

ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at investigating the relationship between various automobile attributes and brand decisions of buyers of used cars in Bangkok.

A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to buyers of used cars in nine tents located in three areas of Bangkok. Of these, 367 questionnaires were considered valid and these were used in analyzing data for this study.

The study found moderate to weak positive relationships between all the nine automobile attributes (performance quality, price, durability, after-sales maintenance, design, level of fuel consumption, safety, comfort, country of origin) and purchase evaluation although two - design, and country of origin, demonstrated the most significant correlations to brand.

The study also found that Thais' used car buying behavior had undergone a radical shift from the past. Instead of buying according to technical attributes (price, performance, durability, safety, etc.) Thais emphasized symbolic attributes, such as luxury, prestige and social status in their buying decision.

Overall, European brands were perceived most positively, followed by American, Japanese, and one Korean brand. Almost all of the Japanese brands, except one, Subaru, were rated positively in terms of technical attributes, nonetheless, they scored lower means in terms of country of origin than European brands.

The recommendations, based on the findings, were that the used car marketers should employ lifestyle segmentation (VALS models) to target their core customers better. They should also make more effective use of media such as car magazines. Finally, based on the findings of this study, it might be more useful for used car marketers to employ symbolic benefits in their promotional materials rather than merely functional benefits.

The study concluded with some suggestions for future research.