

**THE PERCIEVED INFLUENCE OF VEHICLE BRANDING ON
CONSUMER CHOICE: A CASE OF TOYOTA EAST AFRICA LTD**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Business Administration (Executive) of the School of Business
Administration, Moi University.**

2010



ABSTRACT

In the present developing and modern day world, consumerism has dominated all the aspects of life. The life in the society follows the pattern of the capitalist culture where the human values have a different measure, 'you are known by what you have not by what you are'. This naturally leads to the life in a society where everyone wants to have a unique place in the society, by possessing the things which sets them apart from the rest of people in the society. In present society and living way, the brands not only represent the symbol of the company or product but to a larger extent define the general life of a person. The general objective of this study was to establish if any relationship exists between branding and consumer purchasing decision in vehicle choice in the vehicle industry in Kenya, with specific reference to Toyota East Africa Ltd. The specific objective was to establish the effect of brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand association on consumer decision in motor vehicle choice. An explanatory research design was used so as to establish variable relationship. The target population was 80 customers consisting of external and internal customers of Toyota East Africa Ltd, who have been the market leader in the motor vehicle sales in Kenya for the last six consecutive years. Data was collected and analyzed from the target population. This study used a questionnaire to collect data and was complimented by in-depth interviews to explore and understand these attitudes. The researcher analyzed the result of the survey and drawn conclusions. The results revealed that there existed a very strong and positive correlation between brand loyalty and consumer's decision on vehicle choice a correlation coefficient of 0.741 significant at $P < 0.05$. Most of the people are loyal with specific branded cars, over time they purchase the same branded car because it has satisfied the customer's needs. There also existed a strong and positive correlation between brand awareness and consumer's decision making on vehicle choice having scored a correlation coefficient of 0.534 significant at $P < 0.05$. Brand awareness is a winning track as people generally tend to buy brands that they are familiar with and on which they have confidence. Customers trust branded cars because of the belief that they offer standard of quality, enjoyable features and images. Further research can be done on a large scale covering automobile industry in all parts of Kenya.