor vehicle's brand name provides substantial insights into its overall quality (A5).

Table 2

Generation X rating of the quality factors and motor vehicle brands

	Entirely disagree		Mostly disagree		Somewhat disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat agree		Mostly agree		Entirely agree		Chi Square
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	p-value
A1	5	3.5%	9	6.3%	1	0.7%	2	1.4%	16	11.2%	54	37.8%	56	39.2%	0.000
A2	5	3.5%	4	2.8%	4	2.8%	9	6.3%	24	16.8%	49	34.3%	48	33.6%	0.000
A3	3	2.1%	3	2.1%	1	0.7%	9	6.3%	21	14.7%	40	28.0%	66	46.2%	0.000
A4	4	2.8%	4	2.8%	2	1.4%	6	4.2%	21	14.7%	32	22.4%	74	51.7%	0.000
A5	3	2.1%	3	2.1%	7	4.9%	14	9.8%	28	19.6%	47	32.9%	41	28.7%	0.000

Generation X perceptions of value factors and motor vehicle brands

Based on the level of significance presented in Table 3, the Chi-Square test reveals a statistically significant difference ($P < 0.05$) in the scoring patterns of the participants concerning the statements that assess value factors and motor vehicle brands. The data reveals that most of the respondents (65.8%) expressed agreement with the statement, "I select vehicle brands based on my alignment with the values represented by the brand" (B1). In a similar vein, most of the participants (72.1%) agreed with the assertion "I make vehicle purchases that align with my values" (B2), while

62.3% of the respondents concurred with the statement "The values upheld by a company influence my decision when selecting a motor vehicle" (B3).

Table 3

Generation X rating of the value factors and motor vehicle brands

	Entirely disagree		Mostly disagree		Somewhat disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat agree		Mostly agree		Entirely agree		Chi Square
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%	p-value
B1	14	9.8%	11	7.7%	6	4.2%	18	12.6%	31	21.7%	35	24.5%	28	19.6%	0.000
B2	6	4.2%	13	9.1%	5	3.5%	16	11.2%	21	14.7%	45	31.5%	37	25.9%	0.000
B3	18	12.6%	15	10.5%	4	2.8%	17	11.9%	20	14.0%	37	25.9%	32	22.4%	0.000

Generation X perceptions of group identity and motor vehicle brands

According to the statistical significance level presented in Table 5, the Chi-Square test reveals a significant difference in the scoring patterns of the participants about the statements that assess group identity and motor vehicle brands (P < 0.05). The data reveals that most of the respondents (51.8%) expressed disagreement with the statement, "Using my choice of vehicle helps me connect with other people and social groups" (D1). Similarly, a more significant proportion (57.4%) expressed disagreement with the assertion that they purchase a motor vehicle brand to establish connections with individuals and social circles (D2). The discrepancy between the substantial number of participants who expressed disagreement regarding the social motivation behind vehicle purchases and the relatively low percentage (47.6%) who disagreed with the assertion "I feel a connection with individuals who share the same automotive brand as me" (D3) was unexpected. However, a significant proportion of respondents, specifically 40.6%, agreed that they experience a sense of connection with individuals who share the same brand of motor vehicle as themselves.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of respondents (45.5%) expressed their disagreement with the assertion that their choice of motor vehicle brand reflects their desired associations (D4), whereas an equal percentage (45.5%) concurred with this statement. Notwithstanding this, a majority (62.3%) of the participants disagreed that their selection of motor vehicle brand conveys any information about the individuals they prefer to associate with (D5). Based on the account, it can be inferred that most participants did not assign significant importance to group identity factors when deciding on purchasing a motor vehicle brand.

Table 5

Generation X rating of group identity and motor vehicle brands

	Entirely disagree		Mostly disagree		Somewhat disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat agree		Mostly agree		Entirely agree		Chi Square
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%	p-value
D1	40	28.0%	22	15.4%	12	8.4%	10	7.0%	25	17.5%	20	14.0%	14	9.8%	0.000
D2	45	31.5%	25	17.5%	12	8.4%	16	11.2%	16	11.2%	20	14.0%	9	6.3%	0.000
D3	36	25.2%	24	16.8%	8	5.6%	17	11.9%	25	17.5%	18	12.6%	15	10.5%	0.001
D4	34	23.8%	17	11.9%	14	9.8%	13	9.1%	28	19.6%	20	14.0%	17	11.9%	0.007
D5	55	38.5%	22	15.4%	12	8.4%	14	9.8%	17	11.9%	11	7.7%	12	8.4%	0.000

Generation X perceptions of status factors and motor vehicle brands

According to the statistical significance level presented in Table 6, the Chi-Square test results reveal a significant difference in the scoring patterns of the participants regarding the statements assessing status factors and motor vehicle brands ($P < 0.05$). The data reveals that most of the participants, specifically 54.6%, expressed agreement with the statement that they consciously refrain from selecting automobile brands that do not align with their perceived social standing (E1). Similarly, nearly half of the participants (49.0%) agreed with the statement, "I utilise motor vehicle brands as a means to convey my social standing" (E2), whereas 42.7% held a contrary viewpoint. Similarly, 47.6% of respondents agreed, "I make choices regarding motor vehicle brands based on their association with my social class" (E3), whereas 39.9% held a contrary viewpoint. Moreover, a majority (63.0%) of the participants concurred that their choice of motor vehicle brands indicates their social standing (E4). Therefore, it is comprehensible that a majority (70.0%) of participants concurred with the notion that they "express their accomplishments through the motor vehicle brands they utilise and possess" (E5). Based on the aforementioned information, it can be inferred that the participants exhibited a greater consensus regarding the association between the make of an automobile and the owner's financial status and social standing.

Table 6

Generation X rating of status factors and motor vehicle brands

	Entirely disagree		Mostly disagree		Somewhat disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat agree		Mostly agree		Entirely agree		Chi Square
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	p-value
E1	26	18.2%	15	10.5%	13	9.1%	11	7.7%	28	19.6%	25	17.5%	25	17.5%	0.021
E2	28	19.6%	21	14.7%	12	8.4%	12	8.4%	29	20.3%	21	14.7%	20	14.0%	0.037
E3	26	18.2%	23	16.1%	8	5.6%	18	12.6%	24	16.8%	23	16.1%	21	14.7%	0.100
E4	22	15.4%	13	9.1%	10	7.0%	8	5.6%	37	25.9%	28	19.6%	25	17.5%	0.000
E5	13	9.1%	6	4.2%	7	4.9%	17	11.9%	25	17.5%	33	23.1%	42	29.4%	0.000

Generation X perceptions of traditional factors and motor vehicle brands

This section pertains to the conventional determinants and automotive manufacturers. The findings about the participants falling within the age range of 1964-1976, commonly called Generation X, will be presented. According to the statistical significance level presented in Table 7, the Chi-Square test results suggest a statistically significant difference in the scoring patterns of the participants about the statements assessing traditional factors and motor vehicle brands ($P < 0.05$).

Table 7

Generation X rating of traditional factors and motor vehicle brand

	Entirely disagree		Mostly disagree		Somewhat disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat agree		Mostly agree		Entirely agree		Chi Square
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	p-value
F1	41	28.7%	11	7.7%	9	6.3%	23	16.1%	22	15.4%	21	14.7%	16	11.2%	0.000
F2	50	35.0%	23	16.1%	17	11.9%	11	7.7%	15	10.5%	16	11.2%	11	7.7%	0.000
F3	35	24.5%	18	12.6%	19	13.3%	16	11.2%	19	13.3%	24	16.8%	12	8.4%	0.014
F4	45	31.5%	14	9.8%	11	7.7%	14	9.8%	18	12.6%	23	16.1%	18	12.6%	0.000
F5	63	44.1%	21	14.7%	12	8.4%	9	6.3%	14	9.8%	12	8.4%	12	8.4%	0.000

The data reveals that most of the respondents, specifically 42.7%, expressed disagreement with the notion that they purchase motor vehicle brands due to the significance of this practice within their families (F1). Conversely, 41.3% of the respondents indicated agreement with this

statement. Similarly, a more significant proportion (63.0%) of respondents' express disagreement with the assertion, "I utilise vehicle brands that my family has used or currently uses" (F2). In a similar vein, most respondents, specifically 50.4%, expressed disagreement with the statement "I purchase motor vehicle brands that evoke memories of my family" (F3), whereas 38.5% indicated agreement. In addition to the findings, a more significant proportion (49.0%) of the participants disagreed that their choice of motor vehicle brands indicates their social standing (F4), whereas 41.3% of respondents agreed with this statement. However, a significant majority of 67.2% expressed disagreement with the statement, "I purchase a motor vehicle brand that my parents have purchased or currently own" (F5). Based on the findings, it can be inferred that many participants refrain from purchasing automobiles due to familial customs and practices.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study aimed to examine the perceptions of passenger motor vehicle brands among individuals belonging to Generation X in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The results of this study indicate that a significant proportion of the participants agreed with the notion that their selection of a vehicle brand was influenced by factors such as perceived quality, value, personal and collective identity, social status, and familial customs. According to the study's findings, brand managers and marketers in the motor vehicle industry must prioritise enhancing marketing and promotional strategies. This strategic emphasis is crucial for establishing greater relevance and attractiveness to the intended target market, ultimately leading to a notable surge in the sales of their respective motor vehicles. The level of competition within the motor industry sector is highly intense. The implementation of an appropriate marketing strategy has the potential to confer a competitive edge on motor vehicle brand enterprises. This study is anticipated to yield a favourable outcome by contributing to developing a sound marketing strategy for manufacturers of motor vehicle brands. Consequently, this improvement is expected to enhance the reputation of their motor vehicle brands and elevate customer satisfaction levels.

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СПРИЙНЯТТЯ БРЕНДІВ АВТОМОБІЛІВ СЕРЕД ПОКОЛІННЯ Х У СЕКТОРІ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ ПІВДЕННОЇ АФРИКИ

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Це дослідження мало на меті з'ясувати загальне уявлення щодо значення, яке приписується різним маркам легкових автомобілів серед покоління Х, демографічної групи, яка становить більшість покупців автомобілів. Дослідження проводилося в провінції Квазулу-Натал, де дані були зібрані в чотирьох вищих навчальних закладах. Дослідження було проведено з використанням кількісного, описового та перехресного дизайну дослідження. Метод опитування використовувався для збору даних із вибірки 400 осіб, пов'язаних з університетом (співробітників, студентів), що належать до когорти покоління Х. Дані були проаналізовані за допомогою описової статистики за допомогою SPSS версії 23. Дослідження вивчало різні аспекти бренду, особливо зосереджуючись на факторах, пов'язаних з якістю, цінністю, особистою та груповою ідентичністю, статусом і сімейними традиціями. Індустрія легкових автомобілів характеризується гострою конкуренцією. Отже, перед тим, як завершити покупку, споживачі пропонують різні альтернативи для оцінки та ретельного вивчення. Для того, щоб ефективно задовольнити вимоги споживачів, автовиробники повинні володіти всебічним розумінням їхніх потреб і впливу, який здійснюють їхні колеги. Крім того, автовиробники повинні пропонувати транспортні засоби, які відповідають унікальним характеристикам кожного. Згідно з існуючою літературою, виробники автомобілів мають потенціал для покращення обслуговування клієнтів або користувачів шляхом впровадження сучасних та підтверджених структур і процедур для управління підключенням клієнтів. Результати цього дослідження свідчать про те, що значна частина учасників висловила згоду з думкою, що на вибір марки транспортного засобу вплинули такі фактори, як якість, цінність, індивідуальна та колективна ідентичність, соціальний статус і сімейні традиції. Дослідження дозволило надати цінну інформацію науковцям, професіоналам галузі та виробникам автотранспортних засобів, дозволяючи їм розвинути всебічне розуміння проблем, з якими стикаються промисловість, наукові кола та споживачі, пов'язані з уявленнями про різні марки автомобілів. Крім того, результати цього дослідження можуть слугувати цінним інструментом для визначення більш відповідного маркетингового підходу для покращення ставлення споживачів до автомобільних брендів.

Ключові слова: бренд, автомобіль, якість, уподобання, покоління Х.