

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER PREFERENCE FOR AUTOMOBILE

BRANDS: THE CASE OF GHANA

BY

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**A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING
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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this work is the result of my own research and has not been presented by anyone for any academic award in this or any other university. All references used in the work have been fully acknowledged.

I do bear sole responsibility for any shortcomings.

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DATE

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this Long essay was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the University of Ghana.

.....

(PROF. BEDMAN NARTEH)

.....

DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God, for providing me with the strength, courage and determination to go through my course successfully and my lovely wife, Yaa Serwaa Berchie, who has been a pillar throughout this journey.

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, firms have made considerable investment into various types of branding activities in order to become competitive and profitable by virtue of consumer purchase decisions. But the exact brand activities that significantly influence consumer preference for automobile brands in Ghana has not been empirically for some time now. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the drivers of automobile brand choice among Ghanaian automobile users. Based on this objective, literature was reviewed on the concept of branding, of which five drivers of automobile brand choice were identified. These factors are emotional connection, social influence, brand price, brand awareness and brand accessibility. To empirically examine these factors, the adopted quantitative approach with the use of a questionnaire for data collection. Data was collected from two hundred and forty-nine automobile users within the Legon enclave. Data was coded using Stata statistical software package where the findings were presented using descriptive statistics, linear regression and Pearson correlation coefficient. Whiles the finding of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables, emotional connection, brand awareness and brand accessibility were found to have the strongest relationship with behavioural intention. On the other hand, social influence and brand price were found to have insignificant relation with behavioural intention. The new empirical insights into factors influencing consumers' purchase decision of automobiles from the study will be significant to automobile manufacturers and dealers operating in developing countries such as Ghana. The study therefore recommends that automobile dealers must build car brands that connect emotionally with consumers, and made easily accessible and create the needed awareness for them.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In this dynamic era of globalisation, marketing revolution and impact of marketing activities on consumer behaviour, consumers are more brand conscious in most of the products (Sciffman & Kanuk 2007). As a result, before consumers decide to purchase a product, there is some level of association using factors such as quality, features, country of origin of the product, performance and many other benchmarks (Josiassen & Harzing 2008). Suffice to state that, these associated factors only bother on high involving products. Broadly, consumers scrutinize products with two established variables namely the intrinsic and extrinsic variables (Escalas & Bettman 2005; Gürhan-Canli, Sarial-Abi, & Hayran, 2018). The intrinsic variables bother on intangible characteristics of the product (e.g. taste, design, performance etc.) while the extrinsic variables are concerned with tangible attributes of the products (e.g. price, brand name, warranty, country of origin), all of which are potential sources of information to customers. Evidence suggests that in case of limited information about intrinsic cues, customers are generally relying and using the extrinsic cues such as COO effect for evaluating products; however, these also act as an alternative variable in the absence of the knowledge about intrinsic cues of a product (Escalas & Bettman 2005). Considering the Ghanaian automobile landscape, there might likewise be a few explanations and factors behind consumer's preference towards the origin of automobile brands. Along these lines, there is additionally a need to uncover the explanation and factors behind Ghanaian consumers' preference for foreign and local automobile brands.

Consumers are in a tough spot because they are exposed to different window of information and varieties of automobile brands, many great deals of choices and options available in the market place influence their preference for an automobile brand (Ezeh, Abamara, Ugwuju, & Obike, 2017). As noted by Balabanis and Siamagka, (2017), choosing from among brands in an environment that is cluttered with promotion and price information and other economic indices. These stimuli include not only the large number of brands from which to choose, but also the variety of promotional cues available. It is also being suggested by Ahmed and d'Astous, (2002) that the interpretation and consumer preference towards foreign and local brands is different among individuals and also influenced by internal consumer behavior (perception, attitude, and motivation) and external factors (family roles, peer influence and group influence). Very intriguing however is the observation made by Omonike, Vincent and Adelaja (2011) that some consumers would prefer indigenous products anytime, even if they fall within the same price range with foreign products. Conversely, some consumers would prefer foreign products even if they are three times more expensive. Therefore, factors influencing consumer preference towards foreign and local brands varies (Sun, Zheng, Su & Keller, 2017).

As economies undergoes transformational changes and becomes more affluent, emerging social forces make consumers spend a greater part of their income in way remarkably different from what took place in the past (Ogunnaike, 2010). Achumba (1996) opine that, consumers ideally take the advantage of the affluent and the latest services that technology and business can offer. These consumers are personalities whose behaviour is directed by diverse and wide-ranging influences such as past experience, perception and expectations, income, societal beliefs, attitude, educational

level and social groups. These form his taste choice and product preference. Price is regarded as one of the most important factors affecting the consumers' preference of automobile brands. This suppose that once consumers perceive a price disparity between local and foreign automobiles, price differences start to affect their preference for local goods. Conversely, if consumers realise that local items are more expensive than foreign ones, their preference move toward the foreign products. The notion most often is that, a higher price denotes product quality while lower price implies lower quality (Halkias, Davvetas & Diamantopoulos, 2016).

Although Ghana's automobile industry is relatively young with Kantaka as the major player with incredible range of product offerings, many Ghanaian automobile consumers are of the view that, foreign automobiles have images that bestow quality (Hill, Afriyie-Gyawu, Shah, Hansen & Veeravalli, 2017). Then again, many consumers, country of origin of the brands are the places they would wish cherish to visit or for image boosting purposes. As a result they buy their products as a way of identifying themselves with those countries (Ogunnaike, 2010). Available data suggest that foreign automobile in the Ghanaian market constitute well over 98 percent of the entire population of automobiles. The general perception is that, made in Ghana products are perceived inferior, even when the foreign products were not really better in value or physically different from the domestic alternatives. Considering that, the success of a firm depends to a large extent on its capabilities to attract consumers towards its brands. In particular, it is critical for the survival of a company to attract and retain its current customers, and to make them loyal to the brand by identifying what key factors or motivation drive consumers to make car choices. This study, therefore, examines the factors influencing consumers' preference towards local and foreign automobile brands in Ghana.

1.2 Problem Statement

As a characteristic of developing economies, large number of products from developed economies are imported each year and automobile brands are not an exception (Cleverland, Laroche, and Papadopoulos, 2009; Hill, Afriyie-Gyawu, Shah, Hansen & Veeravalli, 2017). This development has brought stiff competition to indigenous companies in developing economies. In other words, consumers are exposed to alternative preference for domestic made products and foreign products (Halkias, Davvetas & Diamantopoulos, 2016). Juxtaposing this background against Government of Ghana's Industrialisation drive – supporting and encouraging local businesses, requires that the behaviour of Ghanaian consumer must be understood because their insatiable taste for locally produced goods is what will give meaning to the industrialization agenda.

A careful look at the literature on consumer preference decision reveals that studies conducted within the Sub-Sahara Africa context have largely been focused on the concept from the organisation's point of view (Hinson et al, 2006) and consumers behaviour in relation to low involvement products (Hinson et al, 2009; Solomon, Dahl, White, Zaichkowsky, & Polegato, 2014). However, there is fairly no studies conducted with respect to high involvement product specifically automobile brands. Some studies conducted on consumer brand choice have also mainly being conducted in the Western worlds (Sun, Zheng, Su & Keller, 2017; Balabanis & Siamagka, 2017). The question of what drives consumer brand choice of automobiles has been under researched in Ghana even though the market for automobile keeps growing on a daily basis. The current study is intended to address the need for more knowledge on what drives consumer

brand choice of automobile in Ghana. This study is thus positioned to explore from a Ghanaian context the key motivation behind automobile users' choice of cars.

1.3 Research Purpose

The study seeks to identify and examine the factors responsible for consumer preference or choice of automobile in Ghana. It also aims to identify whether Ghanaian automobile brand can be preferred above foreign brands.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To determine the drivers of consumer brand choice of foreign or local automobiles in Ghana.
2. To examine the relative importance of these drivers or factors in driving consumer choice of foreign or local brand.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the drivers of consumer brand choice of foreign or local automobile brands in Ghana?
2. What is the relative importance of these drivers in consumer preference for foreign or local automobile brands in Ghana?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is positioned to highlight the marketing issues and relevant strategies to promoting locally manufactured automobile in the Ghanaian economy. The study will highlight these drivers to the management of Kantaka automobile and how to improve their marketing strategies. The study can also be used as a learning material in understanding consumer behavior. Furthermore, the research will contribute to the existing conceptual and empirical literature on consumer brand preference and serve as a basis for further research. This study will also be beneficial to instructors when lecturing on how local companies can best influence consumer choice.

1.7 Chapter Disposition

The first chapter presents an introduction to the research, comprising the research problem, objectives, and research question, the significance of the study and organisation of the study. Chapter Two reviews related literature on the concept. Chapter Three explains the research methods that was used for the study. It involves the research design, research population, sampling technique and sample size in this chapter. Additionally, sources of data, data collection instrument(s), and methods of data collection as issues on research ethical considerations are addressed. The Fourth chapter will present the data analysis and presents an analysis of the data collected. The descriptive and inferential analyses of the data are presented. Lastly Chapter Five will present the findings, summary, conclusion and recommendations for companies and further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section of the study focuses on review of relevant literature in other to establish domain of the study. In view of the objectives, the contemporary literature reviewed bothers on the concept of brands and how it differs from products. The chapter also focuses on brand equity, foreign and local brands and finally concludes with drivers of consumer brand preference.

2.2 The Concept of Brand

There are numerous definitions and explanations of the term ‘brand.’ Taking the literal meaning of the word and encompassing it into a universal business understanding, a brand is a permanent mark that is hot-stamped onto a good or service (Kapferer 2008). This definition suggest that brand must have a particular and distinct company name and respective trademark (Hansen & Christensen, 2003). The American Marketing Association also offered a definition on the concept as composed of several elements, such as “name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors”. It is often that a brand has all of those elements working together in a way that uniquely identifies a company and differentiates it from its competitors. Additionally, Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006) defines a brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of these that identifies the makers or seller of the product or services”. This definition is based on the use of a brand name, symbols and signs to distinguish a

product from its competitor. It can be deduced from the definitions above that brands functioned as symbols that enable consumers to identify and separate one producer from another, with the ability to trace one good back to the manufacturer holding it responsible for its quality (Kapferer, 2012), but they are today ascribed with almost divine characteristics serving as a strategic business asset essential for firms to develop if they are to compete successfully (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

In differentiating a brand from a product, Kotler (2000) explains that, a product is anything which can be presented to a market for purchase, use or consumption that is possible of satisfying need or want. This differentiation captures a product as made up of goods that have physical appearance, service, events, experiences, places, persons, organisation, properties, information and ideas. On the other hand, De Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2003) asserts that a brand goes beyond physical constituents and what it stands for, it has some additional attributes which although maybe intangible but are still important for consumers consideration. A brand has added value which differentiate it from a product (Jones & Slater, 2003). Jones and Slater (2003) sum up these added values as those that develop from experiences of the brand; those that arise as a result of usage of the brand, which could be as a result of consumers association with the brand; those that arise from an assumption that the brand is powerful; and those that arise from the appearance of the brand i.e. packaging the product. According to Doyle and Stern (2006), these added values play a vital role in many consumers buying decisions, as brands are purchased from emotional motivation as well as functional motivation.

Interestingly, as a brand is considered by my scholars as an identifier of a product, Kotler and Armstrong (2004) disagrees by arguing that a brand is beyond an identifier. According to Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2007), a brand is a distinguishable symbol of origin and an assurance of performance. It therefore means that a brand can be said to be a symbol of all facts associated with a product and service. A brand commonly includes a logo, a name and any other visible elements such as symbols and images. It also consists of other sets of expectation related to a product or service which normally arise in people's mind. Brands are highly regarded as an important source of capital for most business. The term brand has in that regard had different meaning attached to it and Prasad and Dev (2000) have also stated that a brand can be seen to include all tangible and intangible attributes that a business stands for. Brands have always been commercial agents and brand managers take pride in their ability to meet the needs of their target market (Beverland, 2005).

2.2.1 Brand Building Efforts

According to Kotler and Pförtsch (2006) and Keller and Brexendorf (2017), brand building efforts requires brand strategist to approach their operations in an all-inclusive manner in other for the brand to live up to its potentials. This implies that brand marketers and strategists must look at the brand in question from a very wide angle, rather than from a narrow one, as it provides a better understanding of the respective brand. Brand building is about the full knowledge of the brand's responsibilities and customers. It is about truly anticipating its respective customer's needs. Therefore, brand building starts with the thoughtful understanding of the characteristics of the brand's goods and services (Keller & Brexendorf, 2017). It then means that, top management must initiates the branding efforts with consensus, as it is a strategic necessity that is of great importance

to the company. This consent on approach includes instituting a brand's strength(s), which ultimately achieves brand stability, leadership, and of course international presence.

The successful building of a brand requires the need to integrate the elements namely clarity, consistency, and leadership along with the organisations strategic mission (Keller & Brexendorf, 2017). So, to be able to apply the above elements in line with the strategic mission, Kotler and Pförtsch (2006) suggest that the following brand building process is judiciously adhered; brand planning, brand analysis, brand strategy, brand building and brand audit. It could therefore be said that the brand building process is one that “consumes the respective company’s resources, as such a procedure cross-examines the company’s internal and external processes to produce a well-structured strategy” (Pandley & Tripathy 2008). Therefore, it could be derived that brand-building process has an underlying objective of constructing a marketing and branding plan that attracts a large number of customers to the brand name at stake (Kotler & Pförtsch, 2006).

2.2.2 Brand Equity

The concept of brand equity in the marketing literature is an important and scholars and practitioners, as it constitutes of the priceless value(s) that is added to a product or service for the sole reason of holding the respective brand's name, and consequent logo (Pandley & Tripathy 2008). Those values that are being added do not only include tangible qualities, but also abstract ones. The intangible brand qualities or brand attributes are held in the minds of the brand's consequent consumers (Aaker & Biel, 1993). In a sense, brand equity represents the mental correlations and framework a consumer has composed over a certain brand. This set of conceptual associations and linkages is not born overnight, but rather is built over a long period of time (Kapferer, 2008). It could be confirmed and highlighted that the untouchable brand

characteristic(s) that reside(s) in the consumers' minds is a brand equity feature with the highest level of significance (Aaker & Biel 1993).

Brand equity is accordingly defined as “the set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to a firm's customers” (Aaker 1991, p. 15). To break it down, brand equity consists of all the assets and liabilities that are related to a certain brand name and its respective logo. Those assets and liabilities are correlated in a manner that if the brand's name or logo changes, they are changed; consequently, they are greatly affected (Aaker 1991). So, it could be stated that the assets and liabilities holding tangible and intangible values are added to a good/service in order to enhance them. According to Aaker (1991), those assets and liabilities can be categorized as brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations. It is important to state that each category of the brand equity dimension produces distinct brand values that help the respective customers, and company as well in several ways.

2.3 Foreign Brands

According to Steenkamp (2017), brands have “come to represent a fascist state where there is full acknowledgement of logos, with little opportunity for criticism because our newspapers, television stations, internet servers, streets and retail spaces are all controlled by multinational corporate interests”. With globalization touching the nooks and corners of every nation a global consumer segment has arisen whose needs and interests are becoming increasingly homogeneous (De Mooij, & Hofstede, 2010). The growing integration of international markets as well as the growth of

competition on a worldwide scale implies that adoption of a global perspective has become increasingly imperative in planning marketing strategy (Steenkamp, 2017).

2.3.1 Consumer Perceptions of Global and Local Brands

Polonsky, & Jevons (2009) defines a local brand as a brand that exists in one country or in a limited geographical area. Gregory and Wiechmann (2002) point out that local brands belong to a local, international, or a global firm, they also provide a link between national economy and individual well-being. Several researchers such as Gregory and Wiechmann (2002) define global brands as “a brand that is marketed under the same name in multiple countries with similar and centrally located coordinated marketing strategies”. Local brands are perceived as more “down to earth” than a foreign or international brand, which means that local brands offer a more basic/no frills brand proposition. Local brands are also linked more to local traditions and local cultures than international brands are. It was also found that trust is an important advantage for local brands because it provides a unique relationship with consumers that take years to develop. Local brands are not more flexible than global brands in terms of their marketing activities when they compete in a foreign product category due to cultural categories being associated with the product category (Eckhardt, 2005). Just as global brands need to conform to international marketing dictums, local brands sometimes need to conform to deeply held preconceptions about product category in which they operate.

According Holt et al (2004), when a brand is marketed around the world, that fact alone gives it an aura of excellence and a set of obligations. A study conducted by Douglas et al (2004) revealed

that consumers all over the world associate global or foreign brands with three main characteristics and evaluate them on those while making purchase decision. These characteristics include Quality Signal, global myth and Social responsibility. Gregory and Wiechmann (2002) defines quality as “conformance to requirements”. Polonsky and Jevons (2009) are of the view that quality is a comparison between Expectations and Performance. Consumers prefer global brands because they usually offer more quality and better guarantees than other products. That perception often serves as a rationale for global brands to charge premiums. Consumers look to global brands as symbols of cultural ideas. They use brands to create an imagined global identity that they share with like-minded people. They feel that “Local brands show them what they are while global brands show them what they want to be”, global brands often make them feel like citizens of the world, and they somehow give them a sense of identity (Holt et al, 2004).

2.4 Drivers of Consumer Brand Preference

There is unequivocal evidence that researching into consumers’ needs and wants is crucial to marketing both in the research world and business circle. This significance of doing this can be assessed from two perspectives – the benefits the firm receives from doing it, and the downside risk the firm incurs if it does not do it (Czinkota & Kotabe, 2001). If viewed from both perspectives, the upshot can be very great and can have far-reaching effects on the success of marketers in the prevailing highly competitive marketing environment.

It has long been recognized in the literature that the consumer's evaluations of a brand (be it foreign or local) can be characterized by functional and symbolic dimensions. The utility provided by a brand has been revealed in research areas such as those related to branding, the needs and motivations for consumption behavior, the individual's attitudes and social psychology (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). From an empirical perspective, it has been shown that brands have a functional/utilitarian component and a symbolic/expressive component (Usunier, & Shaner, 2017; Polonsky & Jevons, 2009; Gregory & Wiechmann, 2002). The functional dimension describes brand evaluation in a rational and practical manner. Consumers evaluate the performance capabilities of the product, along with perceptions about usage effectiveness, value for money, availability, and reliability of the brand. Therefore, this dimension represents the more intrinsic advantages of the product and usually corresponds to product-related attributes. At a more emotional level, the symbolic evaluation of the brand is considered. Here, consumers use personal or subjective criteria such as taste, pride, desire to reinforce their membership of a particular social group and desire for expressing something about themselves in their consumption decisions. This study however examines consumer preference for foreign or local brands using multiplicity of drivers.

2.4.1 Brand Awareness

Attracting new customers and maintain existing ones are fundamental to the success of a business, as such organizations must endeavor to distinguish element that will make consumers identify and buy their brands. Creating and building brand awareness, reaching consumers' minds, and encouraging them to develop a preference for the brand, are important steps in ensuring a successful product brand (Keller, 2003). Brand awareness is essential for the above process to

occur, since consumers must first be made aware of a brand in order to buy it (Rossiter and Percy, 1997). Ross and Harradine (2004) also confirm that brand awareness is the crucial first stage in buyer readiness to develop a brand preference and move closer to the point of purchase. A consumer is more likely to choose a product with higher brand awareness, regardless of quality and price (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000).

Romaniuk, Wight and Faulkner (2017) posit that, brand awareness is synonymous with brand recognition (consumers' ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as cue) and brand recall (consumers' ability to retrieve the brand when given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other cues). Brand recognition is therefore considered as the minimum level of brand awareness and is based on aided recall (Pegoraro, Scott & Burch, 2017). Brand recognition is particularly important when a consumer chooses a brand at the point of purchase. Brand recall is considered the next level of brand awareness. As the consumer is not aided by having the name provided, brand recall implies that the brand holds a stronger brand position in his or her mind. The first-named brand in an unaided recall thus represents the highest level of brand awareness (George Onyango, Caleb, & Patrick, 2017).

George Onyango, Caleb and Patrick (2017) have established that Brand awareness is thus essential in consumer buying decision-making as it is important that consumers recall the brand in the context of a given specific product category, awareness increasing the probability that the brand will be a member of the consideration set. Awareness also affects decisions about brands in the consideration set, even in the absence of any brand associations in consumers' minds. In low involvement decision settings, a minimum level of brand awareness may be sufficient for the choice to be final. Awareness can also influence consumer decision making by affecting brand

associations that form the brand image (Ranwala, & Perera, 2017). According to George Onyango, Caleb and Patrick (2017), customer awareness and association influences inferred attributes, perceived quality and finally result to brand loyalty. In a study by Radder and Huang (2008), the relevance of brand awareness was established when it comes to consumer choice of high-involvement products and indicated that the feature plays a major role than in low-involvement products. Since one of the objectives of this study is to examine the drivers of consumer preference for foreign and local brands, the study proposes a set of testable hypotheses. The first hypothesis for the study is as follows:

H₁: there is a positive relationship between brand awareness and consumer preference of foreign or local automobile brand.

2.4.2 Brand Accessibility

Brand accessibility is also known in the brand management literature as “convenience”. The brand must be available when consumers wants it or where consumers shop. It is much easier for consumers to insist upon a brand if it is widely available. Slight brand preference goes a long way toward insistence when the brand is widely available. The importance of convenience cannot be underestimated in today's world (Meyvis & Janiszewski, 2004). Accessibility has the most pronounced impact on converting brand awareness and preference to brand purchase. For this reason, accessibility is something every organization should seriously consider as it manages its brand and its equity.

Within the context of the consumer decision making, especially when evaluating potential alternatives during the pre-purchase stages, the evoked set refers to the specific brands (or models) a consumer considers in making a purchase within a specific product category. Regardless of the total number of brands in a product category, a consumer's evoked set tends to be quite small on average, often consisting of only three to five brands resulting from the frequency with which they are accessible and convenient to the consumer (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009).

Products that are easily accessible by consumers tend to create strong impacts in their evoked set of brand choices and thus could affect their purchasing decisions. Coca Cola leverages on this dimension of brands and makes their products available at most points where consumers could easily access them and this contributes significantly to the global success of the brand. In this regard when planning an organization's distribution channels, it is important not to think of just short-term sales but long-term strategy for the brand. Accessibility is not just about being available to consumers but about image-building, because it matters that your brand's image is conjoined with your distribution channels, availability and of course prices (Van Auken, 2003). In a study by Meyvis and Janiszewski (2004), it was found out that a substantial number of consumers (32 percent) switched brands due to out- of-stock situations. Similar study conducted two years later by Dhir, Kaur, Chen and Lonka, (2016) also reported 21percent of consumers behaving in a like manner. Some consumers had even switched stores to purchase desired brands as reported by Ahluwalia and Gürhan-Canli, (2003) affirming the extent to which accessibility of brands by consumers could affect their purchasing decisions and brand choice. The second hypothesis for the study is thus as follows:

H2: there is a positive relationship between accessibility and consumer preference for foreign or local automobile brand.

2.4.3 Emotional Connection

To withstand competitive pressures, companies have adopted various branding strategies in order to survive. Currently, a lot of companies are believed to have realized that strong emotional associations can create long-term and everlasting relationships between brands and customers (Loureiro, Ruediger, & Demetris, 2012). This has emerged as the concept of “*Emotional Branding*.” Brands now prefer to enter new markets with emotional promises rather than with assurances of trustworthiness. Customers also wish to have economic contracts with brands based on emotions or faith. Emotional Branding is a consumer-centric, relational, story-driven approach to forging deep and enduring effective bonds between customers and brands (Roberts, 2004).

Consumers identify a good brand based on the product quality or general affirmations of brand reliability, trust, reputation, etc. Emotional and self-expressive base value propositions build up strong bonds between customers and brands. Buying decisions are made on promises that transcend products, and promises are rooted in human emotions. Emotions are experienced as “feelings”. The whole world is driven by emotions. Companies have started realizing that rational thought leads consumers to be interested in brands, but it is emotion that sells. Branding strategies are moving towards this “emotional anchoring”.

Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer and Nyffenegger (2011) argue that, it is very necessary for brand managers to leverage on the power of their brand promise and building of confidence to get consumers emotionally connected to their brands. “Brand promise is like a kind of liquid cement that fills in a small crevice in the brain. When well-focused, it stakes out a position in the brain, so that even

the toughest competitor will find it difficult to dislodge” (Travis, 2000). To illustrate the potency of building confidence, some few years ago, Cadburys ran into a controversy in which some of the company's chocolates were reportedly found to be infested with worms. It recognized the problem and addressed it in a transparent manner. Resultantly, Cadbury was able to recover from the controversy in a short span of time (Koushik, 2006). It is believed that “a good experience will remain in the consumer’s emotional memory as connection made on a level far beyond their needs”. The third proposed hypothesis for the study is as follows:

H3: there is a positive relationship between emotional connection and consumer preference for foreign or local automobile brands.

2.4.4 Brand Price

According to Kwun and Oh (2004), price can be used as a reason for brand choice in two ways; either by going for the lowest price in order to escape financial risk or the highest price in order to achieve product quality. According to Popp and Woratschek (2017), price, place and brand are three important factors when deciding consumers purchase choice in everyday product. Cadogan and Foster (2000) indicate that price is probably the most important consideration for the average consumer. Consumers with high brand loyalty are willing to pay a premium price for their favored brand, so, their purchase intention is not easily affected by price. In addition, customers have a strong belief in the price and value of their favorite brands so much so that they would compare and evaluate prices with alternative brands (Keller, 2003). Consumers’ satisfaction may be built by comparing price with perceived costs and values. If the perceived values of the product are greater than cost, it is observed that consumers will purchase that product.

Price premium usually being used as a proxy for elasticity of demand is often a measure of brand perceived quality. Price premium reflects the brand's ability to command a price higher than its competitors. The price premium construct is consequently important for all types of brands, despite their actual positioning within a category (Chattopadhyay et al., 2009). The fourth proposed hypothesis for the study is as follows:

H5: there is a positive relationship between price and consumer preference for foreign or local automobile brands.

2.4.5 Social Influence

According to Algesheimer, Dholakia and Herrmann (2005), influence by other social-related factors plays a vital role in consumer's decision processes. Consumers have the habit of consulting each other regarding a new product or brand and seeking their advice. The advices of other people have a strong effect on consumers buying behaviour. However, the degree of such affect depends on the situation or individual. Later adapters tend to be more influenced than early adapters. Influence by others cannot be sharpened by marketers. A buyer can also be influence culturally i.e. value, behaviour and preferences from family or other institution or socially i.e. by a small group like family or membership group. Purchase decision could also be influenced by attitude of others. For example, a consumer wants to buy Toyota, while in the shop he or she comes in contact with a friend who says Kantaka gives you an indigenious identity. The consumer can be forced to buy Kantaka.

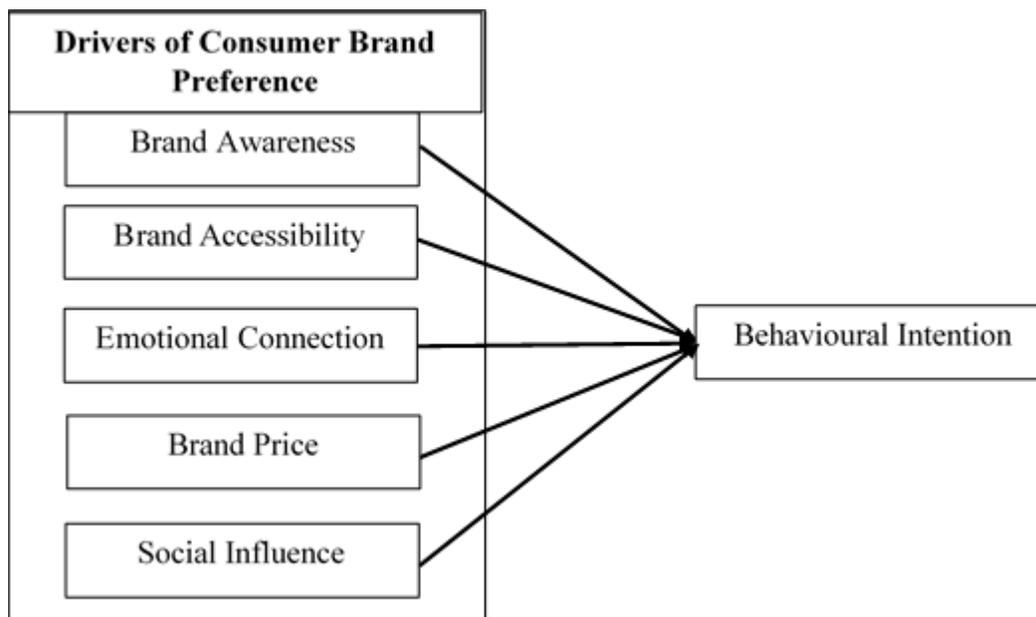
Lee and Chae (2007) stress that, although may not be considered an important driver of consumers in their choice of brands, social and cultural issues surrounding the consumer cannot be underestimated. Socio-cultural dimensions of consumers have also been seen to have one of the greatest influences on consumer behaviour. Cultural factors have to do with the culture, subculture or social class in which a consumer identifies himself with. According to Ahn and Back (2018), apart from cultural factors other factors such as social (relating to issues that have to do with the consumer's family, reference groups and the consumer's role and status), personal (are the lifecycle status and age of consumers. Also, the economic situation, occupation, self-concept and consumers personality), and psychological factors (include perception, motivation, learning, attitude and belief of the consumers) have influence on consumer's behaviour. The Fifth hypothesis for the study is thus as follows:

H5: there is a positive relationship between socio-cultural influences and consumer preference for foreign or local automobile brands.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Following from this literature review, a summary of the entire hypothesis for the study is therefore displayed, known as the conceptual framework below:

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the study



Source: Adapted from literature review

The directions of the arrows show the potential influence of each of the drivers on the consumer's preference for a foreign or local automobile brand and it indicate that there is a positive relationship between the drivers and behavioural intention. The study therefore posit that, when these drivers are leveraged by automobile brands, their likely to influence consumers to their brand.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the processes and procedures that were adopted in the gathering of data towards the attainment of the objectives of the study. The research methodology comprises the research design and approach, study population, sample and sampling techniques. This section concludes by detailing how data was collected and analysed.

3.2 Research Approach

A research approach can be quantitative, qualitative or mixed method. In this study, the researcher employed a quantitative research approach. Quantitative research approach was employed because it is relevant for the research survey design, questionnaire design, data collection instrument and analysis (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). Quantitative research approach involves systematic and pragmatic approach which in quantifying through the assistance of mathematics and statistics (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The main aim of this study was to examine consumer preference towards local and foreign automobile brands in Ghana. The study deemed it relevant to employ quantitative approach because the study is premised to assess a cause-effect relationship.

3.3 Research Design

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) states the purpose of any research as exploratory, explanatory or descriptive in nature. This study employed explanatory research design. A research design represents a blueprint for satisfying goals and giving knowledge to answer the research purpose (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). It is a plan and a guideline which shows the strategy of an inquiry considered appropriate for a research (Punch, 2005). This study sought to examine the consumer preference towards local and foreign automobile brands in Ghana, thus the study deemed is necessary to employ an explanatory design, which attempts to explain the reasons for the phenomenon (Creswell, Plano-Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003).

Considering that this study was based on the verification of hypotheses through data collected from a large sample size to enable generalization, the survey approach was deemed appropriate for this study (Saunders & Lewis, 2009). According to Yin (2003), there are five basic designs that a researcher can employ, all of which are used in business research which includes experiments, survey, analysis of archival records, case study, history, and. Survey research design is one of the research designs which is widely considered in literature as the most effective in attaining opinions, attitudes, and descriptions as well as cause-and-effect relationships (Creswell, & Creswell, 2017; Yin, 2003). A survey design was adopted because it is important for acquiring information about the characteristics, actions, or opinions of a substantial sample (Malhotra, Birks, Palmer, & Koenig-Lewis, 2003).

3.4 Study Population

Gravetter and Forzano, (2009) defined research population as the entire set of individuals of interest to a researcher. It is also defined by Malhotra, Birks, Palmer and Koenig-Lewis, (2003) as a “collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying”. Saunders, et al. (2009) further highlights that the population of the study is within the confines of the research study’s geographical delimitation which is determined by the research question and operationalisation. Most often, the whole population is not involved in an entire research study, but the results from the sample of the study are generalised to the entire population. The population covered by this study are students who reside in the University of Ghana campus and are owners of automobile brands.

3.5 Sample and Sample Method

The sample size for this study was 200 participants drawn from the University of Ghana campus of about 40,000 people. It must be noted that, the Legon campus is a host to many automobile users. To access the respondents, the researcher made use of probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select participants. According to Zikmund et al. (2013) probability sampling is a sampling technique in which every member of the population has a known, non-zero probability of selection, while non-probability sampling is a sampling technique in which units of the sample are selected based on personal judgment or convenience; the probability of any particular member of the population being chosen is unknown.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

As mentioned before, this study follows a quantitative research approach with explanatory research purpose. Cameron and Price (2009) asserted that questionnaires enable one to gather large quantities of data that is valuable for quantitative research with explanatory purpose. Moreover, Sekaran and Bougie (2013) postulated that questionnaires are deemed an effective data gathering instrument when the study is explanatory in nature. However, a questionnaire survey should be skillfully and carefully designed to ensure that questions help to achieve research objectives (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000). To achieve the suggestions made by Bless and Higson-Smith, the following was employed in designing the questionnaire; what should be asked, questionnaire relevancy and questionnaire accuracy.

This questionnaire had Likert scale questions which measured participants' degree of agreeing or disagreeing. To ensure that the survey instrument is valid and reliable the questions were mainly derived from past studies and some questions were tailored to suit the current study. The use of previously used questions by another researcher is supported by (Zikmund et al., 2013). Some questions sought to rank factors in order of importance, which aided in identifying factors that influence consumers' behavioural intention to adopt digital marketing as a grocery shopping channel. Demographic information was also collected which enabled the identification of demographic characteristics of respondents.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting data to provide explanation to single phenomenon of interest. The responses from the questionnaires were edited thoroughly before analysis (Zickmund, 2000). The demographic responses were analysed using SPSSs. The SPSS software has been used extensively by various researchers in quantitative study in analysing data (Roy & Banerjee, 2012). In this study, data on demographic factors were analysed and interpreted with descriptive statistics such as the use of mean and frequency count. Second, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to test the hypotheses relationship on the main construct. Before performing the actual analysis of the main data, preliminary data analysis was done. During the preliminary data analysis (PDA), datasets and variables were cleaned to eliminate unengaged responses and correct errors that could skew the research findings. Exploratory factor analysis was done to explore the data to ensure that the data is fit and adequate for the study. Secondly SPSS was used for the Regression analysis aimed at testing the study hypotheses.

3.8 Ethics Considerations

In order to ensure high ethical standards in data collection, enough time was given the participants who voluntarily accepted to participate in this survey. This is to avoid errors and inaccuracies and misrepresentation of the study findings. All respondents were assured that their responses are confidential and will solely be used for academic purposes. In essence, respondents were fully assured that any answers provided would be kept with all anonymity and confidentiality. The

purpose is to make the respondents feel more comfortable and confident to provide all the valuable information required.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter of this study was dedicated to the methodology employed in collecting data for the study. This current chapter presents the results of the findings of the data analysis in line with the objective of the study. The chapter begins with the demographic characteristics of respondents and descriptive statistics of the scale variables used. Regression analysis was used to test the research hypotheses, determine the existence of a significant relationship between the variables under study and to ascertain the predictive power of the drivers of automobile brand choice.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The table 4.1 below provide the demographic profile of the respondents used for the study. In doing so, variables such as gender, age, nationality, marital status, current level of education and income status. This according to Narteh, Odoom, Braimah and Buame (2012) and Dwivedi, Nayeem and Murshed (2018) these characteristics are important consideration that must be taken into account in studies such as this, as it has the propensity of influencing the outcome of the study and management direction. Out of three hundred and twenty (320) questionnaire distributed, a total of two hundred and forty-nine (249) usable questionnaires were returned for the study. This figure represents a return rate of 77.8% of the data collected.

Table 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondent

Details	Measurement	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	176	70.7
	Female	73	29.3
Age	22 – 26	45	18.1
	27 – 31	78	31.3
	32 – 36	83	33.3
	Over 36	43	17.3
Nationality	Ghanaian	232	93.2
	Non Ghanaian	17	6.8
Marital status	Single	95	38.2
	Married	146	58.6
	Divorced	8	3.2
Education	Bachelor Degree	98	39.4
	Master degree	138	55.4
	PhD	13	5.2
Income Status	1000-1499	12	4.8
	1500-1999	32	12.9
	Above 2000	205	82.3
N=249			

Source: Field Data (2019)

Notwithstanding the fact that the selections of the respondents were conveniently done, more males were sampled than females for the study. Out of the 249 respondents of automobile users, 70.7% were males while 29.3% were females as shown in the table above. Also, respondents in the age category between 32-66 years were sampled more than any other age category with a total percentage sampled of 33.3% while respondents in the age category of 36 years and above were the least sampled for the study. Meaning a total of 17.3% of the sampled respondents were in the

age category of 36 years and above. A sizeable number of the respondents constituting 31.3% were in the age category of 27-31. A total of 18.1% of the entire sampled size were in the age category of 22-26 years. With respect to the nationality of the respondents, 93.2% of the respondents were Ghanaian while 6.8% of the respondents were non-Ghanaian. The marital status of the respondents indicates that, 38.2% of the respondents were single, 58.6% were married and 3.2% were divorced. The educational status of the respondents shows that 39.4% of respondents had a Bachelor degree whilst respondents with the minimum educational status of Doctorate degree and the highest respondents of educational status were 55.4% constituting Master degree. The final segment was the income status of the respondents. Majority of the respondents constituting 82.3% earns a monthly income of above 2000 GHC, with 12.9% of the respondents receiving a monthly income between the ranges of 1500-1999 GHC and 4.8% of the respondents earning a monthly income between the ranges of 1000-1499 GHC. Suffice to state that all the respondents are users automobile brands and also no part of the data was skewed in order to achieve a certain predetermined outcome.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

This section of the analysis explores the descriptive statistics of variables employed to measure that concept. The descriptive analysis covers the mean and the standard deviation. Table 4.2 below represents the descriptive statistic of the variables that were used in testing for the factors driving consumer choice as far as automobile brands are concerned. The Table 4.2 shows the summation of the indicator of each of the variables used. These are represented by brand awareness, brand

accessibility, emotional connection, brand choice and social influence: behavioural intention is the outcome variable.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variables	Observation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Emotional Connection	249	3.41	0.92	1	5
Social Influence	249	3.09	0.81	1	5
Brand Price	249	2.84	0.89	1	5
Brand Accessibility	249	2.96	0.76	1	5
Brand Awareness	249	2.74	0.93	1	5
Behavioural Intention	249	2.76	1.05	1	5

Source: Field Data (2019)

Malhotra and Birks (2007) opines that descriptive statistics is an indication of the significant propensity of the mean and standard deviation. Basically, descriptive statistics was relevant in this study because it shows the extent to which a surveyed respondent agreed, were neutral, or disagreed with variables used to measure the independent and dependent variables and also how each of the variable fared from the viewpoint of respondents. The mean scores recorded in the Table 4.2 above indicates that, the variables truly show that the drivers of automobile brand choice have the propensity of influencing behavioural intention. The highest mean recorded was 3.41 representing emotional connection whiles the lowest mean recorded was 2.74 representing the

brand awareness. The general effect of the results indicated that all the variables had a modest to high mean values.

4.4 Regression Analysis

The study employed linear regression in doing the analysis. Linear regression analysis represents a family of techniques that can be used to explore the relationship between one continuous dependent variable and a number of independent variables (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). It has been adopted as a system of analysis for this study because of its ability to explain how well a set of variables are able to predict a particular outcome. Additionally, it has the ability to explain a set of variables as the best predictor of an outcome. Furthermore, it has the ability to explain whether a particular predictor variable is still able to predict an outcome when the effect of another variable is controlled. Therefore, using behavioural intention as the dependent variable and the other factors (emotional connection, social influence, brand price, brand accessibility, and brand awareness) as the independent variables, a linear regression analysis was performed to identify which of the independent variables significantly influence behavioral intention. The result of the analysis is in the Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Linear Regression Result

Dependent variable: Behavioural Intention	
Variables	Model 1
Emotional Connection	0.80*** (0.70)
Social Influence	-0.18 (0.08)
Brand Price	-0.04 (0.07)
Brand Accessibility	0.34*** (0.83)
Brand Awareness	0.07 (0.06)
Constant	-0.09 -0.24
Observation	249
R-Square	0.62
Prob>F	0.00

Source: Field Data (2019)

Standard errors are robust; *** p<0.01 ** p<0.05 * p<0.1

The findings indicate that there is a strong and significant relationship between variables used for the model to represent drivers of automobile brand choice and behavioural intention (R-squared = 0.62, Prob. F-stats 0.00). Some research scholars (such as Gelman, Goodrich, Gabry & Vehtari, 2018; Latouche, Robin, & Ouadah, 2018) argue that the model reaches statistical significance if the Sig<.05. In the present study the Sig=.000 of the F- statistics depicts that the model is statistically significant. The R-Square value in the model summary depicts the degree of variance in the dependent variable which is explained by the model (including the independent variables). As seen in the Table 4.3, R-Square value = 0.62. Conveyed in percentage, it is found that the model consisting of independent variables (brand awareness, brand accessibility, emotional connection,

brand price and social influence) explains 62% of the variance behavioural intention, an important indication of the relevance of the model.

Accordingly, the regression analysis results suggest that, emotional connection was found to have the greatest influence on behavioural intention ($\beta = 0.80$, $t = 0.07$). This means that automobile users sampled for this study consider emotional connection as the most important factor in automobile brand choice. Emotional connection is the practice of building brands that appeals directly to a consumer's emotional state, needs and aspiration. The next strongest contributor to behavioural intention as far as automobile brand choice is concerned is brand accessibility ($\beta = 34$, $t = 0.06$). This means that by virtue of the easy to find, purchase and use of a particular automobile brand, behavioural intention will drift toward it. Accessible brands insure that brand preference is converted into brand purchase. It also means that if a brand is ubiquitous, there is no excuse not to purchase it if it is your favorite brand. The third contributor to behavioural intention towards automobile brand choice is brand awareness ($\beta = 0.07$, $t = 0.06$). Brand awareness is the extent to which consumers are familiar with the qualities or image of an automobile brand. Most often marketing campaigns help to increase brand awareness which then influence behavioral intention for an automobile brand. On the other hand, social influence was established to have a statistically insignificant influence on behavioural intention ($\beta = -0.18$, $t = 0.08$). This finding suggest that social influence in the form of peer pressure, persuasion, and conformity has no influence on behavioural intention as far as automobile brand choice is concerned. Brand price was also established to have a negative impact on behavioural intention ($\beta = -0.04$, $t = 0.07$). This finding means that, the price of an automobile brand has no influence on behavioural intention.

4.5 Test of Relationships

The study proceeded further to test for the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, statistical results from Pearson product-moment correlation analysis were used to determine both the strength and the direction. The Pearson correlation coefficient measures the linear association between two scale variables. The result of the correlation is depicted in Table 4.4 below

Table 4.4 Correlation Analysis

	Behavioural Intention	Emotional Connection	Social Influence	Brand Price	Brand Accessibility	Brand Awareness
Behavioural Intention	1.00					
Emotional Connection	0.75*	1.00				
Social Influence	0.42*	0.58*	1.00			
Brand Price	0.46*	0.52*	0.63*	1.00		
Brand Accessibility	0.52*	0.44*	0.50*	0.67*	1.00	
Brand Awareness	0.31*	0.24*	0.34*	0.41*	0.51*	1.00

Source: Field Data (2019)

As indicated in the correlation table above, it is evident that all the independent variables (brand awareness, brand accessibility, emotional connection, brand price and social influence) indicated positive relationships to the dependent variable (behavioural intention) at significant level showing that they help explain customer retention of internet banking service. This means that an

improvement in any of these independent variables with respect to how they are strategically deployed, would contribute significantly to behavioural intention towards an automobile brand. It further proves that the model can be used to conduct future studies on the thematic area of study.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

Branding as an important marketing concept employed for influencing consumer behaviour has many dimensions. Several scholars (see for instance Narteh, Odoom, Braimah & Buame, 2012; Erdem, & Swait, 2004; Winter, & Grebitus, 2018) have come out with various dimensions to measure drivers of automobile brand choice and its impact on behavioural intention. However, the five independent variables used in this study were adopted based on contextual issues (Liu et al., 2018). The five drivers of consumer automobile brand choice examined in this study are brand awareness, brand accessibility, emotional connection, brand price and social influence. The results of the regression analysis shows that three out of the five independent variables were accepted as having the power to influence behavioural intention towards automobile brands in the Ghanaian context. These variables with the predictive power are brand awareness, brand accessibility, and emotional connection whiles those negative influence on behavioural intention are brand price and social influence. The finding take an alternative view to the results obtained by Narteh et al. (2012) and Henfrey, Graham and Bennett (2018) who found that the five variables examined in this study are drivers of brand choice. In other words, they have positive significant relationship with behavioural intention. Additionally, the correlation analysis indicate the all the drivers of brand choice has a positive significant relationship with behavioural intention.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter of this study presented the empirical tests and results of the data collected in line with objective of the study. This concluding chapter of the study provides a summary of the research conclusions, implications and direction for future study. The chapter also highlights the critical lessons drawn from the study and makes some recommendations for players in the automobile industry.

5.2 Summary of the Study

This study probed into the factors that influence consumer choice of automobile brands. More specifically the study examined the key motivations behind consumers' choice of automobile brands in Ghana. Therefore, the study sought to find answers to the question "what are the factors that motivate the Ghanaian automobile consumer to choose a car brand"? In order to answer this question, the study reviewed related extant literature on the concept. From the literature review, five factors were identified as important to automobile brand choice namely; brand awareness, brand accessibility, emotional connection, brand price and social influence. These factors led to the development of the conceptual framework of the study which culminated into the formulation of relevant hypotheses. The study adopted a quantitative research approach in which two hundred and forty nine (249) usable questionnaires were obtained for the data analysis. Data was analysed

using descriptive statistics and linear regression. This was premised on the fact that quantitative data analysis techniques enable numerical representation and manipulation of observations/data for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomenon which reflects the observations/data. Also, a significant number of studies on brand choices (e.g. Narteh et al., 2012; Dwivedi, Nayeem, & Murshed, 2018; Erdem, & Swait, 2004; Liu et al., 2018) have made use of such techniques in analysing data. The data was performed using Stata version 15 as an instrument which helped generate tabular and numerical results for the model.

5.3 Conclusions

To begin with, the linear regression analysis indicated that the research model was tested and proven to be statistically significant ($F = 0.62$, Prob. F -stats < 0.05) and a respectable 62% explanation for the variance in brand choice. Notably, the independent variables in the conceptual model are brand awareness, brand accessibility, emotional connection, brand price and social influence, whilst the dependent variable is behavioural intention. Further multiple regression analysis indicates that these dependent and independent variables (i.e. the drivers) explain a reasonable variance in the purchase of automobiles in Ghana. Three out of the five factors were found to statistically influence behavioural intention (brand awareness, brand accessibility and emotional connection) whilst the remaining two (brand price and social influence) were statistically insignificant. Additionally, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was prepared to confirm the hypothesis developed and to ascertain the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The results revealed that all the independent variables were positively related to the dependent variable – behavioural intention. They showed

positive relationships with correlations which were significant at both 0.01 and 0.05 levels (3-tailed). This helped to emphasize the usefulness of the conceptual framework in the conducting of study related to the area under current study concerning consumer brand choice of automobiles.

5.4 Recommendations

This current study could be relevant to practitioners in the field of developing and maintaining strong brands to gain insight into how to strengthen their brands using a multiplicity of factors desired by the consumer. For car manufacturers and dealers, a very important implication for the findings relates to the attributes of a car because among all the five factors that were statistically proven to influence behavioural intention, emotional connection was found to be the most contributor to behavioural intention towards automobile brands in Ghana. Knowing the emotional connection in the making of choices on automobiles, it is imperative on manufacturers and dealers to adopt an intensified “emotional branding” philosophy. Scholars (e.g. Keller, 2001) indicate that consumers’ perceived “emotional value” refers to their affective reactions to a brand. General feelings for brands are often reported in elicitation sessions. The feelings about brands can be mild, intense and negative or positive in nature. Importantly, emotional response to a brand is a strong predictor of purchase intention and accounts for more than twice the variance of cognition. Consumers are inundated with commercial messages relative to brands, and advertisements that evoke emotional responses can significantly affect purchase intention. Coupled with the indispensable role which advertising plays in creating awareness, manufacturers and dealers should integrate emotional components in their campaigns so as to build positive feelings within consumers.

5.5 Limitations and Direction for Future Studies

This study was limited only one product group. However, future research in this field should also consider other product types and additional countries since consumer assessment varies from one product to the other and country by country. This is due to the impacts of factors influencing consumer buying behaviour such as social, cultural, personal and psychological factors. In addition, this study could also be stretched to other products such as domestic ones to enable producers enhance their marketing efforts as well as improving their exporting to other countries and decrease the excess dependence on foreign made products. An example is the locally made Ghanaian rice and poultry compared to imported products from developed nations. Finally, in order to cover wide scope and to also enhance understanding, future study could be done so that focus groups will be used to discuss the findings of the survey. This may help to generate qualitative explanations from the consumer point of view regarding to the purchasing of imported products.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Dear Respondents,

The researcher is an Executive MBA student of **the University of Ghana Business School**. The researcher seeks to ascertain the factors influencing consumer preference towards automobile brands in Ghana. This is in partial fulfilment of requirements leading to the award of an Executive MBA degree in Marketing. Information provided for the purposes of this research will be treated confidentially and used for academic purposes only. Your completion of this questionnaire is an indication that you have volunteered to be part of this research work.

Section A: General Information on Respondent

1. **Gender:** Male [] Female []
2. **Age:** 18 – 21 [] 22 - 26 [] 27 – 31 [] 32 – 36 [] Over 36 []
3. **Nationality:** Ghanaian [] Non-Ghanaian []
4. **Marital status:** Single [] Married [] Separated [] Divorced []
5. **Current level of education:** Bachelor degree [] Master degree [] PhD []
6. **Average monthly income (GHC):** a. Less than 500 [] b. 500-999 [] c.1000-1499 [] d.1500-1999 [] e.2000+ []

Section B: Brand Choice Drivers

On a scale of 1-5, please indicate by ticking (√) the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements when it comes to the factors influencing your automobile brand choice.

1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree

No.	Brand Awareness	1	2	3	4	5
1	I usually choose well-advertised car brands					
2	I buy car brands which I remember best					
3	I prefer buying well-known car brands					
4	My car is top-of-mind in its product category					
Brand Accessibility						
5	I choose a car brand which is widely available					

6	I prefer car brands which have showrooms in Ghana					
7	I buy cars whose spare parts are readily available					
8	I usually choose a car which have maintenance and repair services					
Emotional Connection						
9	My brand of car stands for something which is very important to me					
10	The brand connects me to people on different levels					
11	The brand of car is unique and admirable					
12	The car always makes me feel good					
Brand Price						
13	I usually buy a car which is lowly priced					
14	I usually buy a car which is highly priced					
15	I prefer this brand of car because it is worth its price					
16	I am willing to pay a premium price for this brand of car					
Social Influence						
17	I usually choose this brand of car because of the country of origin					
18	My family/friends recommended this brand to me					
19	The car I choose reflects my social status					
20	I prefer this car because everyone in my family/company drives one					
Behavioural Intention						
21	I will buy this brand of car relative to other brands					
22	I am happy with this brand of car					
23	I will recommend this brand to friends and family members					
24	I will repurchase new models of this brand					

Thank you