The Effects of Facebook on Automobile Purchasing Behavior among International Students in Northern Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

Purchasing an automobile is one of the most expensive decisions among younger generations, yet an increasing number of international university students in Northern Cyprus keep acquiring luxury ones. Even so, it is unclear what motivates international students into such expensive purchasing behavior, and as a result this study seeks to investigate factors that prompt such behavior, and the effects of Facebook as a new media tool on automobile purchasing behavior among international students in Northern Cyprus. It aims to establish a relationship between Facebook use, brand loyalty, automobile purchasing behavior, and other moderating factors such as need to boost self-esteem and travel convenience, as well as age and family income.

This is a quantitative research design. It uses online questionnaires, with 400 (133 female, 267 male) randomly selected international students in Northern Cyprus, from the 2020/2021 spring semester as study participants. With Google forms, 40-question English questionnaires were created and distributed online through Whatsapp, Facebook, and Snapchat. The study found several links between Facebook and automobile purchasing behavior among international students. For example, it found links between brand loyalty and Facebook use, automobile reviews and automobile purchasing behavior, and self-esteem/convenience and automobile purchasing behavior. However, no relationship was found between automobile purchasing behavior and the ages/yearly family income of international students in Northern Cyprus. Consequently, the findings showed a relationship between Facebook and automobile buying behavior among international students in Northern Cyprus.

ÖZ

Otomobil satın almak genç nesiller arasında en pahalı kararlardan biri olmasına rağmen, Kuzey Kıbrıs'ta giderek artan sayıda uluslararası üniversite öğrencisi lüks araba satın alma eğilimi göstermektedir. Ancak üniversite öğrencilerinin bu denli pahalı satınalma davranışına iten dürtü ise pek net değildir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki uluslararası öğrenciler arasında otomobil satın alma davranışını, yeni medya aracı olarak Facebook kullanımı ve otomobil satın alma davranışı üzerindeki etkilerini araştırmaktadır.Bu çalışmanın amacı, üniversite öğrencilerinin Facebook kullanımı, marka sadakati, otomobil satın alma davranışı ve benlik saygısını artırma ihtiyacı ve seyahat kolaylığı gibi diğer faktörler ile yaş ve aile geliri arasında bir ilişkiyi araştırmaktır.

Bu çalışma, nicel araştırma tasarımı kullanılarak çevrimiçi anket kullanılmasına dayanmaktadır. Evren örneklemi olarak Kuzey Kıbrıs'ta 2020/2021 bahar döneminden rastgele seçilen 400 (133 kadın, 267 erkek) uluslararası öğrenci kullanılmıştır. Google ile 40 soruluk İngilizce anketler hazırlanmış ve whatsapp, Facebook ve Snapchat aracılığıyla öğrencilere iletilmiştir. Bu çalışma sonuncunda, Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki uluslararası öğrencilerin Facebook kullanımı ile marka sadakati, otomobil değerlendirmeleri ve otomobil satın alma davranışı ve benlik saygısı/kolaylık ve otomobil satın alma davranışı arasında istatistik ilişkiler bulunurken, otomobil satın alma davranışı ile yaş/yıllık aile geliri arasında bir ilişki bulunmamaktadır. Netice itibarıyla Sonuçlar Facebook ile otomobil satın alma davranışı arasında Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki uluslarası öğrenciler arasında bir ilintiye işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Facebook, satın alma alışkanlığı, tüketici davranışları, otomobil, Sosyal ağ siteleri, yeni medya, marka, marka sadakati.

DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation to my loving family, who are indeed gracious, and the reason I am here today, to my late father, for whom I would do anything to see him witness this day. Dad, I know you would be proud of me, and your memory lives forever our hearts. And, lastly, to Almighty God, who continually shines His countenance over me with so many benefits.

I pray and hope this achievement adds to the many dreams you all have for, and brings brighter hopes for the future.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In today's world, business environments are highly competitive in various sectors around the world. The competition leads to changes in the company's survival in the marketplace. Not only competition, but also alterations of consumers' lifestyles, new technological improvements within new media cause changes of the companies' strategies and tactics to become successful. Thus, companies try to satisfy their consumers and achieve their organizational objectives. For companies, it is not an easy job to satisfy consumers' needs and wants, because consumer purchasing behavior has a complex structure, since products and services are usually similar to each other. Routinely, purchasing convenience products has a simple structure. However, shopping products, especially expensive product categories such as the automobile purchasing process, is complex in nature. Not only people with occupations, but also students search and purchase automobiles during their university education.

Next to purchasing a home, purchasing an automobile is the second most expensive decision most people make, yet an increasing number of students purchase one, and the world never stops becoming an emerging market of various kinds of automobiles. Davies (2017) affirms that automobile industries are gradually shifting from the expensive television and magazine advert into the new media. Could this be the

reason for the surge in purchase among students? A press release by Digital Air Strike (2015) on the new media trend for automobile industries found that 75% of people purchase, while 68% service their automobiles with the help the of the new media. They also found that 66% of buyers, and 83% of service customers clicked on automobile adverts on the new media such as Facebook. The new media also known as social networking websites or social media serves as a connection and communication tool among various people, especially university and college students (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Facebook is the largest social networking platform. When compared to other social networking sites, has the highest users, with over 2.7 billion active users, compared to 1.1 billion on Instagram, 350 million on Twitters, etc. (Clement, 2020), other social networking sites are rapidly on the rise too. Facebook spans across all demographics, with over 9 million users using it for advertising, and 74% users being active (Aslam, 2020). Facebook is the most common new media platform that facilitates sharing of ideas, experiences, and deeper global social interaction (Yang & Brown, 2009; Sawyer & Cheng, 2012). It influences consumer behavior, due to the assumption that consumers learn about brands on the new media, hence companies become smart by gaining presence on the new media to take advantage of its benefits (Barnes, 2008; Smock, Ellison, Wohn, & Lampe, 2011).

Facebook has been an important and useful tool for individuals to rely on during the Covid-19 pandemic. Park, Boatwright, and Johnson (2019) maintained that it served as an online source of information and news of happenings around the world about the pandemic. Secondly, Dai and Menhas (2020) assert that it provides social supports for those with anxieties about their health, and other medical conditions

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during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thirdly, Tang, Miller, and Zhou (2021) argued that it provides people with updated information on the statistics related to the virus pandemic around the world. Lastly, Yang, Kim, and Pennington-Gray (2021) posit that it provides people with peer to peer health support throughout the globe.

Additionally, Facebook makes digital marketing much more flexible during the Covid-19 pandemic. Digital marketing is simply the development and distribution of content through channels of digital media which include social networking sites, websites, email, landing pages, and mobile applications (Hyllegard, Ogle, Yan, & Reitz, 2011). For example, social media marketing as a type of digital marketing involves the advertisement of products and services, the promotion personal or non personal contents and brands on social networking sites, such as Facebook, so as to drive and generate traffic, improve brand awareness, and gain leads and audiences for a business or organization (Sawyer & Cheng, 2012). Social media marketing is by far the most useful because of the broad and intuitive interface, such that it does not only allow for dissemination of goods, contents, and services, but also gives room for integrative and interactive dialogues and other communications and interactions as well (Yang & Brown, 2009).

As the current study explores the effects of Facebook on automobile consumer behavior among international students, some studies (Keller, 2008; LaDuque, 2010; Hyllegard, Ogle, Yan, & Reitz, 2011; Hu, Liu, & Zhang, 2008) established a link between the new media, consumer behavior, and brand loyalty. Keller (2008) posited that companies seek to maintain loyalty of their brands through new means of marketing which includes new media marketing. In a similar vein, LaDuque (2010) argued that businesses employ the help of the new media to increase sales and brand

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loyalty. Hyllegard et al. (2011) maintained that companies and organizations use social media websites as a tool of communication both with their customers and potential ones.

Hu, Liu, & Zhang (2008) discovered that there is a correlation between positively reviewed brands on social media and consumption. That is to say, the more credible and positive a review is, the more influenced a consumer might become, vice versa. Whereas Hu et al. (2008) found a relationship between reviews and sales, Belohlavek et al., (2001) posited that individual motivation also play an important role because some people might be motivated by their interest to improvement self, while others might be driven by existential or social needs. Building on this, Solomon (2008) applied Maslow's hierarchy of needs to understand the motives of consumers. He found that the consumer behavior is motivated by many other factors which can be categorized into two, namely, internal factors psychological factors and external factors; hence the hierarchy of needs can successfully fit the market segmentation of advertising. However, this study applies external factors (age and income) as moderating effects on automobile consumer behavior among international students.

1.2 Problem Statement

The use of luxury automobiles among international students is becoming increasingly rampant in Northern Cyprus. It is not clear what motivates them to purchase such luxury automobile brands which includes but are not limited to Mercedes Benz, Range Rover, BMW, Audi, Mazda, and so forth. Past studies (Abu-Rumman & Alhadid, 2014; Allard, Banin, & Chebat, 2009; Al-Somali, Gholami, & Clegg, 2009; Barnes, 2008; Bilal, Ahmed & Shahzad, 2014; Monga, Chaudhary, & Tripathi, 2012; Chu, 2011; Darban & Li, 2014; Haciefendioglu, 2011; Hu, Liu, &

Zhang, 2008; Lu, Yu, Liu, & Yao, 2003; Miyazaki & Fernandez, 2001; Raijas & Tuunainem, 2001; Raj, Sasikumar & Sriram, 2013; Serenko, Turel, & Yol, 2006; Shin, 2009; Srivastava & Tiwari, 2011) probed the relationships between the brand loyalty and social media, online reviews, age, level of self-esteem, social class, income, and even peer pressure, however, it is not known which influences the purchasing behavior of students in North Cyprus more. Hence it becomes pertinent to investigate how factors within the social networking sites, like Facebook, influence their decisions to own pricey liability.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

An increasing number of international students acquire luxury liabilities, particularly automobiles; hence this study is to probe, and to see the effects of Facebook as a new media technique for automobile industries to affect automobile purchasing behavior among international students. The current study focuses on Facebook as a social networking platform because it is the largest. When compared to other social networking sites, has the most users, with over 2.7 billion active users, compared to 1.1 billion on Instagram, 350 million on Twitters, etc. (Clement, 2020), other social networking sites are rapidly on the rise too. Facebook span across all demographics with over 9 million advertisers, with 74% being active users (Aslam, 2020). While this study focuses on both owners and non-owners of automobile, it would implore several theories (Processes of consumer purchase and decision making, Model of satisfaction and brand and dealer loyalty, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, and Diffusion of Innovation Theory) in order to fully grasp how purchasing processes work, and also the individual characteristics or influences that affects purchasing behavior.

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Furthermore, it seeks to investigate automobile brand loyalty, automobile purchasing behavior, Facebook recommendation and reviews, self-esteem, and need for convenience on the automobile purchasing behavior among international students in. Additionally, it would apply some external factors of motivation (age and income) as indicated by Solomon (2008) in order to moderate automobile purchasing behavior among international students in Northern Cyprus.

1.4 Research Questions

Past researches have assisted in narrowing down the focus of current study and have revealed questions that are yet to be asked. Current study seeks to make out and understand how Facebook affects automobile consumer behavior among international students, and to find answers to this question, this study needs to start with a more chiefly focus on why international students purchase different ranges of automobiles. After the question has been answered, questions that are more detailed will be asked to understand the effects Facebook has on automobile consumer behavior among international students. Even so, this study will focus on the following causes and effect research questions because they attempt to understand if variables such as automobile brand loyalty, automobile purchasing behavior, Facebook recommendation and reviews, and other factors such as age, income, self-esteem, and need for convenience affects automobile consumer behavior among international students.

Research Question 1: Does a relationship exist between the use of Facebook and automobile brand loyalty?

Research Question 2: Does a relationship between automobile reviews or recommendations on Facebook and automobile brand loyalty among international students?

Research Question 3: Does need to boost self-esteem motivate automobile purchasing behavior among international students?

Research Question 4: Does need for convenience motivate automobile purchasing behavior among international students?

Research Question 5: Does automobile consumer behavior have a correlation with the age of international students?

Research Question 6: Does automobile consumer behavior have a correlation with the yearly family income of international students?

1.5 Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant relationship between the use of Facebook and automobile brand loyalty.

H2: There is a positive relationship between automobile reviews/recommendations on Facebook and automobile purchasing behavior among international students.

H3: There is a positive correlation between self-esteem boost and automobile purchasing behavior among international students.

H4: There is a positive correlation between convenience and automobile purchasing behavior among international students.

H5: There is a positive correlation between automobile consumer behavior and the ages of international students.

H6: There is a positive correlation between automobile consumer behavior and yearly family income of international students.

1.6 Research Design

This current study is a quantitative research design because it investigates the associations between Facebook and automobile purchasing behavior among international students in Northern Cyprus. With the approval of the Research and Ethical Committee, Institute of Graduate Studies, Eastern Mediterranean University, online questionnaires through the use of Google forms were created, and links distributed on different social media platforms which includes Whatsapp, Facebook, and Snapchat. 400 (133 females, 267 males) international students of 2020/2021 spring semester studying in the various universities in Northern Cyprus, and above the age of 17 participated in the current study.

Data was randomly gathered online, and lasted for four weeks, from the first week of July to the last week of July, 2021 and consists of seven-category self-reported online questionnaire with forty questions in total which were in English, and took approximately 3 minutes to complete. On gathering data, they were exported to Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet before uploading the responses to SPSS where the collected data was computed and analyzed for necessary findings.

1.7 Assumptions

The current study assumes that, (i) adverts, recommendations, and opinions on Facebook plays a role in the automobile purchasing behavior among international students in North Cyprus; (ii) automobile adverts and reviews on Facebook are not enough, but other factors as need to boost self-esteem and convenience, age, and family income also influences their automobile purchasing behavior; (iii) most international students in North Cyprus purchase automobile brands with high brand loyalty.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Knowing that automobile acquisition among international students contributes to the economic growth of the society, the findings of this study will be of advantage to the society at large. Companies and retailers of such automobile brands will be able to understand if Facebook adverts, customer reviews, or other factors which may include competitiveness, need for recognition, and better self-esteem, influence consumer behaviors among international students. Family (parents, siblings, and close relatives) and close friends of influenced students will be able to understand their true motives. And for the research, this study will help reveal areas that were not covered by previous researchers. The considered outcome should include promoting healthiness in the usage of Facebook, and possibly, to improve the interaction between company/retailers and student consumers.

1.9 Scope and Limitations of the Study

To begin with, this study does not consider other social networking sites like Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, and Twitter. It is only limited to Facebook as a social networking platform. Facebook, when compared to other social networking sites, has the highest of users, with over 2.7 billion active users, compared to Instagram's 1.1 billion, Twitters' 350 million, etc. (Clement, 2020), other social networking sites are rapidly on the rise too. While Facebook spans across all demographics, with over 9 million advertisers, and 74% users being active (Aslam, 2020), Christie (2019) maintains that the younger generation adults prefer Instagram when checking out and interacting with brands online.

Also, personality and self-concept play a big role in one's involvement with social media as a whole (Jisana, 2014). The current study does not consider personality as a

moderating factor in automobile purchasing behavior among international students, hence the oldest philosophical debate in psychology, "Nature vs. Nurture." Similarly, although motivations such as self-esteem boost, and convenience were investigated as moderating factors, peer pressure could also be a motivation in automobile purchasing behavior among international students. Additionally, while this study is limited to the international students enrolled during the academic year 2020/2021 spring semester at the various universities in Northern Cyprus, it does not seek to know the opinions of international students from the other higher institutions of learning, such as vocational schools, as different universities have different concentrations of international students.

Furthermore, while a sample size of 400 participants seems sufficient, it may not very well represent diversity in culture, because different cultures have different approach towards life. Also, Northern Cyprus is a small country and cannot be compared to Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, or the United States in terms of cultural diversity. For example, a proper sample population of international students should at least include all races of the world to better represent self-concepts (Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010). According to a statistics release by TRNC Statistical Institution (2019), there are approximately 111,188 Turkish and international students studying in Northern Cyprus as of 2019/2020 academic year, perhaps more than 400 will better represent diversity in culture.

Lastly, this study is also limited to quantitative research methodology, because the current survey tries to investigate the connections between Facebook and automobile purchasing behavior among international students in Northern Cyprus. For example, automobiles are expensive liabilities, and are designed specifically as based on

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individual requirements, hence humans are expected to show certain levels of complications or unpredictability when deciding to purchase an automobile (Alsaif, 2016). Even so, Earl (2010) defined quantitative research design which may either be descriptive or experimental in nature, as a type of survey that seeks to establish associations between two or more variables within a study.

1.10 Definition of Terminologies

Facebook: Facebook is a social networking platform or site that offers users the opportunity to connect with family and friends worldwide while exchanging information digitally through photos, videos and audio recordings. Facebook can also be used for educational and entertainment purposes such as reviews, updates, newsletters, brochures and so on. All these contribute to the changes in the lifestyle and general activities of users from day to day (Barnes, 2008).

Purchasing Behavior: Purchasing behavior refers to all the decisions and actions taken by a customer before he or she actually purchases a product or service either for the use of an individual or a group. These kinds of decisions and actions are usually taken after careful examination of information relating to the product or services. The source of such information could include social media (Facebook), word-of-mouth, advertisements, radio advertisement, etc (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

Consumer Behavior: Consumer behavior is mostly used synonymously with purchasing behavior but there is a little difference. Consumer behavior is the attitude exhibited by a consumer after he or she has consumed a particular product or service. That is to say, his or her future decisions about the product or service are informed by the satisfaction gained from the product. Purchasing behavior assesses the

attitudes of the consumer before he or she patronizes a product or services (Blackwell, et al., 2001).

Automobile: An automobile is a public or private vehicle that runs on either on two or more wheels and can be used for commuting purposes. Apart from the certified Facebook accounts of automobile brands such as Honda, BMW, Benz, Mazda and so on, there are also different Facebook pages that sell automobiles and even provide additional review pages to inform the customers of any updates in models, parts or other services in relation to the band (Raj, et al., 2013).

Social Networking Sites (SNS): Social networking sites are also called social media, and refer to any form of media that facilitates creation and sharing of contents between its users and the public in a digital form. Facebook is a very popular social media platform that facilitates digital creation and sharing of contents such as Automobiles in the public domain (Barnes, 200).

New Media: New media refers to new computer technologies that have upgraded the creation and sharing of contents throughout the Internet (Barnes, 2008).

Brand: A brand is simply an image or name or combination of the two that represents the company which has the product. A brand helps the company to distinguish its products from that of its competitors. Every company brand is displayed on their Facebook page or other social media pages to make it easier to identify their products on those pages (Blackwell, et al., 2001).

1.11 Motivation for the Study

Purchasing automobile in the TRNC as an international student is very easy as compared to Nigeria where one has to take an awful long time to arrive at a decision in purchasing automobiles after considering many factors such as the trustworthiness of the seller, the relative difficulty in getting genuine parts and the possibility of a resell. Therefore, the motivation of this study is based on the increasing number of international students purchasing luxury automobiles in North Cyprus. Also, due to the difficulties in making decisions concerning luxury automobiles, it is important to understand what influences their purchase decisions. More so, the focus was to review how social media such as Facebook reviews influence the attitudes of international students towards their automobile purchases.

1.12 Plan of the Study

This research study will be divided into five chapters so that readers can have better understanding of the information presented in the current study.

Chapter 1: The introductory part which includes (a) background information of the study, (b) purpose of the study, (c) research questions, (d) study hypothesis, (e) study significance, (f) scope and limitation of the study, and (g) an outline of the research.

Chapter 2: This part contains the literature review which reviews past literatures relevant to current study. Also, this part has the theoretical framework which encompasses every theory relevant for this field of study. These theories include the Uses and Gratifications Theory, and the Diffusion of Innovation Theory. More so, some models such as the Model of Consumer Decision Making Process, Maslow's

Hierarchy of Needs Model, and Model of satisfaction and brand and dealer loyalty were used within the study.

Chapter 3: The methodology part which contains (a), research methodology, (b) research design and methods, (c) approaches that are contained in the methodology, (d) strategies of sampling, and (e) techniques of data analysis.

Chapter 4: This section contains reports of data collected for the research, the results of the findings, and unbiased interpretation of the findings of the current research based on the methodology used in gathering information.

Chapter 5: This last section contains the conclusion part, discussion, summary of the research study, and recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Overviews of important past studies relevant to the current study are reviewed in the current chapter. It combines theoretical reviews and literatures to connect the idea of consumer behavior, and the factors that influence it among international students. The combination of theories includes; (i) consumer behavior, (ii) rational decision-making process, (iii) brand loyalty and profitability, (iv) the factor of consumers' behavior, (v) Maslow's hierarchy of needs, (vi) uses and gratifications theory, and (vii) the connection between the new media, consumer behavior, and brand loyalty. Even so, becoming a consumer of automobiles often comes with a process of decision-making because it is not only expensive to acquire but tends to add value to one's social and economic class, and comes handy with simplified transportation (Hiscock, Macintyre, Ellaway, & Kearns, 2002).

Several past literatures were employed in several concepts in the development of the current thesis. To begin with, consumer behavior needs to be explained to shed light on the activities of consumers during purchase decisions. Secondly, the factors of consumer behavior help understand those underlying reasons that may trigger certain responses from a consumer. Thirdly, the effects of brand loyalty on consumer behavior help understand how brand loyalty affects the decisions of consumers during purchases.

2.2 Consumer Behavior

The field work of consumer behavior has become so vital in the world of marketing because it is pertinent for manufacturers, companies or organizations to know the processes consumers may follow in order to arrive at a choice. Consumer behavior is defined as a branch of knowledge that focuses on the activities of a consumer (Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2001). Kotler and Armstrong (2001) described consumer behavior as the processes individuals or groups follow in selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing of goods or services which involve both mental and social processes. Building on this definition, Schiffman & Kanuk (2008) demonstrated consumer behavior as behaviors displayed by a consumer during a search or prior to purchasing products, ideas, or services that are believed to satisfy basic needs. For example, when purchasing an automobile, a consumer may explore the web for related information on the product, read reviews, online comments or magazines, consult with family, friends, or colleagues at work, and as a result option are narrowed to few companies and brands. Next, the consumer checks out the narrowed options, and finally decides on what brand to purchase (Ajzen, 2014).

The concept of consumer behavior cannot be well understood without explaining the levels of involvement that goes with purchasing a brand, because consumer behavior is often determined by the level at which the consumer gets involved in purchasing; these levels include low, and high involvement (Tanner & Raymond, 2013). Low involvement is usually seen with inexpensive products that do not include high risk, if the buyer makes a mistake in purchasing them, while high involvement includes brands that may pose high risk to buyers, if they make a mistake in purchasing them. Automobiles are products with high involvement, because they have high costs and

interest rates, high symbolic and pleasure value, and high risk (Lapersonne, Laurent, & Goff, 1995). As a result, potential consumers are expected to not consider a single brand, but to carefully gather, analyze, and compare alternative brands before purchasing one. It follows a process of decision making.

2.3 Model of Consumer Decision-Making Process

As mentioned in the previous set of paragraphs, consumers often follow some steps during the purchase of certain products, brands or services. The steps include problem recognition, information search (internal and external), evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior (Wallace, 2016).

Figure 2.1: Consumer Purchase Decision Making Process (Wallace, 2016).

(a) Need recognition: This is where the buyer decision process starts. Here the consumer of certain goods or services picks upon the notion that there is a problem or need in their lives, which can be quenched by purchasing a product of service in the market (Hoyer & MacInnes, 2010). The consumer senses that there is big gap between their desired and actual state, which is often triggered by an internal stimulus, especially when physiological needs which includes thirst, hunger, sex grows to a level high enough to create a drive (Stankevich, 2016). Similarly, needs could also be triggered by external stimuli. Marketers at this stage need to study consumers so as to find answers to vitals which include, (i) what problems or needs does the consumer have? (ii) What brings about such needs? (iii) How often do these

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needs lead the consumer towards certain products or services? For example, when people get hungry (internal stimuli), it means they need food. Or when they salivate at the sight of food (external stimuli), it also means they food.

(b) Information search: This is next to need recognition. When individuals realize they have a need, they begin to find information about such needs, hence they are at the stage of information search. The attention of the consumer may become pronounced, making them to actively look for information in order to satisfy their needs. Even so, the strength of the need often equals the amount of searching the consumer does; the level and quantity of information they start to find; the convenience they find in looking for information; the importance they place on information gotten, and the happiness derived from searching (Stankevich, 2016). There are different sources where information about goods can be gotten; (i) public sources – product review and consumers' opinions websites, social media, etc., (ii) Individual sources – family, neighbors, friends, acquaintances, etc., (iii) experimental sources – handlers and examiners of products, and (iv) commercial sources – advertising dealers, packaging, sales individuals, etc. (Stankevich, 2016).

The amount of influence, sources of information has on the individual depends on the individual and the products themselves. In general, the most amount of information concerning products comes from commercial sources, which are those sources controlled by marketers. However, individual sources are usually the most effective ones, in that they are very effective in influencing the actual purchase of services or goods. While commercial sources are usually for information, individual sources are evaluated and make products more legitimate to buyers. For instance, to evaluate information received from commercial sources about a drug, doctors often

go to other health practitioners. Even so, the more the information consumers get about a brand, the better their knowledge and awareness of the brand. Hence it becomes important for organizations and companies to create brand awareness among their target audiences. They should investigate the sources of information of buyers, as well as the importance of such sources (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

(c) Evaluation of Alternatives: Having sought for information, consumers begin to look out for alternative brands; in that the information gotten is used for the evaluation of alternatives, which is the third stage in purchasing processes. The attractiveness and usefulness of other brands is evaluated using every information point that is gotten from various sources (Sternthal & Craig, 1982). In general, other brands are evaluated by the consumer on bases of the product's degree of importance, attributes, satisfaction, belief, etc., so as to choose correctly (Hoyer & MacInnes, 2010). Even so, the mode at which consumers evaluate and purchase alternative brands usually depends on the individual, and the purchase situation. In some cases, consumers become careful, make serious calculations, with logical thinking. In other cases, the consumer purchases by intuition and impulse (Hoyer & MacInnes, 2010).

There are some basic concepts that explain the consumer evaluation processes (Silverman, Bachann, & Akharas, 2001). Firstly, it is assumed that products are seen by consumers as a bundle of product characteristics. For example, the product characteristics of a refrigerator are capacity, cooling, size, price, space, etc. Consumers will direct their attentions to the features that are important to them. Secondly, it is assumed that consumers depend on their needs and wants. Thirdly, it is assumed that consumers tend to develop beliefs on what a brand stands for. These

set of beliefs which a consumer hold is called brand image. However, these beliefs many be different from the actual attributes of the brand, due to selective distortion, perception, and retention. Fourthly, it is believed that the total satisfaction expected to be brought by a product depends on the changes that occurs at the level of different characteristics. Lastly, attitudes towards other brands are developed by the consumer through some procedures of evaluation, which varies depending on the purchase decisions (Silverman, et al., 2001).

(d) Purchase Behavior: This is a stage where purchasing decision is made, in that the consumer purchases the product. After alternative brands have been evaluated, purchase behavior follows purchasing the best brand that soothes current needs or wants (Kotler & Keller, 2009). However, such decisions may be influenced or affected by situational or attitudinal factors. An attitudinal factor includes the attitudes of the consumer's family, friends, or neighbors towards the brand. While situational factor are simple things that can't be controlled or foreseen, such as unavailability of other brands, price drop and increase, and or expected price or product benefits (Hoyer & MacInnes, 2010). However, events that are unexpected may affect purchase decision, as purchase intentions do not always mean the consumer would end up with the product (Hoyer & MacInnes, 2010).

 (e) Post Purchase Evaluation: At this stage, the consumer decides on an action based on dissatisfaction of satisfaction which is the final stage in the process of consumer purchase decision making. Here cognitive dissonance may occur, as the consumer decides whether they are dissatisfied or satisfied by the product (Silverman, et al., 2001). Questions like "Was the right decision made with this purchase?" At this time of the purchase decision process, just after purchase, consumers decide on what to do

further base on their dissatisfaction or satisfaction of the product or service (Kotler & Keller, 2009). What shows if the buyer is dissatisfied or satisfied with a purchase? The answer to the question depends on the relationship that exists between the perceived performance of the product and expectations of the consumer. If the product is below expectations, the consumer becomes disappointed. If it meets or rises above expectations, the consumer becomes satisfied and delighted (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

2.3.1 Processes in Consumers' Need Recognition

When the difference between an actual and desire state is realized by the consumer, problem recognition occurs. There are unsatisfied wants and needs in everyone which creates discomfort or tension. Some of which can be satisfied by purchasing certain products or services. The decision of what to purchase begins when those needs or wants which can be quenched through consumption are so strong enough to motivate the individual. Even so, individuals' problems may become routinely when they lack daily necessities, or have unexpected ones, in that appliances that are major to them suddenly becomes unavailable in the market. Additionally, other types of problems may be subtle, and slowly evolve over time. An example of this would be the desire to purchase a washing machine.

Consumer decision making starts when a individual notices unmet needs or problems. There is a need or a problem when discrepancies exist between the desired state and actual state as shown in figure 2.2, which according to Kotler and Keller (2009) suggests that existing state and desired state are the resultant of an individual's current situation and lifestyle. Howbeit, the individual's current and desired state may be the same, or discrepancies may exist between them. If discrepancies are noticed between current and desired state, the individual would

perceive that a problem that needs to be met exists. Even so, problems are defined by consumers in terms of their motivations (Kotler & Keller, 2009).
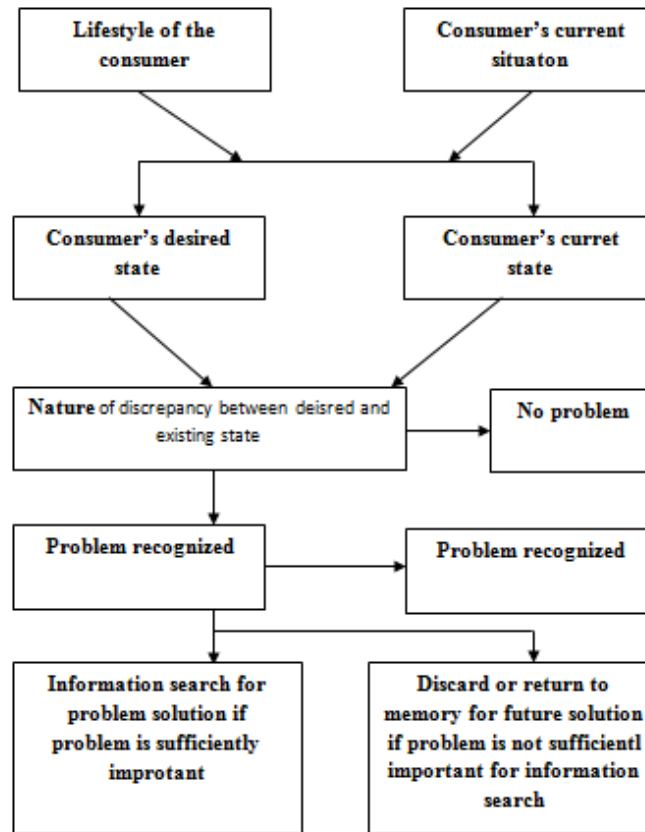
Figure 2.2: Need Recognition Process (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

Silverman, et al.(2001 asserts that the extent at which an individual desires to get their problem resolved depends on the magnitude of the discrepancy that exists between their existing and desired state, and the level of importance the problem or need is to them. Hence a consumer becomes seriously invested in finding solution to their problem if they perceive the extent of discrepancy as serious enough or of great importance (Silverman, et al., 2001). For instance, problem recognition would be to noticing problems related to status. Inferentially, the problem needs to be defined in terms that are meaningful, in that they figure out what is causing the problem rather

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than the problem itself. Even so, an individual may have both active problems – ones in awareness, and inactive problems – ones out of awareness.

2.3.2 Situations that Leads to Consumers' Need Recognition

There are many instances that might bring a problem to the knowledge of the consumer. Below are some situations that leads to consumer' need recognition.

(a) Inadequate stock of possession and availability of products: Kotler and Keller (2009) posit that the depletion of products a consumer uses is often the most common situation that leads to recognition of problems. For example, if an individual has shortage of necessities that are vital to them, they immediately identify the existence of a problem. Also, the availability of such products in the market makes the consumer even more aware of a need (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Problem recognition results from such feeling.

(b) Discontentment and dissatisfaction with the products: When products a consumer own or use becomes dissatisfactory, a problem arises or is recognized (Kotler & Keller, 2009). For example, if an individual who owns a decade old car becomes willing to purchase a more recent model, such a feeling of dissatisfaction with the decade old car may lead to discontentment, hence, car related problems are recognized (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

(c) Promotion related activities: With promotions of goods or services, marketers try to create hunger drivers in consumers. Kotler and Keller (2009) argue that marketers use promotional activities to create a gap between consumers' desired state and actual state, hence problems are created by marketers and recognized by consumers.

(d) Characteristics changes in the environment: With changes occurring in the characteristics of individual's or group of individual's environments, problem recognition is formed (Kotler & Keller, 2009). For instance, when an individual or group of individuals move from a life stage to another, various types of services or goods become required, which creates a problem or need. Moreover, the influences of friends, neighbors, and reference groups may cause the individual or groups to purchase or try novel or different products. Problem recognition is also resulted from this (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

(e) Financial status and changes: The financial status of an individual or groups, and the changes that occurs, whether worse or better, may create problem recognition (Kotler & Keller, 2009). For instance, if an individual's or group's financial status worsens or becomes better, or if they anticipate a deterioration or improvement in their financial position, recognition of problem based on their anticipated or actual changes in financial position occurs.

(f) Past purchases and individual development: Purchases that a consumer may also lead to recognizing that problem exists (Kotler & Keller, 2009). For instance, an individual who own a television, may realize they need a voltage stabilizer or an antenna. Purchasing a computer may make individuals realize they need a printer. Also, the mental development of an individual and changes in their outlook on life may lead them to realizing their lack of certain products or goods (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

(g) Efforts of consumers and government bodies: Problems may arise from the activities of various government agencies and consumer interest groups (Kotler &

Keller, 2009). For example, if an embargo is laid by the government on the use of private vehicles on certain roads, locals and residents would see a problem and may begin to purchase bicycles to tackle the problem (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

2.3.3 Sources Consumers Use in Gathering Information

Consumers often turn to one of the many major information sources. According to Gordon, Calantone, and Benedetto (1993), experience as the most widely used information source is one of the primary sources of information. The experiences consumers have with a particular product often provide them with selective sets of information about the product in general. Another vital information source used by consumers is family, friends, neighbors, and associates. This kind of source refers to individual source (Gordon, et al., 1993). This is because consumers often depend heavily on their family, friends, neighbors, and associates, as they trust them, often more than other sources. Marketing source is another widely used source of information. This includes advertisements, sales individuals, packages and labels, and product displays. Even so, such sources provide information the markets want consumers to know, and might be over hyped or underestimated by the marketers (Gordon, et al., 1993).

Additionally, independent or public information sources can also be used by the consumer (Gordon, et al., 1993). This includes news presentations, government reports, product testing reports, and published reports by consumer groups. These sources often provide factual and neutral information; hence they are perceived as very credible. Lastly, another memory search is also widely used information source (Gordon, et al., 1993). This is because consumers tend to search and recollect memories about a product, so as to retrieve information relevant to their current needs. If done successfully, it might present the consumer with various alternative

brands relevant to their needs (Gordon, et al., 1993). More so, where internal searches fail, external searches are often used by the consumer, especially when they are unable to retrieve information sufficient enough to solve the problems they recognized (Gordon, et al., 1993).

(a) Characteristics of marketplace: Certain marketplace characteristics may determine a consumer's level of external search. Here costs are determined, as well as the derived benefits that corresponds to a consumer's search (Jisana, 2014). They include a good number of product alternatives, store distribution, price range, and available information. When there is a single brand available within a particular category of product, then external search is not required by the consumer regarding those goods. But, in cases where there are many product alternatives, store distribution, and price ranges, then the consumer would extensively go through external search (Jisana, 2014). By inference, this provides the consumer with the best decision to make about their needs or problems.

(b) Characteristics of products: Product characteristics which include product differentiation and their price levels often influence consumer's level of external search (Jisana, 2014). If the price of the product is considered low and insignificant, the level of external search would reduce or become limited. On the contrary, if the level of the price is perceived as high by the consumer, they extensively search for alternative products, stores, or price. Even so, another characteristic of product is product differentiation, and it influences consumer's level of external search (Jisana, 2014). When many differences are perceived by the consumer on alternative brands, they become heavily invested in external search, and begin to consider competing brands differences such as quality, design, features, and style (Jisana, 2014).

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(c) Characteristics of the consumer: Consumer characteristics, which includes experience and learning, self-concept and individuality, age and family lifecycle stage, social class, and perceived risk, may be a serious influence to the level of external search for information a consumer becomes involved in (Jisana, 2014). If prior purchase is satisfactorily certified, or the consumption of a particular good meet their needs, they get involved in repeated purchase, hence eliminating the need to externally search for more information about the individual category of product. This is applicable in the case of routine and habitual purchase (Jisana, 2014).

Individuals' self-concept and individual characteristics may also influence their level of externally searched information. Howbeit, deliberate information seekers often go extensively on external search (Jisana, 2014). Additionally, Jisana (2014) argues that individuals with authoritarian personality type tend to go less on external search; individuals with middle and lower-class statuses go more on external searches when compared to upper-class individuals; the level of information search decreases with age, as maturity and learning brings experience. Also, increase in an individual's perception of risk leads to increase in external information search.

(d) Characteristics of the situation: The intensities or levels of externally searched information are also influenced by the situations surrounding the consumer. For example, if the consumer is pressed by time, they tend to go limitedly on external search. Also, overcrowded stores or shops may also limit the intensity of a consumer's search. They may also engage in less information search if the offer made by the seller is desirable or attractive. Lastly, consumers' current mental and physical conditions may begin to influence the level of external search. If they are less on physical or mental energy, the level of external search becomes reduced.

2.5 Effects of Brands and Brand Loyalty on Consumer Purchasing Behavior

Brand loyalty as a concept is closely related to the concept consumer purchasing behavior and the preferences of consumers. Taskin and Akat (2012) asserts that when consumers are determining their preferences, they can from time to time, experience indecision. Consumer purchasing behavior is a kind of action that results from preferences, attitudes, decisions, and intentions that consumers make when they are about to purchase goods or services (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). The concept of consumer purchasing behavior is a phenomenon that encompasses psychology, anthropology, sociology, and so on. Even so, individual attitudes and the always changing behavior usually impact the purchasing intents of the consumer, and those intentions affect their purchasing behavior (Palumbo & Herberg, 2000). More so, intention of consumer purchase is an important point to consider on online purchasing behavior.

Furthermore, the dimension indecisions take may be decreased or increased based on whether the expected performance of the product is properly demonstrated (Taskin & Akat, 2012). Taskin and Akat (2012) defined brand loyalty is a psychological commitment similar to friendship. Cakirer and Marka (2012) defined brand loyalty as a conscious act that cannot be developed by mere conscience. That is to say, it is a behavioral reaction towards brand which develops with the passing of time, and developed through decision making, when there are more brands to choose from within a product category (Cakirer, 2012). Palumbo and Herberg (2000) describes brand loyalty as a situation where consumers despite competitive brands presenting sales promotions chooses to continually search, purchase, and use a particular brand.

Accordingly, Aaker (1991) asserts that brand loyalty create sales advantage for companies and organizations, in that it serves to reduce marketing costs, hence establishing better effects of financial leverage, and amassing new customers. This shows that the effects brand loyalty has on the costs of marketing are very obvious, as it serves to protect current consumers who may by themselves influence other consumers towards the particular brand (Aaker, 1991). Inferentially, the loyalty that current consumers have towards a brand creates a serious entry barrier for competitive company brand, as it is really expensive to try to convince consumers into switching loyalties. Yilmaz (2005) believes that consumers often prefer popular and known product as opposed to non-populous ones, especially when the purchase decision is towards an expensive product due to the known information and benefits such popular brands presents. However, Dick and Basu (1994) maintained that there are approaches that explain brand loyalty, namely, behavioral and attitudinal approaches (Day, 1969; Jacoby & Kyner, 1973).

In the opinion of Aaker (1991), behavioral approach in relation to brand loyalty is when a consumer prefers and chooses one brand over another. It also involves the behavior of repurchasing the brand over another. Pelz and Andrew (1962) states that the reason consumers choose one brand over the other can be based on the amount of motivation, promotion, and advertisement. Attitudinal approach on the other hand, emphasizes that the repurchasing behavior of a specific brand is related to psychological processes, and cannot be a reason on its own (McConnell, 1968). While brand loyalty has been inferentially described as the positive feeling a consumer has towards a specific brand, and their frequent choice of repurchasing, and using the same brand over an extended period of time, there are common conditions and tendencies that further establishes brand loyalty. Hence Jacoby and

Kyner (1973) asserts that psychological functions which includes behavioral reactions, prejudice, a specific period of time, components of decision making needs to be considered as well.

Jacoby and Kyner (1973) further argued that behavioral dimensions alone are not enough to explain brand loyalty. Also, mistakes can be made because some consumers may develop brand loyalty towards a particular product because it is cheap, but when they discover a cheaper brand, they switch. Hence Assael (2004) posits that brand loyalty needs to follow recurring behavior. As maintained by Aaker (1991), 11 brand association types exist, and this includes qualities of brand, moral values, related price, benefits it gives to consumers, user, usage, famous people, product class, lifestyle, geographical environment, and competitors (Aaker, 1991). Still and all, Aaker (1991) describes brand awareness as the possibility of potential consumers to notice, remember or recognize that an individual brand is part of a certain category of product.

The effect of brand awareness on brand value relies on both the brand's awareness level, and the content they provide (Aaker, 1991). One of the factors that affect a company's market share of a product is the level of brand awareness. As a product's market share increases, its brand awareness also increases (Kavas, 2004). That is to say, brand awareness is an instrument of trust for most consumers. As maintained by Macdonald and Sharp (2000), it has been generally observed that consumers prefer brands that has high levels of recognition despite the differences in price and quality. Kirmani and Zeithaml (1993) developed the theory of perceived quality, and defined it as the judgment a consumer has on the superiority and extensive perfection a product has. Aaker (1991) also described perceived quality as the customers'

perception of superiority and quality of a service or product when compared to competing brands, and changes as consumers' perception changes.

Keller (2008) described quality as a brand association that determines brand attitudes, which directly or indirectly has an effect on the image of a brand through brand attitude or perceived value, and affects the behavior of consumers, and their preferences. Research by Bendixen, Bukasa, and Abratt (2004) posits that quality perception is the most important tool in determining the quality of a brand and brand loyalty. Similarly, in the studies conducted by Michell, King, and Reast (2001), it shows that some of the tools that serves to show brand loyalty are reliability, quality, performance, financial value, and services. They also argued that perceived quality, leadership in market share, market image, and differentiation of brand are the most vital factors of brand value (Michell, King, & Reast, 2001). Similarly, Atilgan, Aksoy, and Akinci (2005) suggest the extent of brand loyalty is a very important element that affects brand value.

2.6 Automobile Brand Loyalty and Profitability

Any brand with loyal consumers is bound to succeed, because brand loyalty is a very important part of any business, as it enhances consumer referrals, purchases, market shares and profitability. It is one of the biggest troubles that any business or company may be faced with, which makes it an important business concept that is central to marketers, because it also reflects a good level of identification and ultimate relationship of a consumer with a brand (Keller, 2008). Oliver (1999) described consumer brand loyalty as a commitment that is held deeply to consistently repurchase in the future, a preferred brand or service, thereby causing repetition of same-brand purchases, despite the efforts of marketers or other situational influences

to cause switch in purchase behavior. When consumers develop loyalty towards a brand, they respond favorably to the brand than non-loyal consumers. Brand loyalty influence sales directly, attract new consumers, and reduce cost of marketing (Aaker, 1992).
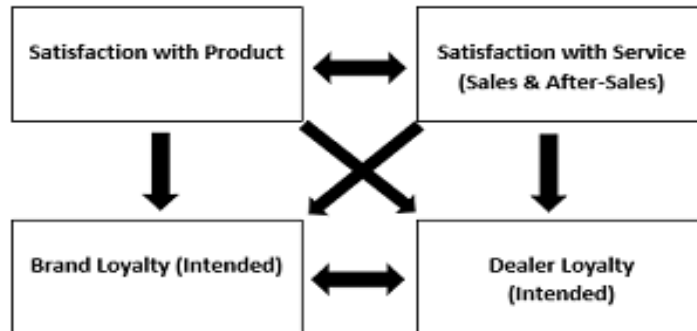
Figure 2.3: Model of satisfaction and brand and dealer loyalty (Fornell, 1992)

Fornell (1992) explained that the overall determinant of consumers' experience on any brand is customer satisfaction, and consumer satisfaction with product is expected to lead to brand and dealer loyalty (figure 2.3). A brand earns recognition, preference against alternative brands from consumers' beliefs about a brand which is based on accumulation of reinforcing individual experience, experience of others, and some external factors as well (Schmalensee, 1982). A press release by Edmunds (2018) on various automobile brand loyalty showed that brand loyalty on mainstream segment automobiles is high for Honda, Toyota, and Subaru, and on luxury automobiles, is high for Land Rover, Audi, and Lexus. Findings of the report revealed that Honda and Toyota automobiles were high on reliability and quality, while Subaru has the reputation offering sophisticated products; hence individuals who value longevity or sophistication on mainstream automobiles keep repurchasing

those brands. Similarly, Land Rover, Audi, and Lexus as luxury brands are repurchased for comfort and sophistication.
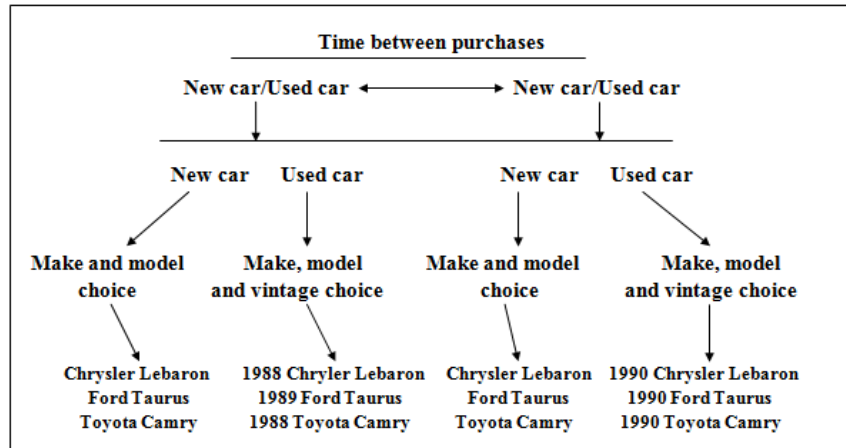
Figure 2.4: Structure of Automobile Choices in the U.S. (Mannering et al., 1991)

Mannering et al., (1991) deconstructed the outcome of brand loyalty on automobile market share in the United States (figure 2.4). In connection to consumer behavior, they assert that every car consumer foremost decides to purchase a used or a new car, and then selects a brand, e.g., Chrysler, Ford, or Toyota. If Toyota is the selected, then a model, e.g., Camry, and then purchase might be made, and finally, their experience with Toyota Camry determines their satisfaction which could make them a loyal consumer of the Ford brands of automobile. By this, they asserted that brand loyalty is theoretically justifiable as an influencing factor of automobile purchase, which is reflected in consumers' accumulated experiences of a brand (Mannering & Winston, 1985).
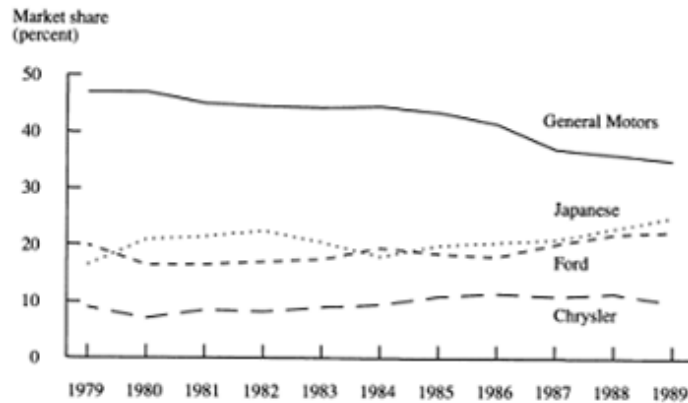
Figure 2.5: Share of Automobile Market in the United States (Buzzell et al., 2014)

Buzzell et al. (2014) when studying 57 companies found that the major determinant of profitability is market share, and increased market share is a result of brand loyalty (figure 2.5). Findings showed that General Motors has the highest market share while Chrysler has the lowest due to their different levels of consumer loyalty.

2.7 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Psychologists over the years have developed theories of motivation. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model as shown in figure 2.6, is one that is employed at large in both marketing and psychology. This is because it illustratively demonstrates how motivation works, to explain the ways need can motivate behavior. Jansson-Boyd (2010) asserts that Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a large theory that stresses on how the needs of human can become the basic influence of consumption. Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs which was divided according to their level of significance which includes psychological needs, safety needs, social needs, recognition needs, and self-actualization needs, illustrates that consumer behavior is based on the level a consumer has attained; hence the hierarchy of needs can successfully fit the market segmentation of advertising.

Figure 2.6: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model (Vainikka, 2015).

According to Maslow (1970), the highest needs which include social, esteem, and self-actualization needs, are at the top part of the hierarchy, while the basic needs which include physiological and safety needs are situated below. As illustrated by Vainikka (2015), physiological needs include water, food, sleep, sex, etc. An example of a consumer fulfilling physiological needs is shopping for groceries or getting into a sexual relationship. Secondly, safety needs include physical and environmental stability or security. Example of a consumer satisfying this is purchasing a home in a safe neighborhood, seeking asylum due to war in one's home country, etc. Thirdly, social needs are generally reflected in the individual's desire to make friends, find love, and be part of a renowned reference group. For instance, an individual who attends concerts, clubs, or other social gatherings is fulfilling their social needs. Fourthly, esteem needs are closely related to the need to improving self-respect, self-worth, or statuses. This kind of need command respect and satisfaction. An example of this is acquiring luxury automobiles or homes. Lastly, self-actualization or self-fulfillment needs include the yearning of an individual to live life to the fullest, and to attain full potential.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as shown in figure 2.6 improved the way of deconstructing consumer motivation towards a brand. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) explained that consumer purchase decisions are generally tied to their need to climb the ladder of needs until they are self-actualized. Inferentially, international students purchase automobiles to boost statuses and to become recognized among their peers. Solomon (2008) on applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to understand consumers' motives towards a brand, maintained that the decision making process of every consumer is determined by factors which can be divided into two, namely, internal factors which includes motivation, perception, learning, and attitude, and external factors which includes individual, psychological, and social factors. While Maslow's Hierarchy of needs explains the internal factors, some other factors (individual, social, psychological, economical, and cultural factors explained in the next set of paragraphs are relevant as motivating factors in this study.

2.8 Factors of Consumer Behavior

Every consumer has characteristics that are distinct to the self or group they identify themselves with. Such characteristics include personal (culture, gender, age, etc.), social (social class, income, etc.), and psychological (feelings, attitudes, etc.). Individual characteristics can influence their purchasing behavior on products or services. Understanding these factors (i) help understand how consumer purchasing behavior affects marketing, and (ii) allow companies and businesses increase market share and maintain brand loyalty by anticipating the shift in consumer wants (Jisana, 2014).

2.8.1 Personal Factors

Personal factors include those specific characteristics of an individual that may not be relatable to other groups. Such characteristics or features include how the individual make decisions, and those interests, habits or opinions that are unique to them. In view of individual factors, purchase decisions can be motivated by culture, gender, age, and other individual factors. For instance, older generations have more practical life experiences than younger ones, so an older generation individual is likely to show consumer behaviors that are different from individuals of younger generation (Jisana, 2014). By inference, older people might choose different brands because they are more reserved to spend on things that might not be of interest to an individual of younger generation. Below are the personal factors.

(a) Age: One element key to affecting purchasing behavior is age. The purchasing choice of young people is different from those of the middle-aged group. Elderly class has a complete contrasting purchasing behavior. Teens tend to be more engrossed in beauty products and the purchase attractive clothes. Middle-aged are interested in property, houses and vehicle for the household (Jisana, 2014).

(b) Income: This has the potential to impact the purchasing behavior of individuals. For example, high streams of income equip consumers with high purchasing power. When the income of a consumer is or becomes high, it presents more chances for them to spend lavishly, and on luxurious goods. On the contrary, middle or low income consumers or individuals spend the major part of their earnings on basic necessities like clothes, perishables or groceries (Hill & Harmon, 2007).

(c) Occupation: A consumer's occupation affects their purchasing behavior. An individual is likely to purchase items suitable to their career. An instance is a doctor who purchases clothes suitable to this profession as opposed to a professor who wears differently (Hill & Harmon, 2007).

(d) Lifestyle: This is simply attitude towards life. It is the way an individual lives among people in the society. Even so, purchasing behavior is seriously affected by the viewpoint of an individual. For instance, when a consumer's main point of view is living healthy, he or she will purchase healthy product more substituting junk food (Hill & Harmon, 2007).

2.8.2 Social Factors

Social factors impact consumer behavior significantly. It includes the consumer's family of orientation or procreation, social interactions and class, income, school, work, level of education, and living conditions (Jisana, 2014). For example, automobiles are expensive to acquire, and in order to acquire one, the individual needs money. Even when the money is available, the individual might decide to purchase a luxury automobile due to social class. Jisana (2014) asserts that social factors vary, and can be very difficult to explain, especially when creating marketing tactics. Howbeit, it is very important to consider this factor when analyzing consumer behavior, because it greatly impacts the consumer's purchase decision and response to adverts. Below are the social factors.

(a) Family: This plays a major part in molding the purchasing behavior of an individual. An individual's predisposition grows throughout childhood, simply by observing their family purchase, and continually purchasing same things even when they are grown (Jisana, 2014).

(b) Reference Groups: This group is a class of individuals with whom an individual looks up to, and identifies with. Basically, everyone in the reference group has purchasing behaviors that are common to those of others (Jisana, 2014).

(c) Statuses and roles: Individuals are often affected by their societal, family, and individual positions. If an individual ranks high in the society, they tend to see an increase in their purchasing behavior. For instance, bosses in organizations would purchase things suitable to their position, as opposed to employees in the same organizations (Hill & Harmon, 2007).

2.8.3 Psychological Factors

Consumers often respond to information about a brand based on their knowledge or perception of the brand. Hence psychological factors include those feelings of an individual towards a need, their capability to learn about information about their needs, and their attitude toward those needs (Jisana, 2014). It is almost impossible to understand this factorial concept without understanding consumer psychology as described in the next sets of numberings (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The ABC model which consists of three psychological components which includes, affect, behavior, and cognition explains the relationship between perception and behavior (Solomon, 2008). Affect represents the consumer's perception or opinion regarding the brand. Behavior represents the consumer's response or behavior shaped by perception and knowledge (Affect and Cognition). Cognition represents the consumer's knowledge about the brand or product (Dean, 2010).

(a) Motivation: When an individual is adequately motivated, it affects their purchasing behavior. An individual has various needs such as basic or essential needs, security, social needs, self-actualization, and esteem needs. The security and

basic needs are the most important of all the needs listed. Thus, security and basic needs has the potential to gear consumers toward purchasing certain goods and services (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

(b) Perception: This is a key feature that affects the behavior of consumers. Customer perception is a kind of process where knowledge about a product is gotten by a customer, the consumer then makes the knowledge gotten simple enough that they are able to create a peculiar image with regards the individual product. This often begins with consumer viewing social media feedbacks, customer reviews, promotions, and advertisements that relates to the product or service. Even so, the perception of consumers largely impacts their purchasing decisions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

(c) Learning: When consumers purchase product, or services, they begin to learn about and master key aspects of the product or service. Mastering the aspects of a product, and learning about them happens over a period of time through experience (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The learning abilities of consumers rely on provided information, and their skill sets. Even so, learning about products can be cognitive or conditioned. Conditioned happens when individuals are exposed to situations that are repetitive, causing them to create a conditioned feedback towards the product. Cognitive learning happens when the consumers employ their expertise through rational understanding, so as to get a solution and gratifications from the purchased product (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

(d) Attitudes and beliefs: Specific beliefs and attitudes are held by customers differently; hence their purchasing decisions are differently influenced. Hinging on

their attitude, the consumers behave in a certain manners towards the product (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Such attitudes hold major roles when building on brand image. As a result, marketers endeavor to know the various attitudes of individuals so as to design their marketing promotions and campaigns (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

2.8.4 Economic Factors

The consumer purchasing behavior and choices relies largely on the economic circumstance of the market or country. A booming country has a solid economy, hence generating more distribution of money in markets, and providing consumers with better purchasing power (Hill & Harmon, 2007). If consumers are provided with economic situations that are healthy, they become more apt to spending and purchasing services or goods. However, economies that is feeble, breads staggering markets which are affected by inhibited purchasing abilities and unemployment. More so, the components of an economy majorly impacts consumers' choices of purchase (Jisana, 2014). Some major economic components are listed below.

(a) Individual Income: Individual with more disposable incomes sees increase in their purchasing capabilities. Money left after purchasing the basic needs of an individual is called disposable income. When disposable income is more, it results to increase spending on different things, but when disposable income decrease, expenditure on more items also decreases (Hill & Harmon, 2007).

(b) Income of family: the overall income of every the individuals in a household is referred to as family income. When there are more individuals among the family who earn, more money becomes available for lavish spending, luxurious purchasing, and basic or essential needs (Hill & Harmon, 2007). Higher or increased family income gears individuals in a family towards more purchases. Availability of excess income

accessible in a family makes individuals in the family susceptible to purchasing luxury goods they really do not have needs for (Hill & Harmon, 2007).

(c) Credit of a consumer: Secured credit for consumers encourages them to do more expenditure (Hill & Harmon, 2007). Sellers are taking advantage of credit cards, hire purchase, bank loans, and easy installment to encourage consumers to do more shopping. Howbeit, when high credit becomes accessible to consumers, their purchasing power on luxurious products goes high (Hill & Harmon, 2007).

(d) Liquid Assets: Individuals with liquid assets are more likely to purchase luxuries, and spend on comfort. Those assets, such as savings, which can be easily changed to cash, are liquid assets. Some instances of liquid assets are savings in the bank, cash available on hand, and securities (Hill & Harmon, 2007). When an individual has more liquid assets, he or she is more certain of purchasing luxury products (Hill & Harmon, 2007).

(e) Savings: The total sum individuals wish to keep from their income as saving has a great impact on their purchasing behavior. When consumers decide to reserve more in banks or personal vaults, their spending, and expenditure will decrease (Hill & Harmon, 2007). On the contrary, when a consumer isn't engrossed in saving, he will spend more towards purchasing goods (Hill & Harmon, 2007).

2.8.5 Cultural Factors

Communities have different values, and beliefs that individuals belonging to such communities relate to (Jisana, 2014). That is to say, individuals' behaviors are greatly affected by the community and culture they identify with (Jisana, 2014). Withal, cultural factors are listed below.

(a) Culture: This greatly affects the purchasing behavior of consumers. Cultural components are those needs, values, preferences, behaviors, wants, beliefs, and perceptions that consumers have, and observe from their households or society at large (Jisana, 2014).

(b) Subculture: There are usually many of them. This is a class of culture that shares similar ideologies and values. This is made up of individuals from various nationalities, geographies, societies, and religions. Subculture itself makes a segment of consumer (Jisana, 2014).

(c) Social Class: Across the planet, societies have a type of social classes. Even so, social class is not justifiable by income alone, but also by other different components which includes family background, individual occupation, residence location and educational background. Social class is as aspect of culture that can depict consumer behavior (Jisana, 2014).

2.9 Online Consumer Behavior and Purchasing Processes

Since over 35 years now, online shopping kept evolving due to the ever-improving technologies that shaped it. Online shopping is a type of electronic shopping known as e-commerce. Here consumers purchase goods or services directly from individuals, companies or organizations that sell on the Internet by using web browsers such as Chrome, Safari, Firefox, etc. (Khurana & Kaur, 2017). In the United States alone, automobile ecommerce revenue has grown to $51 billion between 2012 and 2018, which represents over 120% increase (Siders, 2021). This shows that online purchasing behavior is becoming a big thing in societies. However, by inference of Kotler and Armstrong's (2001) definition of consumer behavior,

online consumer behavior is simply the processes individuals or groups follow in selecting, purchasing goods or services over the Internet, which also involves both mental and social processes. Buyer decision process which can also be called the process of consumer decision making, enables marketers to discover the process of consumers knowing about product and their purchase decision process.

It is important for companies or organizations to understand this because it is essential for marketing and sales. Being aware of this will serve as an advantage for companies to be able to target consumers properly and also initiate plans or patterns which could be convincing to the point of influencing consumers' purchasing decision and in fulfilling the problem of the consumer. The purchasing process begins when the consumer notices there is a problem or a need, either activated by internal or external stimuli exists. Howbeit, there are many stages consumers go through many stages before they can finally arrive at a brand decision. The five-stage Consumer Purchase Decision-Making Process (Engel, Kollat, & Blackwell, 1968) also known as "Engel, Kollat & Blackwell Model" is still very much the most persuasive model of consumer behavior in the world of marketing. Figure 2.1 shows that the model includes all the five steps consumers often follow during purchase of certain products, brands or services. The steps are problem recognition, information search (internal and external), evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post purchase behavior (Wallace, 2016).

Need recognition stage which is the first step in buyer decision process, explains where the consumer identifies a problem or need, and feels discrepancies exist between their actual and desired state. Consumers endeavor to look for goods or services that satisfy or fulfill such needs. This leads to information search, which is

the second stage, where the consumers seek to discover as much information he or she can before purchasing the product. In the third stage, the consumer uses the knowledge obtained from seeking information to examine other competing brands. At the fourth stage the buyer decides whether to buyer product or services by selecting the brand he or she considers most suitable. The final and most important, the fifth stage, studies the consumer post-purchase behavior and determines if consumer would purchase product again or remain loyal to brand depending on their level of satisfaction dissatisfaction.

2.10 Effects of Digital Media on the Covid-19 Pandemic

Digital marketing which includes social media marketing, such as marketing on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, etc, serves to drive and generate traffic, improve brand awareness, and gain leads and audiences for businesses or organizations (Sawyer & Cheng, 2012). As the virus emerged and became prevalent across the globe, the digital media served as an online source of information and news of happenings around the world about the pandemic (Park, et al., 2019), provides social supports for those with anxieties about their health, and other medical conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic (Dai & Menhas, 2020), presents people with updated information on the statistics related to the virus pandemic around the world (Tang, et al., 2021), and, provides people around the world with peer to peer health support (Yang, et al., 2021).

Some literatures (Dai & Menhas, 2020; Fang, Wang, & Wen, 2020; Zhao, Han, and Zhong, 2021; Zhong, Huang, & Liu, 2021) established on the effects of the digital media during the Covid-19 pandemic. Zhong et al. (2021) posits that the digital media serves to provide information on tolls of global health catastrophes and mental

health, hence people around the world made to better reenact social distancing, remain protected against the virus. Also that government bodies and health practitioners take to digital media as tools to manage and contain consequences of health related crisis. Dai and Menhas (2020) showed that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the digital media provided the world with supporting resources relating to advices, nourishment and emotional care, financial supports, and a sense of belonging. That is to say, the digital media had effect individuals' metal health, and provides them with both social and emotional supports.

Additionally, Fang et al. (2020) found that the digital media provided people around the world with peer to peer support. Inferentially, people for example through the use of Facebook are able to share ideas and help one another both with health related queries and other problems during the pandemic. Zhao, Han, and Zhong (2021) posit that by engaging with the digital media applications, public interactions and communications, individuals seek information relating to the virus pandemic, necessary precautions, preventions, possible sure remedies, and availability of an anti-virus to help curb the spread of the virus. Moreover, during the Covid-19 pandemic, health concerns, threats and pressure increase, which lead to the increase in digital media, use, so as to stay connected to family, friends, and peers (Agius, Grech, & Grech, 2020).

2.10.1 Psychosocial Effects of Facebook during the Covid-19 Outbreak

The number of information available to the public amidst the virus pandemic includes false and misleading information, which is closely seen as a 21st century communication system problem (Pennycook, McPhetres, & Zhang, 2020). Facebook as a digital media has become a source of information as aforementioned which has a psychosocial effect on individuals during the pandemic. Psychosocial encompasses

of both the psychological and sociological aspects of a thing. Apart from the positive effects of the digital media which has been highlighted in the previous set of paragraphs, Facebook in midst the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, Facebook has both negative psychological and sociological effects on individuals across the world. This is because the contents and information present may be unreliable and inaccurate (Merchant & Lurie, 2020).

The wrong information disseminated about Covid-19 has some serious psychological effects on people (Lai, Wang, Calvano, Raja, & He, 2020). Studies (Hua & Shaw, 2020; Depoux, Martin, Karafillakis, Preet, Wilder-Smith, & Larson, 2020) showed that shock and stress that originated from contents on the virus pandemic affected the psychological and social well-being of people. The lockdown during the outbreak made people very dependent on social media to in order to gain access to information about the increasing number of infections and mortality rates. This in turn resulted in panic and depression (Gao, Zheng, Jia, Chen, Mao, & Chen, 2020). While the digital media as a whole was described as improving mental health in section 2.10, Ahmad and Murad (2020) posit that contents on Facebook negatively impacts the mental health of people; in that it gave rise to the cases of depression around the globe. This is because the perceptions inculcated into people about the virus through the social media made the whole outbreak even more fearful.

2.11 Digital Media Marketing Pre/Post Covid-19 Pandemic

The Corona virus (Covid-19) is one of the most disastrous viruses that plagued the entire world. It impacted millions of lives and changed lifestyles around the world. According to World Health Organization (WHO) since 2019, and as of 2021 October, there have been over 230 million confirmed cases of Covid-19 and over 4.8

million deaths worldwide. Even so, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Northern Cyprus was also affected, According to Aslan (2021) as of 2021 May; there has been over 6,400 cases and 32 deaths from Covid-19 so far in Northern Cyprus, which has led to lockdowns, curfews, and the availability of most resources online which includes payments and purchases to help control the devastating impact of the virus (Aslan, 2021). Even so, a total of over 6 billion vaccine doses have been administered worldwide, with Cyprus counting, over 550 thousand doses administered as of 2021 October (Covidvax, 2021).

Consumers are usually sensitive and concerned with individual and payment risk, when thinking to make online purchases (Santouridis, Trivellas, & Tsimonis, 2012). However, the Covid-19 pandemic has changed everything. Now, people are more concern about their health that they are with their individual information and payments safety (Santouridis, et al., 2012). Inferentially, the Covid-19 pandemic made e-commerce and online marketing or business interactions become better so customers can get goods and services to enhance social distancing, and reduce commuting or traveling (Dakduk, Horst, Santalla, & Molia, 2017). Consequently, the impact of Covid-19 pandemic was seen in businesses and organizations. Hence some businesses and companies were forced to rely mainly on the digital world in order to conduct businesses successfully.

On relying on the digital world, businesses and organizations rely on digital marketing if they would continue to reach their target audiences (Prihadini, Nurbaiti, Rashmadi, & Krisantoro, 2020). Digital media marketing is simply to the development and distribution of content through channels of digital media which include social media sites, websites, email, and mobile applications (Hyllegard, Ogle,

Yan, & Reitz, 2011). Social media marketing in the case of this study is a type of digital media marketing which involves the advertisement of products and services, the promotion individual or non individual contents and brands on social networking sites, such as Facebook, so as to drive and generate traffic, improve brand awareness, and gain leads and audiences for a business or organization (Sawyer & Cheng, 2012).

Digital media marketing is by far the most useful because of the broad and intuitive interface, such that it does not only allow for dissemination of goods, contents, and services, but also gives room for integrative and interactive dialogues and other communications and interactions as well (Yang & Brown, 2009). Covid-19 has changed the way companies conduct businesses. Prasad, Ramamurthy, and Naidu (2001) maintained that through Internet integration, digital marketing change the game on marketing. For example, digital marketing allows the company to directly communicate their brands and products with customers, instead of depending on intermediaries to do so. Persio and Honchar (2018) argued that businesses that continued to achieve high success rates during the Covid-19 pandemic increased their presence on the digital world, hence engaging directly with digital users in order to create a non restricted network of customers and partners in marking, while increasing brand awareness.

2.11.1 Facebook Online Purchasing Behavior during the Covid-19 Pandemic

During the Covid-19 pandemic, more and more companies made online sales available to the world. As a result, Jones (2020) affirmed that retail sales on the digital media was greatly impacted by Covid-19, and has serious effect on e-commerce at large, with sales expected to hit $6.5 trillion by year 2023. In Northern Cyprus, online orders and payments were enhanced to accommodate everyday livelihood. Utility bills, foods, groceries, etc, were being purchased and paid for

online. Some people go on Facebook pages to learn of certain information with regards curfew, lockdowns, ad as well as the virus impact in the country. Academic learning was moved online. Students carrying out researches resorted to online data collection. All these were enhanced due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Several studies (Abiad, Arao, & Dagli, 2020; Andrienko, 2020; Bhatti, 2020; Davis, 2020; Hasanat, Hoque, Shikha, Anwar, Hamid, & Tat, 2020) showed the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on online purchasing behavior. Davis (2020) found that the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Messenger, Zoom, etc., for meetings, sales and transactions increased during the pandemic. That is to say, individuals resorted online to get their needs and businesses met. Abiad, Arao, and Dagli (2020) found that the Covid-19 compelled individuals to engage in digital media, Facebook, surfing for various products and services, and it became a daily routine.

A study by Hasanat, et al. (2020) argued that most of the challenges faced by retail sellers, which includes social distancing, movement control, delivery time, and lockdown, were made easy due to the availability of the various components of Facebook, which includes communication, information search, and marketing. Bhatti (2020) found that 52% of consumers of various goods and services avoid shopping in crowded areas, as 36% avoids shopping traditionally, but resorted online until they get corona virus vaccine. Andrienko (2020) found that the total sale of goods and services online increased due to the Covid-19 virus, because people were scared, kept social distance, avoided going out unnecessarily, and made purchases from their various homes.

2.12 Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Social networking has been in existence for an elongated time period. It is simply the process of connecting with people both new and old, and as well as expanding such connections both on individual, social, and business levels (Jain, Gupta, & Anand, 2012). Social Networking Websites include those online services that enable individuals or organizations to connect. It enables billions of individuals around the world to keep in touch, share and exchange media contents, moments and experiences. It helps companies reach their target audiences through marketing adverts, promotions, ecommerce sales, and also make their contacts available. In fact, it has become a way of life for many. Various social networking websites exists, this includes Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, Instagram, Tiktok, etc. (Jain, Gupta, & Anand, 2012), however, Facebook will be discussed.

2.12.1 Facebook

Facebook is used in the current study because it is the largest social networking platform, with over 2.7 billion active users, Instagram with 1.1 billion, Twitter with 350 million, etc. (Clement, 2020). While other social networking sites are rapidly on the rise, Facebook remained on top, as it spans across all demographics, with over 9 million users using it for advertising, and 74% users being active (Aslam, 2020). It is the mostly used and common new media site or platform that facilitates sharing of ideas, experiences, and deeper global social interaction (Yang & Brown, 2009; Sawyer & Cheng, 2012). It is the first social networking website to hit and cross 1 billion users, and currently the largest across the globe. Facebook does not only help users with the ability to connect and network with others, but also with the ability to market, promote, and sell goods and services online through ads and online shops with over 2.8 billion active subscribers as of 2020 (Barnes, 2008).

Some studies (Barnes, 2008; Smock, et al., 2011) have shown that Facebook influences consumer purchasing behavior, due to the assumption that consumers learn about brands on the new media, hence companies become smart by gaining presence on the new media to take advantage of its benefits (Barnes, 2008; Smock, Ellison, Wohn, & Lampe, 2011). Also, Hu, Liu, & Zhang (2008) posit that a link exists between positively reviewed brands on Facebook and brand consumption. That is to say, positive review can influence a consumer on purchasing, and vice versa (Hu et al., 2008). Facebook serves as a connection and communication tool among various people, especially university and college students (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). It is so influential in various societies of this contemporary world, as it provides environment for consumers and friends verses consumers and markets to interact (Hayta, 2013; Hyllegard, Ogle, Yan, & Reitz, 2011; Ladique, 2010).

Today, the Facebook aids businesses in promoting their services and brands. It enables public figures to promote their personalities. It helps people in their works of research, and in academia at large. Also, Facebook use inhibits loneliness, and satisfies behaviors that are addictive and compulsion (Barnes, 2008; Smock et al., 2011). Gallion (2010) maintained that people use the social media, Facebook, to feed their desires, wants, and needs. Since people use social networking sites a lot, it is very normal for companies and marketers to consider it as grounds for advertisement, its users as potential customers (Iyengar, Gupta, & Sangman, 2009). Even so, some of the basic use of Facebook includes communication, entertainment, and education (Whiting, & Williams, 2013).

2.13 Automobile Market of Young Generation Adults

The young generation adult is the focal point of the current study, which includes the millennial generation and generation Z. According to LeDuc (2019) Millennial Generation are people born within the years of 1977 to 1995, while Generation-Z are people born between 1996 to 2015 (LeDuc, 2019). Other generations include the Traditionalists, who were born 1945 downward, Baby Boomers, born from the years 1946 to 1964, and the Generation-X, who were born within 1965 and 1976 (LeDuc, 2019). Although it is often said that the millennial generation are becoming less interested in automobiles, sales figures according to Polgar (2020) showed that automobiles that are rich in technologies, luxury, and practical when driving are very much often bought by Millennial and generation-z.

The young generation adults love luxury automobiles such as Audi, Mercedes Benz, BMW, and Toyota. However, this does not mean they do not purchase smaller cars with low fuel consumption which may also include light duty pickup trucks and small SUVs which may also be considered under the luxury segment (Polgar, 2020). Polgar (2020) further posits that small SUV crossovers and automobiles are increasingly being bought and driven by the young adult generation. While it seems that they would purchase small and practical automobiles due to their budget and quick lifestyle, some leading premium brands in the automobile industry such as Audi, Mercedes Benz, Volvo, BMW, Alfa Romeo, Honda, Toyota, Hyundai, Nissan, and Kia keep refining their luxury brands into something even more stylish, sporty so they can attract the young adult generation customers (Polgar, 2020). That is to say, both the millennial and generation-z love and are attracted to beautiful and luxury automobiles.

According to Schrager (2021), there are about 75 million healthy millennial generations in the United States alone, which is almost the same size when compared to the baby boomer generation. Millennial are seen to be the wealthiest generation since up until now, with up $3.4 trillion as collective annual income by 2018. Hence up to 25% of new automobiles sold in the United States as of 2012 were bought by millennial, with the figure expected to double by 2022. Both the generation-z and the millennial, which are considered the younger adult generation, do not think of an automobile as something of conveyance which gets them from one point to the other. Instead, they think of it as something of status, a way to let the world know they have arrived. Hence their ideal automobile is fun, stylish, practical, capable, and refined. By this, one could infer that the young generation adults think of their cars as an integral part of their lives which keeps them connected to other essential things.

Millennial who are older love automobiles as much as generation-z, and are both technology savvy, and have unique needs when it comes to automobile brands. A recent survey by Polgar (2020) with some 8000 participants figured out some very important aspect for a fast-growing young generation market. The survey found affordability and quality on top, followed by interesting automobile technologies, sustainability and good customer support. Up to 70% of both generation-z and millennial respondents say rich features on infotainment are very important when choosing or purchasing an automobile. They want and appreciate such features as navigation system, satellite, Bluetooth, and mobile Integration; hence technology has become something relevant in automobiles (Schrager, 2013).

When it comes to brand loyalty, Schrager (2013) asserts that the Millennial Generation and Generation Z are prone towards brand loyalty just like the baby

boomer generation; however, their trust is something difficult to reach or lose. That is to say, on average their trust is difficult to gain when it comes to automobiles, with only 41% being likely to recommend an automobile brand they use in contrast to 56% of the Baby Boomers Generation. With regards to young generation adult automobile purchase motivation, Survey by Executive Summary (2013) showed that Generation Z and Millennial Generation often get their first automobiles based on recommendation from family and friends. They depend mostly on word-of-mouth recommendations. They are also most likely to visit more dealerships than older generation adults before making an automobile purchase.

2.13.1 International University Students in North Cyprus

International university students in North Cyprus span from students from almost every nation of the world. According to a statistics release by TRNC Statistical Institution (2019), there are approximately 111,188 Turkish and international students studying in Northern Cyprus as of 2019/2020 academic session, attending the various 21 universities and colleges in Northern Cyprus, which mainly includes but not limited to Eastern Mediterranean University, Near East University, Cyprus International University, Girne American University, etc (Daily, 2019).

2.13.2 Characteristics, Habits, and Lifestyles

International university students in North Cyprus are characterized by both males and females, singles and married, and from all walks of life, who are either at undergraduate, post-graduate, or doctorate academic levels. Automobile purchasing has become a trendy way of life especially for international students. The average international student has the habit of acquiring an exotic luxury car ranging from BMW, Benz, Audi, Mazda, Range Rover, etc. This habit did not exist as of 10 years ago because very few international students had regularly owned or rented cars.

Another habit that exists among international students is that most of them make purchases from Facebook markets by checking the latest uploads of cars for sale. Particularly, most international students review posts from Facebook, and websites such as Mezunum Satiyorum Kibris, a purchase and sell online blog to know the latest second hand cars in the market.

Moreover, the lifestyle of international students in TRNC in relation to purchasing of vehicles can be explained through three elements namely expensive, lavish, and fast. Students on the island like to purchase expensive items ranging from shoes, clothes, food and cars which they lavishly exhibit on social media platforms including Facebook. This is because the pre-intentions of these purchases are influenced by what others portray on their social media platforms as well. In other words, most of the international students follow one celebrity or the other on Facebook, therefore his or her lifestyle is also bound to fall in line with these celebrities. Some international students also live life on a fast lane by going too fast food eateries, high end nightlife and so on, as opposed to the conservative style of living in our homes of origin.

2.14 The Uses and Gratifications Theory

One of many theories which explain the connection between consumers and the new media is the Uses and Gratifications theory (U&G). It takes deep insight at the consumer as an audience, but focuses nothing on the effects of the new media on consumers. It also has its focus on how individuals behave towards the new media or how they consume new media contents to their satisfaction. The U&G theory shows that new media consumers, e.g. Facebook are goal oriented and goal getters, as they make choices that are intentional when selecting a specific platform and using it to any desirable means (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). The brain behind the creation of

the U&G theory was Lasswell (1948). This was later built upon by Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973). This theory is widely used by communication researchers to explain why people use a preferred new media, e.g. Facebook, and the benefit they derive from using it.

Katz, et al. (1973) maintained that the new media provides five basic needs namely, cognitive needs, tension release needs, affective needs, individual and social integrative needs. To begin with, they illustrated those consumers who use the new media, e.g. Facebook to stay informed on trending topics occurring not just in their geographical region but also around the globe as gratifying their cognitive needs. Secondly, consumers who connect emotionally with content of new media for pleasure are fulfilling their affective needs. Thirdly, consumers who use it as a means of escape from stress or boredom, e.g., playing a song or a movie are gratifying their tension release needs. Fourthly, consumers who use it to create or solidify their identity are satisfying their individual integrative needs. Lastly, consumers, who use it to socialize or interact with family, friends, businesses, and organizations, are gratifying their social integrative needs.

2.14.1 Uses and Gratifications of Facebook

New media today help businesses in advertising their brands and services. It also aid people of statuses such as celebrities to promote their images. It helps researchers in their field of study. Also one can say that the social media use reduces or eliminates boredom, loneliness, and satisfies addictive behavior compulsions. Gallion (2010) stated that individuals use the new media, widely to fulfill their needs, wants, and desires. Because lots of individuals commit their time to social media sites, it is very normal for companies and marketers to consider it as grounds for advertisement, and its users are potentials customers (Iyengar, Gupta, & Sangman, 2009) Even so, some

of the basic use of Facebook includes communication, entertainment and education (Whiting, & Williams, 2013).

(a) Communication: One of the major reasons why individuals use Facebook is to take part in social activities on the Internet or even public debate. Facebook enables users to partake in many things. As found by Whiting and Williams (2013), 89% of Facebook users use it for social connections, and interaction with family, friends, businesses and organizations. On marketing interaction, Stelzner (2010) on social Media Marketing Industry Report found that a lot of marketers use Facebook to interact with consumers, and up to 81% of them agreed they would use it more regularly. Findings of this study reveal that the new media, Facebook, provides marketers with voice of ways to interact and communicate with their colleagues and consumers. It also individualizes products and help marketers and companies disseminate information more conveniently.

(b) Entertainment: Another reason people use Facebook is because of its amazing capability in enabling users discover, share, and consume contents such as graphics, music, and videos (Leong & Wright, 2011). These contents consumed by users gratify certain desires or make them happy. Thanks to the rapid growth of technology integration into Facebook. Whiting and Williams (2013) also stated that 68% of Facebook users use it for games, gossips, jokes, and hilarious interaction.

(c) Education: Facebook platform enables people to learn, and teach themselves and other. Whiting and Williams (2013) expressed that a lot of people use Facebook for self taught studies and education. LaRue (2012) argued that academic discussions that are meaningful are being engaged on by Facebook users, which can help create

proper guidance for educational and professional choices in life. People can search for educational articles and information about brands as well in order to obtain more information to improve learning (Alias, Siraj, Daud, & Hussin, 2013). On brand marketing and recommendations, Whiting and Williams (2013) argue that Facebook allows consumers to search for information about the brand they want to purchase, and educate others on their experiences on the brand. A research study by the Global Web Index (2012) on influence of the new media buyer behaviors found that 89% of consumers learn online about the brand before making a purchase, 72% educate others about the brands they have tried, and 62% go online to educate themselves about the brand (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

2.15 Diffusion of Innovation Theory

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory is frequently viewed as an important framework of change for implementing, advancing, and directing innovations of technology which gives birth to new techniques, ideas, and technologies that cover the needs that exists among all groups of adopters. Also, the significance in peer networking and communication are highlighted in the procedures of adoption. Plainly, the diffusion of innovation can be defined as the process that takes place as individuals embrace a new product, idea, and philosophy practice. Rogers (1962) explained this procedure, and emphasized that in most cases few individuals are initially open to adopting, and eventually adopt the use of new idea of innovation. As words are being spread by these primary innovators and more people becomes open to it, then critical mass becomes developed. And with the passing of time, the idea, technology or product of innovation gets diffused into the population at large, until it they become saturated.

Roger (2003) described diffusion as the procedure in which innovation takes certain routes over a period time, and spreads within and across members of a social structure or system. This is a practice, where an object or an idea that is seen as new or novel by individuals, group of individuals, or other adopters is accepted into the population (Rogers, 2003). Rogers (1962) established five categories of innovation adopters as innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. In other cases, a sixth category is added, which is non-adopters. These primary five categories are explained in the bell-shaped curve image as seen in figure 2.7. More so, a percentage estimate of each category adopters were established, which also looks like the proportions that are seen in a traditional bell-curve.
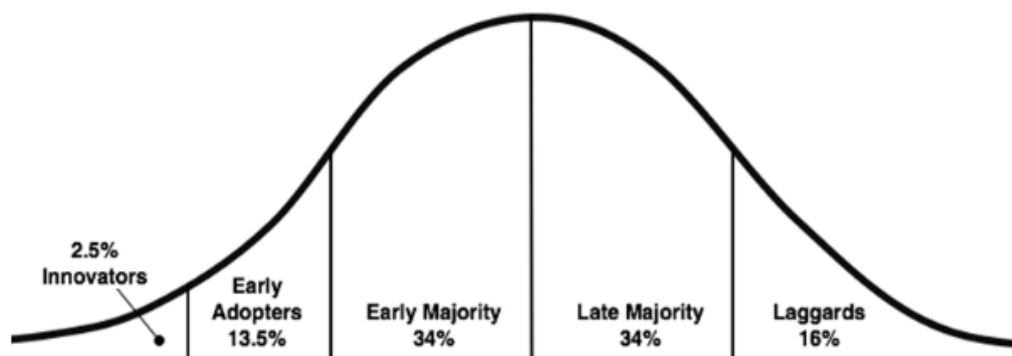
Figure 2.7: Diffusion of Innovation Theory Curve (Roger, 2003).

(a) Innovators: People that are often the first to use an innovation. These people are adventurous, interested and entertain new ideas. They are risk takers, and are usually the ones who develop or start new ideas. Nothing really needs to be done to make an innovation appealing to this set of people.

(b) Early Adopters: These set of people are in the frontline, and are seen as opinion leaders. They love and enjoy roles of leadership, are adaptive, and embrace

opportunities of change. They know that change is a constant thing, that there is a need for it, and are never uncomfortable when it comes to adopting new ideas. In order to make an innovation appealing to this population all that is necessary are implementation information sheets, and user manuals. Convincing information is not necessary to sway them towards a change.

(c) Early Majority: They rarely take the leadership in innovations. However, they may easily adopt new set of ideas before every other individual does. But then, they need to see evidence that an innovation in functional or works before they can adopt it. To appeal to this set of people, success stories, testimonies, and evidence of the effectiveness of innovation needs to be seen.

(d) Late Majority: This population set rarely change, even with testimonies until they can see a lot of people are adopting the innovation, or that the innovation has been used or tried by the masses. To appeal to this population, relevant information on how many other individuals using or have tried and adopted the innovation needs to be provided.

(e) Laggards: This group of people is conservative in nature, and is bound by tradition. They almost do not change and rarely adopt an innovation. They are the hardest set of individuals to bring on board. Strategies to make an innovation appealing to them include pressure from other groups of adopters, fear appeals, and statistics of adopter.

2.16 The Relationship between Facebook Use and Automobile Brand Loyalty

To own a competitive brand, every business ought to be well grounded in the new media, this because it is an effective use of resource, and time. Above traditional marketing methods, the new media marketing serves as better ground for interactions between organizations and customers in order to strengthen brand loyalty (Jackson, 2011). Facebook as a new media has over 955 million around the globe, while the new media has become so influential in various societies of this contemporary world, as it provides environment for consumers and friends verses consumers and markets to interact (Hayta, 2013; Hyllegard, Ogle, Yan, & Reitz, 2011; Ladique, 2010). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) maintained that if companies want to remain in business, they should subscribe to the new media since it can connect people and provide e-commerce with marketing benefits.

Several studies (Abu-Rumman & Alhadid, 2014; Srivastava & Tiwari, 2011; Sasikumar & Sriram, 2013; Monga, Chaudhary & Tripathi, 2012) have explored the connection between the new media and brand loyalty. Abu-Rumman and Alhadid (2014) investigated the effect the new media has on brand equity. The hypothesis of the study was that there is no connection between the new media marketing and brand loyalty; however, they found that a strong relationship exists between brand loyalty and new media marketing. By inference, the excellence of a product is related to consumers thought and experience towards brand. Srivastava and Tiwari (2011) on brand loyalty for mainstream automobiles found that during the process of purchase, customers think more about brand name, safety and interior comfort.

Sasikaumar, & Sriram (2013) investigated the influencing factors on brand loyalty on different automobiles brands, including sport utility vehicles, and multi-utility vehicles. This study also found individual perception in terms of reliability of product, trustworthiness, trendy appeal, monetary factors, and promotions influences consumer behavior. Additionally, Monga, et al. (2012) tries to explore customers' thoughts and factors that might influence loyalty on some selected automobiles and found the new media recommendations and consumer's perception on automobile features are influencing factors on brand loyalty.

2.17 Purchasing Behavior and Digital Marketing Communication within Facebook

The new media has made it possible for users to exchange ideas, give and get suggestions, and ask for help before purchasing product brands. Consumers are now co-producer of value, because they are becoming experienced on various products and services, since the Internet allows free access to a world of information (Mimi, Jansen, & Chowdhury, 2011). Users as co-producers is reflected on the features of Facebook that enables consumers to send adverts to their friends online, or comment on adverts, which in turn connects them indirectly to companies. Even so, companies are becoming smarter on ways to impact behavior of consumers towards their brands by gaining presence in the New Media and taking advantage of its benefits which .includes social interaction, professional advancement, and entertainment (Smock et al., 2011). Several studies (Bilal, Ahmed & Shahzad, 2014; Darban & Li, 2014; Haciefendioglu, 2011; Hu, Liu, & Zhang, 2008) have established that a relationship exist between consumer behavior and social media.

On the role of recommendations about a brand on consumer behavior, Hu, Liu, & Zhang (2008), in a study to decipher how product managers can utilize interactions on social media to improve recognition of brand and increase sales, found that the online groups users admire and belong to has the power to change their behavior towards a brand. Darban and Li (2014) while investigating the impacts of Facebook on consumer behavior, found that at the stage of information search as shown figure 2.1, recommendations and comments impact consumer behavior. Haciefendioglu (2011) in a study to explore the importance of the new media on advertising found that consumer behavior is significantly influenced by the recommendations and opinions of others on the brand they want to purchase. However, limited information to compare products may lead to purchase risk, hence suggestions on the new media becomes an important tool for establishing a purchasing decision.

Additionally, Gursakal (2009) posits that the tools of new media create an environment where product brands may be criticized or praised. Considerably, the new media serves as access to information; hence it significantly affects consumer behavior. More so, Bilal, Ahmed, & Shahzad (2014) found that the increased interaction in the new media, e.g., Facebook, have positive effect on consumer behavior, due its strong implication on interaction. These findings become useful because they prove that suggestions on the new media have an influence on consumer behavior. Also, they are the best tools for sending messages about products and services, as a result making room for bigger representation of products and administration of companies (Dunne, Lawlor & Rowley, 2010). Despite many studies on the influence on product suggestions on the new media, no study found a negative correlation.

2.18 Moderating Effect of Self-Esteem on Automobile Purchasing Behavior

Psychologists over the years have developed theories of motivation; Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model as shown in figure 2.7, is one that is employed at large in marketing. This is because it illustratively demonstrates how motivation works, to explain the ways need can motivate behavior. Jansson-Boyd (2010) asserts that Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs stresses on how the needs of humans can become the basic influence of consumption. Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs which he divided according to their level of significance which includes psychological needs, safety needs, social needs, recognition needs, and self-actualization needs illustrates that consumer behavior is based on the level a consumer had attained or wanting to attain, and as a result the hierarchy of needs can successfully fit the market segmentation of advertising.

According to Maslow (1970), the highest needs of individuals are social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs are at the top part of the hierarchy. Howbeit, physiological and safety needs which are the basic needs are at the bottom. Swann (1983) posits that individuals seek ways to verify or improve their sense of self-worth whether as an individual or in a group, they often avoid situations that would further limit or affect their self-esteem, hence the seek out ways increase it by engaging in opportunities that makes this possible. Similarly, Cast and Burke (2002) asserts that the need to better self-esteem can produce a direction for a behavior. That is to say, it can serve as a motivating factor towards engaging in certain behavior, e.g., purchasing behavior, that improves self-esteem. More so, in research (Hiscock, Macintyre, Ellaway, & Kearns, 2002) that was based on interviews of 43 adults in

Scotland, they found that owning a private automobile as opposed to using the public means of transportation provides sense of self-worth and self-actualization.

Additionally, research by Cast and Burke (2002) on the psychology of luxury car buyers where she investigated the relationship between luxury automobile purchasing behavior and status symbol or self-esteem found that acquiring a luxury automobile can serve to increase the status symbol of individuals who engage in such behavior. She further posits that companies who want to show success get their employees to drive around luxury automobiles as a way to boost their self-esteem when visiting clients. Even so, the phenomenon of purchasing luxury to boost self-esteem is called compensatory consumption. This is a type of purchase behavior that individuals engage in when they are faced with adverse life events or psychological threats that affects their ego (Cast & Burke, 2002).

2.19 Moderating Effect of Convenience on Automobile Consumer Behavior

Owning a private automobile has become an achievement for most people. This is because it does not only boost self-esteem as explained in previous subheading, but it also provides opportunity for autonomy and individual control (Marsh & Collett, 1986). Similarly, several other studies (Hamilton, Jenkins, & Gregory, 1991; Hiscock, Macintyre, Ellaway, & Kearns, 2002; Root, Boardman, & Fielding, 1996; Stokes & Hallett, 1992) investigated the importance of private automobiles over public transports and found that public automobiles are usually lacking status, comfort and convenience. Additionally, in research (Hiscock, et al., 2002) that was based on interviews of 43 adults in Scotland found that owning a private automobile as opposed to using the public means of transportation provides convenience,

flexibility, social, and physical safety. They, however, argued that such experiences can be mitigated or base of individual lifestyle and circumstances.

Additionally, some other studies (Hamilton, Jenkins, & Gregory, 1991; Rabbitt, Carmichael, Jones, & Holland, 1996) although with adults that are older, found that owning an automobile helps with reaching or accessing places that public transports cannot, hence about 90% of adults within the study agreed that if they give up driving, it would be inadequate and inhibit their mobility and independence, because depending on other people to reach certain destinations can sometimes be daunting. More so, acquiring a private automobile helps individuals not to constantly adjust their travel schedules to others, as it comes with the benefit of independence and self-reliance (Hamilton, et al., 1991).

2.20 Moderating Effects of Age on Automobile Purchasing Behavior

Age is an example of an individual factor of consumer behavior, and has become an important variable. Its relevance in the study of consumer behavior is underlined in some studies (Czara, Blascovich, Hammond, & Swede, 1989; Harrison & Rainer, 1992; Hubona & Kennick, 1996; Trocchia & Janda, 2000; Venkatesh, Morris, & Ackerman, 2000), which reckoned that computer mastery is easier for younger people than it is for older people. Individuals who are younger often have more experience with the web, and believes it is very useful, when compared to older individuals who believe it is very risky and lay more emphasis on the belief of self-produced results (Venkatesh, et al., 2000), as a result the obstacle surrounding the growth of ecommerce which includes, defiance to change, lack of experience in IT, and their demand to try products before purchase makes older individuals doubt online shopping (Trocchia & Janda, 2000). They maintained that Internet users who

are older lack experience in online shopping, hence they are kept from estimating the benefits of the Internet in terms of shopping, hence participation is hindered.

Few studies (Barnes, 2008; Chu, 2011) established a correlation between the use of the new media and age. Barnes (2008) found that 70% of participants of the study use the new media to examine companies when trying to purchase products. He found that consumers deem information on the new media to be of small importance, however, study respondents who were under ages 25 deemed information to be of great importance. By inference, younger individuals are more affected by reviews or recommendations over the new media about certain products they liked. Negative reviews reduce sales, as positive ones boost sales among younger people. In respect, Chu (2011) confirms that the attitude of college age users of Facebook is most favorable towards the new media marketing and advertising and has become the ever-increasing demographic for businesses. This shows that the new media platform is becoming a potentially favorable environment for marketing campaigns online, specifically for companies and businesses with younger individuals as target market.

2.21 Moderating Effects of Family Income on Automobile Purchasing Behavior

The Internet has become a channel that is open to everyone irrespective of their socioeconomic backgrounds or purchasing power. Family income is an example of social factor of consumer behavior, and as a moderating factor when considering the effects of the new media on consumer behavior, some studies (Allard, Banin, & Chebat, 2009; Al-Somali, Gholami, & Clegg, 2009; Miyazaki & Fernandez, 2001; Raijas & Tuunainen, 2001; Lu, Yu, Liu, & Yao, J. 2003; Serenko, Turel, & Yol, 2006; Shin, 2009) showed that income is a relevant characteristic that may limit the

use of ecommerce, and also a moderating variable of shopping behavior among Internet users.

Miyazaki & Fernandez (2001) when investigating the role of income on purchasing behavior among social media users, found that higher income influences lower perception of implicit risks when making purchases online, hence the recommendations and demands for products over the Internet are affected. Also, finding showed that online transactions, usefulness, simplified use, and self-efficacy perceptions are discouraged by low income, and is as a result of the inability to fight financial losses. However, this should improve if income increases. Also, considering that the income of Internet users has great impact on their first use of ecommerce and the Internet, and as demonstrated by (Lu et al., 2003; Hubona & Kennick, 1996) that individuals that earn more have less perception of risk. However, the results contradict their finding in that while income may be attributed to social or professional statuses of the individuals, different categories of professional classes are linked to difference in levels of computer, and Internet skills.

Furthermore, the differences in professional statuses become a moderating effect, as they produce differences in influencing consumer behaviors or attitudes with regards to IT (Chau & Hu, 2002; Hubona & Kennick, 1996). By inference, when users of the new media acquire skills or experience relevant to IT or technology, income no longer influences their consumption behavior. However, a study by Al-Somali, et al. (2009) made a contradictory finding that risk attitude, perceptions, and consumer behavior of experienced individuals that engage in IT related stuffs are not significantly influenced by their income.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodology part covers the research methodology, which also includes the research design, procedure, instruments, population and sampling, methods of data collection, and validity and reliability of current study. (i) Research design helps to understand what kind of research is being carried out, (ii) population and sample gives insight on the number and basic demography of participants, (iii) procedure highlights on the steps involved in carrying out current research, (iv) methods of data collection shows the different ways data were collected for the current study, (v) instruments includes all the measures used in gathering information from the respondents, (vi) population and sampling includes the demographic information of participants of the current study, (vii) validity and reliability section shows the reliability, as well as the internal consistencies of the questionnaire within the current study, and (viii) hypotheses.

3.1 Research Design

For the current study, quantitative research design was employed through survey questionnaires. Earl (2010) defined quantitative research design which may be descriptive or experimental as a type of survey that seeks to establish associations between two or more study variables. The current study is a quantitative research design, because it tries to understand the associations between Facebook and automobile purchasing behavior among international students in Northern Cyprus. For example, automobiles are expensive, and are designed with a lot of preferences

based on individual requirements, and as a result, humans are expected to be highly complicated and unpredictable when making a purchase decision on automobiles (Alsaif, 2016).

As the current study is descriptive, questionnaires were given to international students studying at various universities in Northern Cyprus, regardless of whether or not they own an automobile. This was done after they had been briefed on the objectives and aims of the research study. Online questionnaires were distributed on the various social media due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, and the shift from traditional mode of study to online classes. International students who participated in the study were asked to fill an informed consent form. The current study which seeks to examine the impacts of Facebook on automobile brand loyalty and consumer behavior among international students in Northern Cyprus has four independent variables (Facebook, reviews/recommendations on Facebook, age, and family income), and two dependent variables (brand loyalty, and consumer behavior).

3.2 Population and Sample

The participants of the current study were random international students in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, TRNC. A population sample of four hundred 400 (133 females, 267 males) (M= 1.67, SD= 0.472) international students of 2020/2021 spring semester were used. They were all above seventeen, 17, years of age (M= 2.56, SD= 0.961), regardless of their socio-economic background, academic departments and academic levels. Participants include both automobile and non-automobile owners currently studying at a university in Northern Cyprus. The participants were computer literates, and at large experienced new media users, who contributed their thoughts and opinions to some brand pages on Facebook.

Specifically, they were all members of the international community who are users of Facebook as a social networking site.

According to a statistics release by TRNC Statistical Institution (2019), there are approximately 111,188 Turkish and international students studying in Northern Cyprus as of 2019/2020 academic session, attending the various 21 universities and colleges in Northern Cyprus. Additionally, purposive sampling technique was used for the current study, because the sample size consists of only international students. Even so, the aim of purposive sampling technique is specifically to focus on some features of a population in order to best answer research questions (Crossman, 2018). The research is also a case study because it is an intensive study on international students in Northern Cyprus. Gustafsson (2017) defined case study is defined as an in-depth study about a group of persons, or a person, which seeks to generalize over the population at large that share similar attributes, e.g., international students.

3.3 Procedure

Before commencement of data collection, ethical approval was taken from the Research and Ethical Committee, Institute of Graduate Studies, Eastern Mediterranean University. The current study sought the convenient ways to recruit participants, which includes online distributions of questionnaires on social networking sites, including Facebook, Whatsapp, and Snapchat. Data was gathered from the first week of July to the last week of July, 2021. 400 (133 females, 267 males) participants were given a seven category self-reported questionnaire with forty questions in total which was in English, and were advised to fill it out completely, since the questions were not many, and on average, took approximately 3 minutes got a 100 percent response rate.

The questionnaire included a 5-point Likert scale, which includes strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. Upon completion of questionnaires, a debrief form which contains more information about the current study, a thank you to participant, and an opportunity for participant to discontinue in the study was given to the participant. They were also allowed to ask questions with regards to the study. A computer software program known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences, SPSS, and version 23 was used to compute and analyze data.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

The data for the current study was randomly obtained online from students currently studying in the various universities in Northern Cyprus through online survey questionnaires. The questionnaires were developed and translated online into Google forms, free online based software that enables people to create quizzes, surveys, and questionnaires (Christa, 2014). The questionnaires were pegged at 400 limited responses; that is to say, it stops taking responses once the number of responses reached 400. A web link was in turn generated via Google forms, and can be accessed by anyone who has the link. Links to the Google form questionnaires were distributed on few social platforms which include Facebook, Snapchat, and Whatspp, as course mates, friends and friends of friends were implored to fill out the online survey, and to help redistribute the link to the Google forms.

On the completion of 400 responses, responses were exported to Microsoft Excel, a computer based spreadsheet program that arranges data in rows and columns, and can be manipulated through the use of formulas that allows for mathematical functions on the data being processed (Britannica, 2019). In order to guarantee a well-represented population for the current study, participants were approved

irrespective of their socioeconomic and education backgrounds. However, they were asked whether or not they are international students studying in Northern Cyprus. Since there are only 40 questions, and must be filled online, it took approximately 3 minutes to answer, and participants were advised to desist from filling the questionnaire whenever they feel so, just at the beginning of the questionnaire. More so, handling out and collation of questionnaires which were in English took approximately four weeks, between the first week and the last week of July, 2021.

On carrying out statistical analysis for the study data, a couple of things were ensured to make sure that the questionnaires and data measures what they are supposed to measure. Firstly, it was ensured that all respondents of the current study were all international students, and that they are all Facebook users. Secondly, Cronbach's alpha test was carried out on SPSS to ensure that the questionnaires are internally consistent and reliable. And according to the test result, the questionnaires has Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.994, 0.984, 0.907, 0.868, and 0.834 respectively. This shows a good level of reliability for the questionnaires. Even so, exclusion criteria for this research were ages below 18, and non-international students in Northern Cyprus. This was achieved by asking supporting questions in the questionnaire. However, both automobile owners and non-owners were included in this research.

3.5 Instruments

To explore the effects of Facebook on automobile consumer behavior among international students, several questionnaires were developed. Online data collection was used due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Questionnaires were distributed to exactly four hundred, 400, Facebook users who were both computer literates and experienced new media subscribers, and the respondents agreed to fill the

questionnaire. The questionnaires were used to access participants' demography, perception of Facebook interactivity, and its benefits. Participants were told they were participating in research work but were not told the hypotheses of the research.

The seven categories of questionnaires were employed by the current study to complete the collection of data, (a) demographic questionnaire, (b) consumer satisfaction survey, (c) brand loyalty survey, (d) Facebook and automobile brand loyalty survey, (e) Facebook reviews and automobile consumer behavior survey, (f) self-esteem and automobile purchase survey, (g) improved mobility and automobile purchase survey. Questions were asked to reveal (i) relationship between Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior, (ii) relationship between Facebook recommendations or reviews on automobile purchasing behavior (iii) relationship between automobile purchasing behavior and self-esteem boost, (iv) relationship between automobile purchasing behavior and travel convenience, (v) relationship between age and automobile purchasing behavior, and (v) relationship between family income and automobile purchasing behavior among international students in Northern Cyprus.

3.5.1 Demographic Questions

Demographic questionnaire was employed to gather the participants' background information, such as gender, age, nationality, employment status, education level, family income, subscription to Facebook, use of Facebook, automobile purchase status, spendable amount on an automobile, and choice of automobile (see appendix A). There were eleven questions in this section of the survey. This includes (1) Age. (2) Gender. (3) Are you an international student in TRNC? (4) Current education level. (5) Yearly family income. (6) Do you use Facebook? (7) How best can you

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describe your use of Facebook? (8) Do you own a car? (9) How much did you or would you pay for a car? (10) What is your choice of automobile brand?

3.5.2 Brand Loyalty Questions

The brand loyalty survey was designed for this study in order to gain insight of whether participants are satisfied with their choice of automobile or not, and also to control consistency in participants' responses. To investigate brand loyalty, 5 questions with either yes or no answers were asked for this section, namely: (11) Do you trust your choice? (12) Do you consider this brand reliable? (13) Would you keep choosing this brand over others? (14) Would you easily switch to a different brand? (15) Would you recommend this brand to someone? Participants were made to answer a yes or no (see appendix B). This survey has a Cronbach alpha of 0.893, which means it scores high on reliability tests.

3.5.3 Facebook Usefulness Questions

The survey for brand loyalty was designed so as to understand how likely the participants of the current study are to trust and remain loyal to the choice of automobile brands. To investigate brand loyalty, 5 statements were made, namely: (16) Facebook has useful information on automobile brands (17) Facebook is good advert tool for automobile brands (18) Facebook has a lot reviews on automobiles (19) Facebook helps one stay updated on automobile trends (20) Facebook makes sharing ideas about automobiles easier. Participants were made to answer on a 5-point Likert scale which includes, strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly disagree (see appendix C). This survey has a Cronbach alpha of 0.963, which means it scores high on reliability tests.

3.5.4 Facebook Reviews and Recommendations Questions

This survey was designed to study the relationship between Facebook review, recommendation, and adverts on automobiles and automobile consumer behavior. To investigate the association between Facebook reviews and automobile consumer behavior, participants were asked to answer 6 questions on a 5-point Likert scale which includes, strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. Questions include (21) Facebook reviews on automobiles can influence purchase (22) Facebook recommendations on automobiles are helpful (23) Facebook reviews can help one choose automobiles wisely (24) Good reviews can positively influence purchasing behavior (25) Bad reviews can negatively influence purchasing behavior (see appendix D). This survey is highly reliable because it has an excellent Cronbach alpha of 0.958.

3.5.5 Purchasing Behavior Questions

This section of the questionnaire was created to investigate the processes of purchasing behavior among international students in Northern Cyprus. To investigate the association between Facebook reviews and automobile consumer behavior, participants were asked to answer 6 questions on a 5-point Likert scale which includes, strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. Questions includes (26) It is crucial to look online for information on automobiles (27) Looking online can influence good decisions (28) Online reviews are important in purchasing decisions (29) Alternative brands should be considered before a decision (30) Online extensive research on automobiles are important (see appendix E). This survey is highly reliable because it has an excellent Cronbach alpha of 0.845.

3.5.6 Self-Esteem Questions

The self-esteem questions were designed to investigate the relationship between need for self-esteem and automobile purchase/ownership. To investigate the association between self-esteem and automobile purchase, participants of the current study were asked to fill in answers for 6 questions on a strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree on a 5-point Likert scale. Answered questions includes, (31) Owning an automobile can make one feel special (32) Owning a car can improve one's social class, (33) Owning an automobile creates one respect and dignity, (34) Owning a car can help one meet new people (35) Owning an automobile creates new relationships (see appendix F). This part of the survey has an alpha of 0.875 on Cronbach alpha, which means it scored well on the reliability test.

3.5.7 Convenience and Automobile Purchasing Behavior Questions

The improved mobility and automobile purchase questions were developed to understand the relationship between need for mobility and automobile purchase/ownership. To investigate the association between improved mobility and automobile purchase, participants were asked to answer 6 questions on a 5-point Likert scale which includes, strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. Questions presented includes, (36) Owning a car can make school fun, (37) Owning a car can help one meet up on appointments, (38) Owning a car can help one see new places at convenience, (39) Owning a car can create freedom to go places at any time, (40) Owning a car is preferred to public transportation (see appendix G). This survey has a good Cronbach alpha of 0.933, hence it is very reliable.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Cronbach's alpha test was carried out on SPSS to check for reliability and internal consistency of every categorical question in the questionnaire. Analysis of Cronbach's alpha level shows that an alpha score of .7 and above shows internal consistency and good reliability, while alpha levels below .7 are poor and unacceptable (Field, 2005). Below are tables to show the reliability and internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Table 3.1: Reliability Statistics

Scales	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Automobile brand loyalty	.893	.854	5
Facebook usefulness	.963	.963	5
Facebook reviews/recommendations	.958	.959	5
Purchasing behavior	.845	.888	5
Self-esteem	.875	.890	5
Convenience	.933	.936	5

3.7 Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant relationship between the use of Facebook and automobile brand loyalty.

H2: There is a positive relationship between automobile reviews/recommendations on Facebook and automobile purchasing behavior among international students.

H3: There is a positive correlation between self-esteem boost and automobile purchasing behavior among international students.

H4: There is a positive correlation between convenience and automobile purchasing behavior among international students.

H5: There is a positive correlation between automobile consumer behavior and the ages of international students.

H6: There is a positive correlation between automobile consumer behavior and yearly family income of international students.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section outlines the frequency distributions for sections A to F of the research questionnaire, and in relation to the descriptive statistics of responses entered in the questionnaire. It also includes the Pearson correlation tests correlation tests which serves to see whether relationships exist between the various variables within the hypothesis tastings (Pathak, 2020), such as (i) Facebook use and automobile brand loyalty, (ii) Facebook reviews/recommendations on automobiles and automobile purchasing behavior, (iii)self-esteem boost and automobile purchasing behavior, (iv) convenience and automobile purchasing behavior, (v) automobile purchasing behavior and age, and lastly, (v) automobile purchasing behavior and yearly family income on the influence of Facebook on automobile brand loyalty and purchasing behavior among international students. All data in this section were processed on the computer statistical software, SPSS, version 25.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=400)

Variables	Total	
	N	%
Age		
18 to 21	59	14.8
22 to 25	136	34.0
26 to 29	129	32.3
30 and above	76	19.0
Gender		
Female	133	33.3
Male	267	66.8
Are you an international student?		
Yes	400	100.0
No	0	0.0
Current education level		
Bachelor	123	30.8
Master	183	45.8
PhD	94	23.5
Yearly family income (rate in Pounds)		
10,000 and below	28	7.0
11,000 to 20,000	93	23.3
21,000 to 40,000	193	48.3
41,000 and above	86	21.5
Do you use Facebook?		
Yes	400	100.0
No	0	0.0
How best can you describe your use of Facebook?		
Communication	174	43.5
Entertainment	82	20.5
Education/Info Search	144	36.0
Do you own a car?		
Yes	120	30.0
No	280	70.0
How did or would you pay for a car? (price in Pounds)		
10,000 and below	68	17.0
11,000 to 20,000	116	29.0
21,000 to 40,000	170	42.5
41,000 and above	46	11.5

4.1 Frequency Distributions Analysis

Table 4.2: Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 to 21	59	14.8	14.8	14.8
	22 to 25	136	34.0	34.0	48.8
	26 to 29	129	32.3	32.3	81.0
	30 and above	76	19.0	19.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2 outlines the frequency distribution of the age of participants on Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students among international students. 14.8% respondents responded that they were between the ages of 18 and 21, 34% respondents were between the ages of 22 and 25, 32.3% respondents answered that they were between the ages of 26 to 29 years old, while 19% respondents were ages between 30 and above.

Table 4.3: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	133	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Male	267	66.8	66.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3 above outlines the frequency distribution of the gender of respondents in relation to Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students among international students. 33.3% respondents were females, while 66.8% were males.

Table 4.4: Are you an international student?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	400	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4.4 above is an exclusion criterion for non-international students, and outlines the frequency distribution of the nationality of respondents in relation to Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students among international students. All respondents, 100%, of this study are international students from various countries, and of course, excluding Cyprus and Turkey.

Table 4.5: Current education level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bachelor	123	30.8	30.8	30.8
	Master	183	45.8	45.8	76.5
	PhD	94	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.5 above outlines the frequency distribution of the current educational level of respondents in relation to Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students among international students. 30.8% respondents were students currently studying at bachelors' level, 45.8% respondents were Masters' students, while 23.5% were PhD students.

Table 4.6: Yearly family income (rate in Pounds)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10,000 and below	28	7.0	7.0	7.0
	11,000 to 20,000	93	23.3	23.3	30.3
	21,000 to 40,000	193	48.3	48.3	78.5
	41,000 and above	86	21.5	21.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.6 above is the frequency distribution of the yearly family income of respondents in relation to Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students among international students. 7% respondents had families who earned below 10,000 Pounds and below per year, 23.3% respondents had families who earned between 11,000and 20,000Pounds, 48.3% respondents had families who earned between 21,000 and 40,000 Pounds, while 21.5% respondents had families who earned 41,000 Pounds and above per year. The value of Pound to Turkish Lira as of October 2021 was 1 Pounds to 10 Lira.

Table 4.7: Do you use Facebook?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	400	400	400	400
	No	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.7 above outlines the frequency distribution of the respondents using Facebook in relation to Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students among international students. 100% of the respondents use Facebook.

Table 4.8: How best can you describe your use of Facebook?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Communication	174	43.5	43.5	43.5
	Entertainment	82	20.5	20.5	64.0
	Education/Info search	144	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.8 above outlines the frequency distribution of the description of Facebook use by the respondents in relation to Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students. 40.3% respondents used Facebook mostly for communication, 20.5% used Facebook mostly for entertainment, while 36% used Facebook mostly for education and information search.

Table 4.9: Do you own a car?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	120	30.0	30.0	30.0
	No	280	70.0	70.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.9 above outlines the frequency distribution of Car Ownership by the respondents in relation to Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students. 30% respondents owned cars, while 70% respondents did not own cars.

Table 4.10: How much did you or would you pay for a car? (price in Pounds)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10,000 and below	68	17.0	17.0	17.0
	11,000 to 20,000	116	29.0	29.0	46.0
	21,000 to 40,000	170	42.5	42.5	88.5
	41,000 and above	46	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.10 above outlines the frequency distribution of the amount of money participants paid or will pay for an automobile in relation to the influence of Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students. 17% respondents paid or were willing to pay 10,000 Pounds or below for a car, 29% respondents paid or were willing to pay between 11,000 and 20,000 Pounds, 42.5% respondents paid or were willing to pay between 21,000 and 40,000 Pounds, while 11.5% respondents paid or were willing to pay 41,000 Pounds and above for a car. The value of Pound to Turkish Lira as of October 2021 was 1 Pounds to 10 Lira.

Table 4.11: Do you trust your choice?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	392	98.0	98.0	98.0
	No	1	.3	.3	98.3
	Not sure	7	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.11 above outlines the frequency distribution of trust in automobile choice in relation to the influence of Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students. 98% of respondents agreed that they trust their choice of automobile, 0.3% responded as No, while 1.8% answered not sure.

Table 4.12: Do you consider this brand reliable?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	395	98.8	98.8	98.8
	No	1	.3	.3	99.0
	Not sure	4	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.12 above outlines the frequency distribution of whether they consider their choice brand of automobile reliable, in relation to the influence of Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students. 98% of respondents agreed that they trust their choice of automobile, 0.3% responded as No, while 1% answered not sure.

Table 4.13: Would you keep choosing this brand over others?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	332	83.0	83.0	83.0
	No	19	4.8	4.8	87.8
	Not sure	49	12.3	12.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.13 above outlines the frequency distribution of whether they would keep choosing their choice brand of automobile over others, in relation to the influence of Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students.83% of respondents agreed that they trust their choice of automobile, 4.8% responded as No, while 12.3% answered Not sure.

Table 4.14: Would you easily switch to a different brand?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	119	29.8	29.8	29.8
	No	206	51.5	51.5	81.3
	Not sure	75	18.8	18.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.14 above outlines the frequency distribution of whether they would easily switch their choice brand of automobile to others, in relation to the influence of Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students. 29.3% of respondents agreed they trust their choice of automobile, 51.5% responded as No, while 18.8% answered not sure.

Table 4.15: Would you recommend this brand to someone?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	351	87.8	87.8	87.8
	No	12	3.0	3.0	90.8
	Not sure	37	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.15 above outlines the frequency distribution of whether they would recommend their choice brand of automobile to someone, in relation to the influence of Facebook use and automobile purchasing behavior among international students. 87.8% of respondents agreed that they trust their choice of automobile, 3% responded as No, while 9.3% answered not sure.

Table 4.16: Facebook has useful information on automobile brands

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	.5	.5	.5
	Disagree	17	4.3	4.3	4.8
	Undecided	33	8.3	8.3	13.0
	Agree	291	72.8	72.8	85.8
	Strongly agree	57	14.2	14.2	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.16 in relation to Facebook use on automobiles of the section C 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questionnaire. On the statement, Facebook has useful information on automobile brands, frequency table showed that 0.5% respondents answered strongly disagree, 4.3% answered disagree, 8.3% respondents answered undecided, 72.8% respondents answered agree, while 14.2% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.17: Facebook is good advert tool for automobile brands

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	.5	.5	.5
	Disagree	10	2.5	2.5	3.0
	Undecided	32	8.0	8.0	11.0
	Agree	294	73.5	73.5	84.5
	Strongly agree	62	15.5	15.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.17 in relation to Facebook use on automobiles of the section C 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questionnaire. On the statement, Facebook is good advert tool for automobile brands, frequency table showed that 0.5% participants answered strongly disagree, 2.5% answered disagree,

8% respondents answered undecided, 73.5% respondents answered agree, while 15.5% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.18: Facebook has a lot reviews on automobiles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	.5	.5	.5
	Disagree	13	3.3	3.3	3.8
	Undecided	37	9.3	9.3	13.0
	Agree	273	68.3	68.3	81.3
	Strongly agree	75	18.8	18.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.18 in relation to Facebook use on automobiles of the section C 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, Facebook has a lot of reviews on automobiles, frequency table showed that 0.5% respondents answered strongly disagree, 3.3% answered disagree, 9.3% respondents answered undecided, 68.3% participants answered agree, while 18.8% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.19: Facebook helps one stay updated on automobile trends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.3	.3	.3
	Disagree	15	3.8	3.8	4.0
	Undecided	37	9.3	9.3	13.3
	Agree	274	68.5	68.5	81.8
	Strongly agree	73	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.19 in relation to Facebook use on automobiles of the section C 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the

statement, Facebook helps one stay updated on automobile trends, frequency table showed that 0.3% respondents answered strongly disagree, 3.8% answered disagree, and 9.3% participants answered undecided, 68.3% respondents answered agree, while 18.8% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.20: Facebook makes sharing ideas about automobiles easier

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.3	.3	.3
	Disagree	13	3.3	3.3	3.5
	Undecided	35	8.8	8.8	12.3
	Agree	275	68.8	68.8	81.0
	Strongly agree	76	19.0	19.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.20 in relation to Facebook use on automobiles of the section C 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, Facebook makes sharing ideas about automobiles easier, frequency table showed that 0.3% respondents answered strongly disagree, 3.3% answered disagree, and 8.8% respondents answered undecided, 68.8% respondents answered agree, while 19% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.21: Facebook reviews on automobiles can influence purchase

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.3	.3	.3
	Disagree	18	4.5	4.5	4.8
	Undecided	40	10.0	10.0	14.8
	Agree	283	70.8	70.8	85.5
	Strongly agree	58	14.5	14.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.21 in relation to Facebook reviews and recommendations on automobiles of the section D 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, Facebook reviews on automobiles can influence purchase, frequency table showed that 4.5% respondents answered strongly disagree, 3.3% answered disagree, 10% respondents answered undecided, 70% respondents answered agree, while 14.5% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.22: Facebook recommendations on automobiles are helpful

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	.5	.5	.5
	Disagree	18	4.5	4.5	5.0
	Undecided	39	9.8	9.8	14.8
	Agree	281	70.3	70.3	85.0
	Strongly agree	60	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.22 in relation to Facebook reviews and recommendations on automobiles of the section D 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, Facebook recommendations on automobiles are helpful, frequency table showed that 0.5% respondents answered strongly disagree, 4.5% answered disagree, and 9.8% respondents answered undecided, 70.3% respondents answered agree, while 15% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.23: Facebook reviews can help one choose automobiles wisely

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.3	.3	.3
	Disagree	23	5.8	5.8	6.0
	Undecided	43	10.8	10.8	16.8
	Agree	275	68.8	68.8	85.5
	Strongly agree	58	14.5	14.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.23 in relation to Facebook reviews and recommendations on automobiles of the section D 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, Facebook reviews can help one choose automobiles wisely, frequency table showed that 0.3% respondents answered strongly disagree, 5.8% answered disagree, and 10.8% respondents answered undecided, 68.8% respondents answered agree, while 14.5% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.24: Good reviews can positively influence purchasing behavior

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	.5	.5	.5
	Disagree	15	3.8	3.8	4.3
	Undecided	34	8.5	8.5	12.8
	Agree	275	68.8	68.8	81.5
	Strongly agree	74	18.5	18.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.24 in relation to Facebook reviews and recommendations on automobiles of the section D 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, good reviews can positively influence purchasing behavior, frequency table showed that 0.5% respondents answered strongly disagree,

3.8% answered disagree, 8.5% respondents answered undecided, 68.8% respondents

answered agree, while 18.5% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.25: Bad reviews can negatively influence purchasing behavior

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.3	.3	.3
	Disagree	15	3.8	3.8	4.0
	Undecided	38	9.5	9.5	13.5
	Agree	269	67.3	67.3	80.8
	Strongly agree	77	19.3	19.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.25 in relation to Facebook reviews and recommendations on automobiles of

the section D 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly

agree) questions. On the statement, Bad reviews can negatively influence purchasing

behavior, frequency table showed that 0.3% respondents answered strongly disagree,

3.8% answered disagree, and 9.5% respondents answered undecided, 67.3%

respondents answered agree, while 19.3% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.26: It is crucial to look online for information on automobiles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	29	7.2	7.2	7.2
	Disagree	31	7.8	7.8	15.0
	Undecided	41	10.3	10.3	25.3
	Agree	198	49.5	49.5	74.8
	Strongly agree	101	25.3	25.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.26 in relation to purchasing behavior on automobiles of the section E 5-

Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions.

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On the statement, it is crucial to look online for information on automobiles, frequency table showed that 7.2% respondents answered strongly disagree, 7.8% answered disagree, 10.3% answered undecided, 49.5% answered agree, while 25.3% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.27: Looking online can influence good decision

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	.5	.5	.5
	Disagree	10	2.5	2.5	3.0
	Undecided	40	10.0	10.0	13.0
	Agree	280	70.0	70.0	83.0
	Strongly agree	68	17.0	17.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.27 in relation to purchasing behavior on automobiles of the section E 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, looking online can influence good decision, frequency table showed that 0.5% respondents answered strongly disagree, 2.5% answered disagree, 10% answered undecided, 70% respondents answered agree, while 17% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.28: Online reviews are important in purchasing decisions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	.5	.5	.5
	Disagree	7	1.8	1.8	2.3
	Undecided	47	11.8	11.8	14.0
	Agree	259	64.8	64.8	78.8
	Strongly agree	85	21.3	21.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.28 in relation to purchasing behavior on automobiles of the section E 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, Online reviews are important in purchasing decisions, frequency table showed that 0.5% respondents answered strongly disagree, 1.8% answered disagree, 11.8% answered undecided, 64.8% answered agree, while 21.3% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.29: Alternative brands should be considered before a decision

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	.8	.8	.8
	Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	2.3
	Undecided	41	10.3	10.3	12.5
	Agree	239	59.8	59.8	72.3
	Strongly agree	111	27.8	27.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.29 in relation to purchasing behavior on automobiles of the section E 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, Alternative brands should be considered before a decision, frequency table showed that 0.8% respondents answered strongly disagree, 1.5% answered disagree, 10.3% answered undecided, 59.8% answered agree, while 27.8% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.30: Online extensive research on automobiles is important

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	.5	.5	.5
	Disagree	8	2.0	2.0	2.5
	Undecided	44	11.0	11.0	13.5
	Agree	249	62.3	62.3	75.8
	Strongly agree	97	24.3	24.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.30 in relation to purchasing behavior on automobiles of the section E 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, online extensive research on automobiles is important, frequency table showed that 0.5% respondents answered strongly disagree, 2% answered disagree, 11% answered undecided, 62.3% answered agree, while 24.3% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.31: Owning an automobile can make one feel special

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	.5	.5	.5
	Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	2.0
	Undecided	25	6.3	6.3	8.3
	Agree	269	67.3	67.3	75.5
	Strongly agree	98	24.5	24.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.31 in relation to self-esteem and automobiles of the section F 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, owning an automobile can make one feel special, frequency table showed that 0.5% respondents answered strongly disagree, 1.5% respondents answered

disagree, and 6.3% respondents answered undecided, 67.3% respondents answered

agree, while 24.5% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.32: Owning a car can improve one's social class

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	.5	.5	.5
	Disagree	22	5.5	5.5	6.0
	Undecided	72	18.0	18.0	24.0
	Agree	221	55.3	55.3	79.3
	Strongly agree	83	20.8	20.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.32 in relation to self-esteem and automobiles of the section F 5-Likert Scale

(strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the

statement, owning a car can improve one's social class, frequency table showed that

0.5% respondents answered strongly disagree, 5.5% respondents answered disagree,

and 18% respondents answered undecided, 55.5% respondents answered agree, while

20.8% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.33: Owning an automobile creates one respect and dignity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	30	7.5	7.5	7.5
	Disagree	63	15.8	15.8	23.3
	Undecided	45	11.3	11.3	34.5
	Agree	190	47.5	47.5	82.0
	Strongly agree	72	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.33 in relation to self-esteem and automobiles of the section F 5-Likert Scale

(strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the

statement, owning an automobile creates one respect and dignity, frequency table showed that 7.5% respondents answered strongly disagree, 15.8% respondents answered disagree, and 11.3% respondents answered undecided, 47.5% respondents answered agree, while 18% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.34: Owning a car can help one meet new people

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.3	.3	.3
	disagree	16	4.0	4.0	4.3
	Undecided	71	17.8	17.8	22.0
	Agree	222	55.5	55.5	77.5
	Strongly agree	90	22.5	22.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.34 in relation to self-esteem and automobiles of the section F 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, owning a car can help one meet new people, frequency table showed that 0.3% respondents answered strongly disagree, 4% respondents answered disagree, 17.8% answered undecided, 55.5% respondents answered agree, while 22.5% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.35: Owning an automobile can create new relationships

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	.8	.8	.8
	Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	3.5
	Undecided	76	19.0	19.0	22.5
	Agree	227	56.8	56.8	79.3
	Strongly agree	83	20.8	20.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.35 in relation to self-esteem and automobiles of the section F 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, owning an automobile can create new relationships, frequency table showed that 0.8% respondents answered strongly disagree, 2.8% respondents answered disagree, and 19% respondents answered undecided, 56.8% respondents answered agree, while 20.8% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.36: Owning a car can make school fun

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	2.8
	Undecided	14	3.5	3.5	6.3
	Agree	239	59.8	59.8	66.0
	Strongly agree	136	34.0	34.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.36 in relation to convenience and automobiles of the section G 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, owning a car can make school fun, frequency table showed that 1.3% respondents answered strongly disagree, 1.5% respondents answered disagree, and 3.5% respondents answered undecided, 59.8% respondents answered agree, while 34% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.37: Owning a car can help one meet up on appointments

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.3	.3	.3
	Disagree	3	.8	.8	1.0
	Undecided	12	3.0	3.0	4.0
	Agree	238	59.5	59.5	63.5
	Strongly agree	146	36.5	36.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.37 in relation to convenience and automobiles of the section G 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, owning a car can help one meet up on appointments, frequency table showed that 0.3% respondents answered strongly disagree, 0.8% respondents answered disagree, and 3% respondents answered undecided, 59.5% respondents answered agree, while 36.5% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.38: Owning a car can help one see new places at convenience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.3	.3	.3
	Disagree	1	.3	.3	.5
	Undecided	13	3.3	3.3	3.8
	Agree	219	54.8	54.8	58.5
	Strongly agree	166	41.5	41.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.38 in relation to convenience and automobiles of the section G 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, owning a car can help one see new places at convenience, frequency table showed that 0.3% respondents answered strongly disagree, 0.3% answered

disagree, and 3.3% respondents answered undecided, 54.8% respondents answered agree, while 41.5% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.39: Owning a car can create freedom to go places at anytime

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	3	.8	.8	.8
	Undecided	13	3.3	3.3	4.0
	Agree	211	52.8	52.8	56.8
	Strongly agree	173	43.3	43.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.39 in relation to convenience and automobiles of the section G 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On the statement, owning a car can create freedom to go places at any time, frequency table showed that 0.8% respondents answered disagree, 3.3% respondents answered undecided, 52.8% respondents answered agree, while 43.3% respondents answered strongly agree.

Table 4.40: Owning a car is preferred to public transportation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.3	.3	.3
	Disagree	3	.8	.8	1.0
	Undecided	10	2.5	2.5	3.5
	Agree	194	48.5	48.5	52.0
	Strongly Agree	192	48.0	48.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.40 in relation to convenience and automobiles of the section G 5-Likert Scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) questions. On

the statement, owning a car is preferred to public transportation, frequency table showed that 0.3% respondents answered strongly disagree, 0.8% answered disagree, 2.5% respondents answered undecided, 48.5% answered agree, while 48% respondents answered strongly agree.

4.2 Pearson Correlation

A Pearson's correlation is employed when investigating a linear relationship or association between two variables. Linear relationships exist when a decreasing or increasing variable causes a similar reaction on another variable (Kalla, 2008).

Table 4.41: Correlations Analysis: The use of Facebook is related to international students' automobile brand loyalty.

		Facebook usefulness	Brand loyalty
Facebook usefulness	Pearson Correlation	1	.205
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Brand loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.205	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to investigate the relationship between automobile brand loyalty among international students and the use of Facebook. The usefulness of Facebook was paired with automobile brand loyalty in table 4.41. Results showed a positive relationship between Facebook usefulness and automobile brand loyalty, $r(400) = 0.205$, $p = .000$. Here, the p value (0.000) is below the alpha level of 0.01, and correlation coefficient (0.205) is positive and greater than 0.

Table 4.42: Correlations Analysis: Automobile reviews on Facebook are related to automobile consumer behavior among international students.

		Reviews and recommendations	Automobile purchasing behavior
Reviews and recommendations	Pearson Correlation	1	.688
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Automobile purchasing behavior	Pearson Correlation	.688	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to investigate the relationship between automobile purchasing behavior among international students and automobile reviews and recommendations on Facebook. Automobile purchasing behavior was paired with reviews and recommendations as shown in table 4.42. Results showed a positive relationship between reviews/recommendations and automobile purchasing behavior, r (400) = 0.688, p = .000. Here, the p value (0.000) is below the alpha level of 0.01, and correlation coefficient (0.688) is positive and greater than 0. This showed that when looking up reviews and recommendations about automobiles on Facebook increases among international students, automobile purchasing behavior also increases among them.

Table 4.43: Correlations Analysis: There is a relationship between self-esteem boost and automobile purchasing behavior among international students.

		Self-esteem	Automobile purchasing behavior
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	1	.473
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Automobile purchasing behavior	Pearson Correlation	.473	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to investigate the relationship between automobile purchasing behavior among international students and self-esteem boost. Automobile purchasing behavior was paired with self-esteem as shown in table 4.43. Results showed a positive relationship between self-esteem and automobile purchasing behavior, r (400) = 0.473, p = .000. Here, the p value (0.000) is below the alpha level of 0.01, and correlation coefficient (0.473) is positive and greater than 0. This showed that the need to boost self-esteem can lead an international student to engage in automobile purchasing behavior. That is to say, as automobile purchasing behavior increases, self-esteem increases as well.

Table 4.44: Correlations Analysis: There is a relationship between convenience and automobile purchasing behavior among international students.

		Convenience	Automobile purchasing behavior
Convenience	Pearson Correlation	1	.387
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Automobile purchasing behavior	Pearson Correlation	.387	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to investigate the relationship between automobile purchasing behavior among international students and convenience. Automobile purchasing behavior was paired with convenience as shown in table 4.44. Results showed a positive relationship between convenience and automobile purchasing behavior, r (400) = 0.387, p = .000. Here, the p value (0.000) is below the alpha level of 0.01, and correlation coefficient (0.387) is positive and greater than 0. This showed that the need for convenience can lead an international student to

engage in automobile purchasing behavior. That is to say, as automobile purchasing behavior increases, convenience increases as well.

Table 4.45: Correlations analysis: There is a correlation between automobile purchasing behavior among international students and age.

		Automobile purchasing behavior	Age
Automobile purchasing behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	-.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.339
	N	400	400
Age	Pearson Correlation	-.048	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.339	
	N	400	400

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to investigate the relationship between automobile purchasing behaviors and the ages of international students. Automobile purchasing behavior was paired with age as shown in table 4.45. Results showed a negative relationship between age and automobile purchasing behavior, r (400) = -0.048, p = .339. Here, the p value (0.339) is above the alpha level of 0.01, and correlation coefficient (-0.048) is negative and less than 0. This showed that age has nothing to do with automobile purchasing behavior among international students. That is to say, there is no relationship whatsoever between age and automobile purchasing behavior among international students.

Table 4.46: Correlations analysis: There is a correlation between automobile purchasing behavior among international students and yearly family income.

		Automobile purchasing behavior	Yearly family income (Pounds)
Automobile purchasing behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	-.112
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.025
	N	400	400
Yearly family income (Pounds)	Pearson Correlation	-.112	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	
	N	400	400

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to investigate the relationship between automobile purchasing behaviors and the yearly family income of international students. Automobile purchasing behavior was paired with age as shown in table 4.46. Results showed a negative relationship between yearly family income and automobile purchasing behavior, r (400) = 0.112, p = .025. Here, the p value (0.025) is greater than the alpha level of 0.01, and correlation coefficient (-0.112) is negative and less than 0. This showed that yearly family income has nothing to do with automobile purchasing behavior among international students. That is to say, there is no relationship whatsoever between yearly family income and automobile purchasing behavior among international students.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study is to examine the effects of Facebook as a new media technique of automobile industries on automobile purchasing behavior among international students in Northern Cyprus. While it has its focuses on both international students who own and those who do not own an automobile, it implores several theories (Consumer Purchase Decision-Making Process, Model of satisfaction and brand and dealer loyalty, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Uses and Gratification Theory, and Diffusion of Innovation Theory) in order to investigate the six-hypothesis developed within current study. The general assumptions of current study were (i) automobile adverts, recommendations, and reviews on Facebook play a role in the automobile purchasing behavior among international students in North Cyprus; (ii) adverts and reviews on Facebook are not enough, but other factors such as need to boost self-esteem and convenience, age, and family income also influences their automobile purchasing behavior; (iii) most international students in North Cyprus purchase automobile brands with high brand loyalty.

While several past studies (Abu-Rumman & Alhadid, 2014; Allard, Banin, & Chebat, 2009; Al-Somali, Gholami, & Clegg, 2009; Barnes, 2008; Bilal, Ahmed & Shahzad, 2014; Cast & Burke, 2002; Chaudhary & Tripathi, 2012; Chu, 2011; Darban & Li, 2014; Haciefendioglu, 2011; Hamilton, Jenkins, & Gregory, 1991; Hiscock, Macintyre, Ellaway, & Kearns, 2002; Hu, Liu, & Zhang, 2008; Jansen, Holte, Jung,

Kahmann, Moritz, Rietz, Rudinger, & Weidemann, 2001; Lu et al., 2003; Manoukain, 2019; Miyazaki & Fernandez, 2001; Rabbitt, Carmichael, Jones, & Holland, 1996; Raijas & Tuunainem, 2001; Root, Boardman, & Fielding, 1996; Raj, Sasikumar, & Sriram, 2013; Serenko, Turel, & Yol, 2006; Shin, 2009; Srivastava & Tiwari, 2011; Stokes & Hallett, 1992; Swan, 1983) already investigated the relationships between the Facebook, brand loyalty, purchasing behavior, online reviews, self-esteem boost, convenience, age, and, income, however, it is still unclear which better motivates the purchase behavior of international students in North Cyprus.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The random participants of the current study were 400 international students in Northern Cyprus universities, and were all above 18 years old. According to table 4.2, 136 respondents between the ages of 22 and 25 (34%) were more, followed by 129 respondents between the ages 26 to 29 (32.3%), 76 participants from 30 and above (19%), and lastly, 59 participants between ages 18 to 21 (14.8%) respectively.267 males (66.8%) more than 133 females (33.3%) participated, see table 4.3. To confirm they were all international students, the question, "are you an international student in TRNC was asked?" They all answered yes in table 4.4. There were 183 master students (45.8%), more than 123 who were studying at bachelors' level (30.8%), and 94 participants doing their PhDs (23.5%), according to table 4.5. Even so, 193 participants had families who earned between 21,000 and 40,000 Pounds (48.3%), as opposed to 93 who had families earning between 11,000 and 20,000 Pounds (23.3%), 86 who earned 41,000 Pounds and above (21.5%), and 28 participants who earned below 10,000 Pounds (7%) respectively, according table 4.6.

While the current student focuses on Facebook users, 7 participants were non-Facebook users (1.8%), compared to 393 participants who were Facebook users (98.3), see table 4.7. According to table 4.8 on integrating the uses and gratification theory of Facebook, 174 participants (43.5%) claimed the use Facebook mainly for communication, followed by the 144 (36%) who answered that they use it mainly for Education and information purposes, and lastly 82 (20.5%) participants claimed they use Facebook for entertainment. Responses were gotten from both car and non-car owners, with 280 participants (70%) being non-car owners, and 120 (30%) being car owners. Lastly, 170 respondents (42.5%), more than the rest agreed they spent or would spend between 21,000 and 40,000 Pounds on purchasing an automobile, followed by 116 (29%) who agreed they spent or would spend between 11,000 and 20,000 Pounds, and 68 (17%) who agreed they spent or would spend 10,000 Pounds and below, and 46 participants who claimed they spent or would spend 40,000Pounds and above on an automobile, see table 4.10.

5.1.1 Hypothesis 1: There is a Significant Relationship between Facebook Use and Automobile Brand Loyalty among International Students.

Using the Pearson correlation analysis to understand how Facebook use impacts automobile brand loyalty among international students, the current study found a positive relationship between Facebook use and automobile brand loyalty, r (400) = 0.205, p = .000. 184. That is to say, when Facebook use or how participants perceive the usefulness of Facebook increases, automobile brand loyalty among international students also increases, and vice versa. 5-Likert scales for Facebook use, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (i. Facebook has useful information on automobile brands, ii. Facebook is a good advert tool for automobile brands, iii. Facebook has a lot of reviews on automobiles, iv. Facebook helps one stay updated

on automobile trends, v. Facebook makes sharing ideas about automobiles easier) were paired with 5 (yes, no, not sure questions) variables of automobile brand loyalty (i. Do you trust your choice? ii. Do you consider this brand reliable? iii. Would you keep choosing this brand over others? iv. Would you easily switch to a different brand? v. Would you recommend this brand to someone?).

The uses and gratification of Facebook (i.e., information search, communication, and entertainment) was investigated to help understand how participants perceive Facebook use.144 participants (36%) use Facebook to learn about new things, such as automobile brands, and 174 participants (43.5%) use it for communication, as compared to the 82 fewer participants (20.5%) who use it mainly for entertainment. By inference, this affords automobile companies the avenue to communicate and bring information about automobiles to the minds and convenience of international students, since the majority mainly uses it for information search and communication purposes. Even so, the result of the current study supports, "H1: There is a significant relationship between Facebook use and automobile brand loyalty among international students." Several past studies (Abu-Rumman & Alhadid, 2014; Keller, 2008; LaDuque, 2010; Hyllegard et al., 2011; Hu, Liu, & Zhang, 2008) within current literature also support hypothesis one.

Abu-Rumman and Alhadid (2014) on the effect social media marketing has on brand loyalty has the hypothesis that there is no relationship between the new media marketing and brand loyalty; however, they found a strong relationship between brand loyalty and social media. Keller (2008) posited that companies seek to maintain loyalty of their brands through new means of marketing which includes new media marketing. Similarly, LaDuque (2010) argued that businesses employ the

help of the new media to increase sales and brand loyalty. Hyllegard et al. (2011) maintained that companies and organizations use social media websites to communicate with customers and potential ones. Also, Jackson's (2011) report that above traditional marketing methods, the new media marketing, e.g., Facebook marketing, serves as better ground for communication between companies and consumers in order to build brand loyalty, and also by Stelzner (2010) on Social Media Marketing Industry Report, with findings that the new media provides marketers with a voice and ways to interact and communicate with their colleagues and consumers.

5.1.2 Hypothesis 2: There is a Positive Relationship between Automobile Reviews or Recommendations on Facebook and Automobile Consumer Behavior among International Students.

Analysis using the Pearson correlation to understand how Facebook reviews on automobiles affects automobile brand loyalty among international students, the current study found a relationship between Facebook reviews and recommendations on automobiles and automobile purchasing behavior, r (400) = 0.688, p = .000. This shows that automobile reviews and recommendations on Facebook have no direct automobile consumer behavior among international students. 5-Likert scales for automobile reviews or recommendations on Facebook, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (i. Facebook reviews on automobiles can influence purchase, ii. Facebook recommendations on automobiles are helpful, iii. Facebook reviews can help one choose automobiles wisely, iv. Good reviews can positively influence purchasing behavior, v. Bad reviews can negatively influence purchasing behavior) were paired with those of automobile purchasing behavior (i. It is crucial to look online for information on automobiles, ii. Looking online can influence good

decisions, iii. Online reviews are important in purchasing decisions, iv. Alternative brands should be considered before a decision, v. Online extensive research on automobiles are important).

The result of the current study supports, "H2: There is a positive relationship between automobile reviews or recommendations on Facebook and automobile consumer behavior among international students," because a positive relationship was found. Similarly, it is supported by past studies (Bilal, Ahmed & Shahzad, 2014; Darban& Li, 2014; Haciefendioglu, 2011; Hu, Liu, & Zhang, 2008) used within current literature. Hú, Liu, & Zhang (2008) conducted a study to understand how companies, e.g., automobiles, can use the social media, Facebook, interaction to enhance recognition of brand and increase sales. They found that online groups users admire and belong to have the power to change their behavior towards a brand. Darban and Li (2014) while examining the effect of Facebook on consumer behavior, found that at the stage of information search (figure 2.1), recommendations and comments impact consumer behavior. Haciefendioglu (2011) in a study to explore the importance of social media on advertising found that consumer behavior is significantly influenced by recommendations and opinions of others on the brand they want to purchase.

Stankevich (2016) asserts that buyers or customers get information about goods, e.g., automobiles, from different sources, which includes personal, commercial, public, and experimental sources. According to Stankevich (2016) personal sources, which include family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances, etc., they appear to be more trustworthy, hence important in influencing the final purchase decision for a product. Other sources such as commercial – Facebook adverts, public – recommendations on

Facebook, and experimental – test driving an automobile are usually part of information search as explained in figure 2.1 of the Consumer Purchase Decision-Making Process. By inference, Facebook recommendation and reviews correlates with automobile purchasing decisions among international students because, while they look up to personal sources to make their final purchasing decision, Facebook helps at the level of information search. This is supported in a study by Darban and Li (2014) while examining the effect of recommendations on Facebook on consumer behavior, found that at the stage of information search (figure 2.1), recommendations and comments impact consumer behavior.

5.1.3 Hypothesis 3: There is a Positive Relationship between Self-Esteem Boost and Automobile Purchasing Behaviors among International Students.

To investigate the relationship between self-esteem boost and automobile purchasing behavior among international students, a Pearson correlation analysis was carried out. Result found a positive correlation between self-esteem boost and automobile purchasing behavior among international students, $r(400) = 0.473$, $p = .000$, in that, the need for self-esteem boost might motivate an international student towards automobile purchasing behavior, and eventually acquiring one.5-Likert scales for self-esteem, which ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree (i. owning an automobile can make one feel special, ii. Owning a car can improve one's social class, iii. Owning an automobile creates one respect and dignity, iv. Owning a car can help one meet new people, v. Owning an automobile can create new relationships) were paired with those of automobile purchasing behavior. (i. It is crucial to look online for information on automobiles, ii. Looking online can influence good decisions, iii. Online reviews are important in purchasing decisions,

iv. Alternative brands should be considered before a decision, and v. Online extensive research on automobiles is important).

The result of the current study supports, "H3: There is a positive relationship between self-esteem boost and automobile purchasing behavior among international students. Consequently, this was also supported by few past studies (Cast & Burke, 2002; Manoukain, 2019; Swan, 1983) used in current literature. Cast and Burke (2002) assert that the need to better self-esteem can produce a direction for a behavior. That is to say, it can serve as a motivating factor towards engaging in automobile purchasing behavior. Swann (1983) posits that individuals seek ways to improve their self-esteem by avoiding things or situations that would further limit or affect their self-esteem, but seek out ways to increase it by engaging in opportunities that make this possible. Similarly, Lastly, Manoukian (2019) on the psychology of luxury car buyers where she investigated the relationship between luxury automobile purchasing behavior and status symbol/self-esteem found a positive relationship between acquiring a luxury automobile and self-esteem boost. She further posits that individuals engage compensatory – a type of purchase behavior individuals engages in when they face adverse life events or psychological threats that affects their ego (Manoukian, 2019).

5.1.4 Hypothesis 4: There is a Positive Correlation between Convenience and Automobile Purchasing Behavior among International Students.

A Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to investigate the relationship between convenience and automobile purchasing behavior among international students. A positive relationship was found between convenience and automobile purchasing behavior among international students, r (400) = 0.387, p = .000. That is to say, the need to improve convenience could motivate international students towards

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automobile purchasing behavior. 5-Likert scales for convenience, which ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree (i. owning a car can make school fun, ii. Owning a car can help one meet up on appointments, iii. Owning a car can help one see new places at convenience, iv. Owning a car can create freedom to go places at any time, v. Owning a car is preferred to public transportation) were paired with those of automobile purchasing behavior (i. It is crucial to look online for information on automobiles, ii. Looking online can influence good decisions, iii. Online reviews are important in purchasing decisions, iv. Alternative brands should be considered before a decision; v. Online extensive research on automobiles is important).

The current study supports, "H4: There is a positive correlation between convenience and automobile purchasing behavior among international students." Similarly, several other studies (Hamilton, Jenkins, & Gregory, 1991; Hiscock, Macintyre, Ellaway, & Kearns, 2002; Root, Boardman, & Fielding, 1996; Jansen, Holte, Jung, Kahmann, Moritz, Rietz, Rudinger, & Weidemann, 2001; Rabbitt, Carmichael, Jones, & Holland, 1996; Stokes & Hallett, 1992) support this hypothesis. For the most part, Hamilton, et al. (1991) affirms that acquiring a private automobile helps individuals to not constantly adjust their travel schedules to others; hence it comes with the benefit of independence and self-reliance. Hiscock, et al. (2002) found that, owning a private automobile as opposed to using the public means of transportation provides convenience, flexibility, social and physical safety. Other studies (Jansen, Holte, Jung, Kahmann, Moritz, Rietz, Rudinger, & Weidemann, 2001; Rabbitt, Carmichael, Jones, & Holland, 1996) posit not driving creates inadequacy and inhibits mobility and independence, because depending on other people to reach certain destinations can sometimes be daunting.

5.1.5 Hypothesis 5: There is a Correlation between Automobile Purchasing Behavior among International Students and Age.

A Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to investigate the relationship between automobile purchasing behaviors and the ages of international students. Automobile purchasing behavior was paired with age as shown in table 4.45. Results showed a negative relationship between age and automobile purchasing behavior, $r(400) = -0.048$, $p = .339$. That is to say, automobile purchasing behavior among international students is not determined by age. Additionally, there was no difference between the different age groups within the study, mainly because the participants of current study were international university students; younger generations which includes the millennial and generation Z (not older than 45 years old) are the focus of the current study. Even so, 5-Likert scales for automobile purchasing behavior, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (i. It is crucial to look online for information on automobiles, ii. Looking online can influence good decisions, iii. Online reviews are important in purchasing decisions, iv. Alternative brands should be considered before a decision, v. Online extensive research on automobiles is important) were paired with the ages of participants.

The current study rejects, "H5: There is a positive correlation between automobile purchasing behavior among international students and age." No past studies (Barnes, 2008; Chu, 2011; Jisana, 2014) were found to support this. For example, Jisana (2014) investigated the effect of age on automobile purchasing behavior and found that older generations have more practical life experiences than younger ones, so an older generation individual is likely to show consumer behaviors that are different from individuals of younger generation, which partly supports the finding of current study. By inference, older people might choose different brands because they are

more reserved to spend on things that might not be of interest to a person of younger generation. Moreover, few other past studies (Barnes, 2008; Chu, 2011) found that there is a relationship existing between age and use of Facebook.

Barnes (2008) found that 70% of participants of the study use Facebook to examine companies when trying to purchase products. He found that consumers deem information on the new media to be of small importance, however, participants who are under 25 years of age deemed information to be of great importance. Inferentially, Barnes (2008) maintains that younger individuals are more affected by reviews or recommendations over the new media about certain products they liked. Negative reviews reduce sales, and positive ones boost sales among younger people. In respect, Chu (2011) confirms that the attitude of college age users of Facebook is most favorable towards the new media marketing and advertising and has become the ever-increasing demographic for businesses. This shows that the new media platform is becoming a potentially favorable environment for marketing campaigns online, specifically for companies and businesses with younger individuals as target the market.

5.1.6 Hypothesis 6: There is a Correlation between Automobile Purchasing Behavior among International Students and Yearly Family Income.

A Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to investigate the relationship between automobile purchasing behaviors and the yearly family income of international students. Automobile purchasing behavior was paired with age as shown in table 4.45. Results showed a negative relationship between yearly family income and automobile purchasing behavior, $r(400) = -0.112$, $p = .025$. That is to say, yearly family income does not correlate with automobile purchasing behavior among international students. Even so, 5-Likert scales for automobile purchasing behavior,

ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (i. It is crucial to look online for information on automobiles, ii. Looking online can influence good decisions, iii. Online reviews are important in purchasing decisions, iv. Alternative brands should be considered before a decision, v. Online extensive research on automobiles is important) were paired with the yearly family income of participants.

The current study rejects, "H6: The effects of Facebook on automobile consumer behavior among international students is determined by income." Several past studies (Al-Somali, Gholami, & Clegg, 2009; Miyazaki & Fernandez, 2001; Raijas & Tuunainem, 2001; Lu et al., 2003) does not support the finding of current study, as they suggest that family income is a moderating factor of online purchasing behavior. Findings further showed that higher income influences lower perception of implicit risks when making purchases online, hence the recommendations and demands for products over the Internet are affected. Also, finding showed that online transactions, usefulness, simplified use, and self-efficacy perceptions are discouraged by low income, and is as a result of the inability to fight financial losses. However, this should improve if income increases. Additionally, it is possible that most international students in Northern Cyprus do not rely on their families when deciding or acquiring an automobile. Perhaps if the current study had investigated the various employment statuses of international students both home and abroad, further insight might be gained as to why yearly family income does not correlate with automobile purchasing behavior among international students.

5.2 Conclusion Drawn from the Study

The study sought to establish a relationship between Facebook and automobile purchasing behavior of international students in Northern Cyprus, with assumptions that Facebook use has an effect on automobile purchasing behavior and automobile brand loyalty among international students, that automobile recommendations and reviews on Facebook has an effect on automobile purchasing behavior among international students, and that such factors as need to boost self-esteem and convenience, age, and family income would also have an effect on automobile purchasing behavior among international students. Even so, of all six hypotheses, two were rejected. For the rejected hypotheses, (i) H5: there is a positive correlation between automobile purchasing behavior among international students and their ages, (ii) H6: there is a positive correlation between automobile purchasing behavior among international students and their yearly family incomes.

The current research assumed in "H5" that there is a positive correlation between automobile purchasing behavior among international students and their ages, but found none. Although several past studies (Barnes, 2008; Chu, 2011) found a relationship, the current student may have rejected it due to sample size. Taking a look at the Pearson correlation coefficient, of -0.048, as shown in table 4.46, shows that negative correlation was weak because it is closer to 0. Perhaps if a larger sample size had been in play, the case would not be the same. Secondly, the current research assumed in "H6" that there is a positive correlation between automobile purchasing behavior among international students and their yearly family incomes, but found none. It is possible that with the high rise in online business opportunities such online content creations, ecommerce, crypto-currency trading, and so on

(Corrigan, 2021), international students are able to engage and make lots of money from such online business opportunities and activities. Howbeit, the current study established effects on automobile purchasing behavior among international students if the two rejected hypotheses were not included in the list of assumptions.

Taking in considerations the Uses and Gratification Theory, respondents were found to use Facebook more for communication and information search as opposed to using it for entertainment. It was concluded 40.3% as communication, 20.5% as entertainment, while 36% as education and information search, as shown in table 4.8. This shows that Facebook users are more satisfied when they are able to communicate effectively and find information that are relevant to their needs on Facebook. This supports the current study, in that, international students look on Facebook for automobile reviews or recommendations, and can communicate with their choice of automobile brands on Facebook. This also shows that reviews or recommendations about automobiles are present on Facebook.

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, most international students in Northern Cyprus are past physiological and safety needs, and are at the stage of self-esteem needs. This is because, as shown in tables 4.31, 4.32, 4.33, 4.34, and 4.35, an aggregate of 77.78% participants both agreed and strongly agreed on the positive statements on owning an automobile and improved self-esteem, as opposed to rest 22.22% who answered strongly disagree, disagree, and undecided. More so, with the amounts of money participants of the current study are willing to spend on automobiles, as shown in table 4.10, only 17% of respondents paid or would pay below 10,000 Pounds for an automobile, 29% paid or would pay between 11,000 and 20,000 Pounds, while over 60% of respondents paid or would pay 21,000 Pounds

and above, which can be considered as luxury for an international student. Hence, it has become evident that they prioritize owning luxury automobiles in their lives.

Moreover, on the amount international students paid or were willing to pay for an automobile, it shows that they love and embrace new technologies in automobiles. That is to say, new products such as the latest automobile diffuse easily amount international students in Northern Cyprus, and inferentially, they are quick to adopt innovations. This means that according to the Diffusion and Innovation theory they fall between early adopters and early majority (13.5% and 34% of the population) found in the Diffusion and Innovation Theory curve as shown in figure 2.7. Additionally, on the brand loyalty question found in the table 4.14, where participants were asked if they would easily switch to a different brand, 119 answered Yes, 75 answered not sure. This shows almost half of the participants would embrace an innovation when it comes their way.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies, for the most part, should use larger sample size when carrying out research specific but not limited to diversity in culture, because larger sample sizes help to represent the population better, produce more accurate results, and reduce margin error (Zamboni, 2018). Secondly, future studies should investigate how peer pressure motivates the younger generation towards acquiring luxury items, and also examine the role of personality on the purchasing behavior among international students because personality plays a big role in the attitudes and behaviors of humans (Roberts, et al., 2007). Thirdly, it has become important to consider other social networking sites as well, such as Instagram. For example, Christie (2019) maintains

that the younger generation adults prefer Instagram when checking out and interacting with brands online.

Furthermore, investigating the role of peer pressure in consumer behavior is important, as this could also be a motivating factor in automobile purchasing behavior among young adults. Lastly, as aforementioned, it is possible that most international students in Northern Cyprus do not rely on their families when deciding or acquiring an automobile. Perhaps, if the current study had investigated the various employment status both at home and abroad of international students, and as well as their possible modes of income, further insight might be gained as to why yearly family income does not correlate with automobile purchasing behavior among international students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Demographic Questions

1. Age: (a) 18 to 21 (b) 22 to 25 (c) 26 to 29 (d) 30 and above

2. Gender: (a) Female (b) Male

3. Are you an international student in TRNC? (a) Yes (b) No

4. Current education level: (a) Bachelor (b) Master (c) PhD

5. Yearly family income (rate in Pounds):

   (a) 20,000 and below (b) 21,000 to 40,000 (c) 41,000 to 50,000 (d) 61,000 and above

6. Do you use Facebook? (a) Yes (b) No

7. How best can you describe your use of Facebook?

   (a) Communication (b) Entertainment (c) Education/Information Search

8. Do you own a car? (a) Yes (b) No

9. How much did you or would you pay for a car? (price in Pounds):

   (a) 10,000 and below (b) 11,000 to 20,000 (c) 21,000 to 40,000 (d) 41,000 and above

10. What is your preferred brand of automobile? _____

Appendix B: Brand Loyalty Questions

11. Do you trust your choice? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure

12. Do you consider this brand reliable? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure

13. Would you keep choosing this brand over others? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure

14. Would you easily switch to a different brand? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure

15. Would you recommend this brand to someone? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure

Appendix C: Facebook Usefulness Questions

SD= strongly disagree, **D**= disagree, **U**= undecided, **A**= agree, **SA**= strongly agree

	SD	D	U	A	SA
16. Facebook has useful information on automobile brands					
17. Facebook is good advert tool for automobile brands					
18. Facebook has lot of reviews on automobiles					
19. Facebook helps one stay updated on automobile trends					
20. Facebook makes sharing ideas about automobiles easier					

Appendix D: Automobile Reviews and Recommendations Questions

SD= strongly disagree, **D**= disagree, **U**= undecided, **A**= agree, **SA**= strongly agree

	SD	D	U	A	SA
21. Facebook reviewson automobiles can influence purchase					
22. Facebook recommendations on automobiles are helpful					
23. Facebook reviews can help one choose automobiles wisely					
24. Good reviews can positively influence purchasing behavior					
25. Bad reviews can negatively influence purchasing behavior					

Appendix E: Purchasing Behavior Questions

SD= strongly disagree, **D**= disagree, **U**= undecided, **A**= agree, **SA**= strongly agree

	SD	D	U	A	SA
26. It is crucial to look online for information on automobiles					
27. Looking online can influence good decisions					
28. Online reviews are important in purchasing decisions					
29. Alternative brands should be considered before a decision					
30. Online extensive research on automobiles are important					

Appendix F: Self-Esteem Questions

SD= strongly disagree, **D**= disagree, **U**= undecided, **A**= agree, **SA**= strongly agree

	SD	D	U	A	SA
31. Owning an automobile can make one feel special					
32. Owning a car can improve one's social class					
33. Owning an automobile creates one respect and dignity					
34. Owing a car can help one meet new people					
35. Owning an automobile can create new relationships					

Appendix G: Convenience Questions

SD= strongly disagree, **D**= disagree, **U**= undecided, **A**= agree, **SA**= strongly agree

	SD	D	U	A	SA
36. Owning a car can makes school fun					
37. Owning a car can help one meet up on appointments					
38. Owning a car can help one see new places at convenience					
39. Owning a car can create freedom to go places at anytime					
40. Owning a car is preferred to public transportation					

Appendix H: Ethics Approval

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Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu (BAYEK) / Board of Scientific Research and Publication Ethics

Reference No: ETK00-2021-0198   05.07.2021

Subject: Your application for ethical approval.

Re: Raphael Ebuka Nwankpa (17500046)
Faculty of Communication and Media Studies

EMU's Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board (BAYEK) has approved the decision of the Ethics Board of Communication and Media Studies (date: 28.06.2021, issue: 102) granting Raphael Ebuka Nwankpa from the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies to pursue his MA thesis titled **"The Effects of Facebook on Automobile Buying Behavior among International Students in Northern Cyprus"** supervised by Assist. Prof. Dr. Umut Ayman.

Best Regards

Prof. Dr. Yücel Vural

Chair, Board of Scientific Research and Publication Ethics - EMU

YV/şk.

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