PERCEPTION OF AUTOMOBILE BRAND IMAGE – PROPOSAL OF A TYPOLOGY IN MORROCAN CONTEXT

Hicham Mohammed Hamri[1], ouafae Zerouali Ouariti[2] and Amira Qanqom[3]

[1] Member of the Research Team ERETTLOG. National School of Business and Management , University Ibn Zohr Agadir, Morocco h.m.hamri@gmail.com.

[2] Responsible of Research Team ERETTLOG. National School of Business and Management University Ibn Zohr Agadir, Morocco zerouali.ouafae @gmail.com.
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[3] Doctoral student in the Research Team ERETTLOG. National School of Business and Management University Ibn Zohr Agadir, Morocco.

Abstract

Brands are vital in automotive business, and image is particularly important. Companies do their best to measure how consumers perceive the brand image.

This article sheds light on the main typologies on brand image that exist in the literature as supported by the most famous authors in this field of research. They are the key to measure the perception of the brand image. As we go on, we will try to adapt these typologies to our research and to find the most adequate one by testing it on the field.

Keywords: Brand image – Typology – Perception – Consumer – Automobile.

1. Introduction

The concept of brand image is very common and very well known, but a lot of research has yet to be conducted in this field because the literature proposes heterogeneous interpretations and because of the divergence between authors.

In this article, I will first of all give a synthesis of existing definitions of brand image in the literature. These definitions fall into five categories. Then I will make reference to three major authors who produced an important amount of search work about brand image: Aaker (1991), Keller (1993) and Korchia (2000). Each of these researchers proposes specific brand image typologies well distinct one from the other. These typologies will be studied with special focus on their advantages and limitations bearing in mind throughout this study the Moroccan context. I will wrap up by selecting the typology which seems to me most complete and, above all, consistent with our work case.

The scope of my thesis is the automotive business and this is the reason why I chose this business for the empirical study of my article.

The automobile market in Morocco has been in increased development in recent years, and brands face the challenge of increasingly tough competition and increasingly demanding consumers. Within this context, businesses are seeking, on one hand, to improve their brand image in a way to make consumers perceive of it to the best possible extent and, on the other hand, to point out elements in their brand image that most impact the perception of the customer so as to make of them their priority. And here lies the importance of the typology: it allows managers to detect the brand image components to which consumers give more importance and therefore make of them a priority in communication efforts around the brand image.
In order to test the effectiveness of typology, we intend to make a qualitative survey that would allow us to say whether or not the components of the typology are accurate and whether the typology should be kept as it is or improved.

I chose for this purpose the brands "Honda" and "Seat" marketed by the company "Concession Motors Company" in Agadir. They are quite different in many aspects in terms of image. They were selected for this reason and this would allow me to see different things while remaining in the same business.

Brand image is one of the most popularized marketing concepts and everybody may have some notions because each one of us may feel concerned. Authors and researchers also give a great deal of importance to this notion as many of their research works are about it. To me, one of the straightforward definitions of brand image is

this one "all that a consumer may associate with a given brand" (Korchia, 2000).

However, some interpretations may even be contradictory. Dobni and Zinkhan (1990) distinguish five different approaches in terms of given definitions to brand image.

Table 1: Summary of definitions of brand image, by category or type of definition:

Type of definition	Description
General definitions	These definitions are generally simple with a general scope.
	For example: "All that people associate with a brand" (Newman 1957) or else "perception of the product" (Runyon and Stewart 1987). Dobni and Zinkhan explain that in this type of definitions perception of reality may not be in connection with reality, yet this illusion is more important than reality itself.
Definitions which focus on the symbolic aspect	In this type of definitions authors deal with brands and products as symbols [1]. They are built on this concept and put it at the heart of the definition of brand image. The idea of the consumer's self is also closely linked to the brand which therefore must have a social or personal meaning.
Definitions showing meanings and messages.	The message a band image may convey or else the meaning associated to it by a consumer do have equal importance as the tangible benefits, when it comes to making the choice or preference to a brand. Swartz (1983) argues that since we have large numbers of brands with no real functional differences, it is the uniqueness of the message which makes the whole difference. Levy (1978) also argues that we may be stimulated by the experiences that other people may have undergone with a given brand.
	Dobni and Zinkhan (1990) state that many authors are not clear in their definition; there is no real difference between definitions based on the symbolic aspect and those based on meanings and messages.
Brand personality	Works on brand personality have developed and become particularly popular as of the eighties. Two points of view are distinguished: One deals with the brand as a human being, which suggests that the brand has its own personality. The second associates the personality of the consumer with the brand image.
	Jennifer Aaker (1997) contributed considerably in developing this concept. She defines the personality of the brand as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" and concludes to five dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness.
	Some authors argue that the act of "buying" is determined by the link between the brand personality and self concept.
Definitions based on cognitive or psychological elements	Brand image is based on ideas, feelings, attitudes, mental constructs, comprehension or expectations. Major authors in this line of thinking and research in the nineties are Keller and Aaker, then followed Korchia in the

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[1] Symbol is defined in the dictionary as: "something visible that by association or convention represents something else that is invisible".

2000's who proposes a new typology of the brand image. These definitions are somewhat complementary with the "general" ones (1st line of the table).
Keller (1993) defines the brand image as "perceptions about a brand reflected by the brand associations held the consumer's memory; these associations are the other informational nodes linked to the node of the brand kept in memory and the recipient of the meaning of the brand for the consumers".
Aaker (1991) argues that brand image is "a set of associations generally organized in a significant way". Association means "all that is linked in memory to a brand".

In this research work, we shall focus more on the cognitive and psychological aspects of the consumer with the aim of understanding the mental process that impacts him/her. It is therefore quite natural to adopt the brand image approach based on the fifth category of definitions (in the above table) as this approach is consistent with our thinking. Indeed, the selected definition category is the only one which suggests this psychological aspect whereas the one which makes reference to the brand personality remains quite limited like the other ones. Our choice is therefore appropriate as this approach is to me the most complete.

Here is the definition which caught my attention and which seems to me the most straightforward and meaningful one: "all that a consumer may associate with a given brand" (Korchia, 2000).

Most of definitions agree on the fact that brand image corresponds to brand associations. These associations are the links that exist between the brand and other nodes kept in memory. Measuring how these information are stored in memory and the associations to the brand already in the memory of the consumer pertains to measuring the consumer's perception of the brand and consequently the image he has thereof. This process is inspired from the search work of Mitchell (1982) who represents memory in the form of a packet of information.

However, and as we need to study the perception of brands, we need also a typology of it.

We will start then by presenting the contributions of Keller (1993), Aaker (1994) and Korchia (2000). Each of these authors established a different typology, based mostly on associations with the brand; in other words it is about nodes liked to the brand (Korchia, 2001). Associations with the brand may also be defined as informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the band by the consumer, (Keller, 1993).

In order to model the functioning of the human brain, some authors were guided by the model of (Collins and Quillian) created in 1969, with the initial objective of finding information in the memory of computers – that was at a time when access to such equipment was not granted to everybody. Then this model was improved by (Collins and Loftus, 1975) by representing concepts stored in long-term memory under the form of a node. These are connected by links of differentiated force and vary following the proximity to concepts they refer to. Later on, an ACT[1] model which is more developed but more complex was elaborated in 1983 by Anderson. Out of these models comes the concept called "spreading activation" which implies that at any time an information node may be activated. This is possible on condition that the conveyed activation level be higher than a given threshold. Take for example the brand "Tria" as stimulus: based on the spreading activation principle a person who hears this word will more easily think of the word "flour" rather than "pasta".

From the models mentioned above derive also the concept of associations with the brand (Keller, 1993). It is therefore necessary to activate the network of associations in the consumer's memory in order to measure the perception of a brand that is the set of nodes and links to that brand. My article is situated within this vision. But before developing this idea, I deem it important to discuss each of the typologies elaborated by Keller, Aaker and Korchia.

2. Keller's contribution

To our knowledge Keller (1993) realized fairly comprehensive work. Other authors made considerable contributions, but Keller's works remain the basis to which every researcher on brand image must refer to.

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[2] "Adaptative Control of Thought" by Anderson (1983, 1993): it's an important model which refers to the concept of work memory.

Brand image is dependent on the existing "history" between individuals and the brands as experiences occur. These experiences may be lived thanks to the use of a product of the brand (satisfied or not satisfied) or in a more indirect way (through word-of-mouth). Such experiences would nourish associations with the brand stored in memory which finally leads to brand image (Keller, 1993). To understand brand image we need to make a list of associations that exist in the consumer's memory.

a. Attributes

They simply describe the features of a product or a service. In other words, what the consumer thinks of that product or service and what its consumption implies. These attributes may be:

- *Linked to the product*: they vary mainly depending on the type of the product or service. They may be defined as the indispensable ingredients for the appropriate use and performance of the product as, for sure, seen by the consumer.

- *Not linked to the product*: These are external features of the product or service in relation with its purchase or consumption. We distinguish four features:

Price: One may think price is directly linked to the product, but it turns out that this information is incorrect because the price, though it represents a necessary phase in the purchase process, does not have any direct incidence on the performance of the product or service.

Packaging or appearance: Once again this attribute is not directly linked to the performance of the product; it rather contributes to the process of purchase and consumption of it.

User imagery: Indirectly this imagery may be constructed thanks to advertising the brand and the whole set of communication around it, but directly it's the outcome of the personal experience of the consumer and his contact with the brand.

Usage imagery: This may be linked to the type of activity, or based on the time of use.

b. Benefits

They are the personal value or meaning consumers attach to the attributes of a product or service, that is what the consumer thinks he can benefit from. There are three types of benefits:

- *Functional benefits*: Advantages intrinsic to consumption of the product or service. They are more about the attributes linked to the products.

- *Experiential benefits*: Feelings of consumers as they use the product or service. They are rather related to the attributes linked to the product.

- *Symbolic benefits*: Advantages intrinsic to the use of the product or service. They correspond more to the attributes not linked to the product and have to do mainly with the social needs or to the personal expressions and self-esteem.

c. Attitudes

These are overall evaluations of a brand. They are the basis of the behavior of the consumer, where their great importance. Attitudes are a multiplicative function of beliefs that consumers have about a product or service (attributes and benefits) and how these beliefs are evaluated (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

In addition to the type of associations with the brand mentioned above, there exist dimensions which determine or indirectly impact the consumer's behavior towards a brand (Keller, 1993 and 1988). Its features, namely force, favorability and uniqueness, seem to have more impact on customers' capital of the brand than cohesion, the number or origin of associations (Keller, 1993; Changeur and Dano, 1998). Each association with the brand may be featured, by level, on the basis of each of these three characteristics.

1 – Strength of association with the brand

It is about the strength of connection between the association and the "brand" node, with a direct incidence on the quality of activation. Indeed, a piece of information encoded in the consumer's memory has more effect if it is actively processed during the encoding operation (see Grunert 1996, Heath 1999 and Korchia 2000). Activation of the brand in the consumer's memory is directly linked to the activation of his association on condition that such association is strongly linked to the brand.
According to the theory of "spreading activation" mentioned earlier, when a brand is linked to many strong associations it comes easily to the consumer's mind in a given situation. Consequently, a brand with strong associations is more likely and more easily to gain customers' loyalty.

2 – Favorability:

The degree of favorability of an association, or "valence", corresponds to the assessment of the association whether

favorable or unfavorable in the consumer's mind. Favorable associations entail positive attitudes towards the brand. In Keller's discussion, an association can rarely be judged favorable or unfavorable for an attribute of low importance. However, importance of an association with the brand may be different depending on situations. For example, the waiting time in a bank may be a very important criterion when the customer is in a hurry, but less important when he/she has no time constraints.

3 – Uniqueness

Uniqueness of an association alludes to the shared or exclusive aspect of the association with competitors. Keller (1993) argues that a brand must have some associations that are not shared with other brands in order succeed and have a competitive advantage. The fact is that, indeed, many brands may have a number of similar associations and that makes the consumer place them all under a number of considerations when he decides to buy.

3. Aaker's contribution

Aaker (1991) thinks that the perception of a brand must be clear, powerful and universal. On the one hand, he distinguishes three groups of associations linked by the consumer to the brand: image of the product (features), image of the persons (contact personnel or employees) and the image of the organization (as an entity). On the other hand, Aaker distinguishes eleven possible dimensions of the brand image:

Tangible features of a product: A brand may put forward many attributes of the product in order to reach a larger audience, but this may have an adverse effect on its image.

Intangible features of a product or service: These are immaterial characteristics such as perceived quality.

User's benefits: Aaker distinguishes between psychological benefits, which are symbolic benefits, and objective benefits which are compatible with functional and experiential benefits mentioned earlier.

Relative price level: Quality-price ratio.

Usage situations: Time of use.

Purchaser's profile: Aaker makes a distinction between a purchaser and a consumer and argues that they are not the same.

Stars and characters that incarnate the brand: Involving celebrities generally allows a transfer of image and fame

(Rossier and Percy 1998). Also some less famous or fictitious characters may give a sympathetic aspect to the brand. Take for example the name Aicha used in "Aicha" jam.

Personality traits: Human features associated with the brand (Aaker, 1997).

Perception of the category of products: Marketed under the brand name.

Evaluation of competitive brands: A brand may in many times find itself compared to other competitors.

Image of the country of origin: Consumers tend to pay great attention to "Made in …"

4. Korchia's contribution

In the 2000's Korchia completed a study with the aim of analyzing the typologies of Aaker and Keller and suggested a new typology which we deem very interesting. He found many limitations to the existing typologies, namely:

- ***Lack of exhaustiveness***: Keller omitted to mention a category dedicated to "distribution" and to personal experiences of the consumer; whereas Aaker overlooked "attitudes".

- ***Coding difficulty***: Due to the lack of some important categories, it is difficult for coders to use these typologies.

He argues that Keller attributes some important categories to secondary associations; whereas these secondary associations must be considered as direct ones owing to their importance.

With reference to the search work of Brucks (1986) who concludes that if a typology is incomplete, meaning that too much material do not fit in any category, it must be improved, Korchia suggests a new typology:

a. Business: All aspects related to the business (country of origin, strategy, reputation of the brand …)

b. Other organizations: Competitors, government, associations …

c. Personality of the brand: Human personality traits associated with the brand.

d. Celebrity, events: When a business associates its brand with a celebrity, the consumer is keen on seeing him/herself in that celebrity by using the brand. The same principle applied to events.

e. Users: Associations between the brand and typical users of that brand (age, walk of life, physical …)

f. Use and personal experience: Usual use of the product and personal experience.

g. Categories of the product: Brand positioning.

h. Price: Quality-price ratio, for example

i. Communication: Particularly advertisement, not involving celebrities and events.

j. Distribution: Stores and sales persons

k. Attributes linked to the products: Physical composition of the product.

l. Functional benefits: Psychological needs, safety requirements and the wish to avoid or eliminate problems.

m. Experiential benefits: Sensations in relation with the use of the product.

n. Symbolic benefits: Needs related to the perceptions of others.

o. Attitudes: Emotional feelings towards the brand.

5. Empirical test

The typologies of Keller and Aaker show some points of divergence, but they also have some similarities. None of them, however, is complete because according to Korchia (2000) they both are incomprehensive. The last typology presented above is, in my view, more complete and gives fairly varied and diversified categories.

As this research aims at measuring the brand image perception by the consumer, and taking into consideration that associations with the brand are crucial, we'll of course make the aforementioned typologies the basis of our work and the key elements that would help us realize this research.

The focus will be on the last typology presented above, Korchia's, because it has already been empirically tested.

A – Choice of the working method

There are many methods to collect data. In this study, we want to achieve targeted information related to the consumers' perceptions. Our main objective in this article is more to test the accuracy of the typology rather than to study the brand image perception.

In order to measure in an exhaustive way how the consumer perceives of the brand image, we need to study associations with the brand kept in the consumer's memory while making sure these associations are completely identifiable. This can only be done if we are equipped with an accurate typology; otherwise, the concept would be measured inaccurately.

The reasonable choice for us is to use the qualitative method which is generally used with an exploratory perspective. This would allow us to collect data quickly and in a more centered way. Though only a limited number of persons are interviewed, this method would allow us to detect the main traits of brand image or else the main associations with the brand, and to know what the interviewed persons feel about it.

Time allocated by each of the interviewed persons will be so precious and will certainly not allow us to have a directive interview which necessitates more time. We therefore need to target the answers and have them as accurate as possible to fit our purpose. The next step (in our future research work) will be to engage in a quantitative phase to measure with more preciseness the traits identified. As to collecting method, we chose to proceed by semi-directive interviews. They will be conducted using an interview guidance manual that we have elaborated based on Korchia's typology. This tool is probably the qualitative data collection mode most used in research dealing with marketing studies (Evrad and al, 1993). Each interview shall be audio recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Thanks to obtained results we will see whether they correspond to the selected typology, that is Korchia's, otherwise we will have to propose a new typology which is adapted to our research framework.

Procedure to design the interview guidelines

We used the free elicitation procedure to design our interview guidelines (Korchia, 2000). This procedure is based on the principle of spreading activation discussed earlier. It should be remembered that it is the process that occurs at the moment of access to a piece of information stored in memory (Anderson 1983, Grunet 1996, Keller 1993). Once the level of activation to a node (for example association with a brand) is superior to a certain threshold, the information contained in that node is remembered in memory and therefore becomes available. Consequently, the most linked nodes will also be remembered.

The free elicitation method is defined by Olson and Muderris Oglu (1979) as "a procedure where interviewees are completely free to say whatever comes to their mind when they are given a starting stimulus".

The starting stimulus, which may be presented in a short sentence, aims at activating an informational node. Take for example a brand name as stimulus: the objective is to activate all nodes related to this brand name in the consumer's mind. But the issue is that a consumer cannot remember everything he/she stores in the memory

regarding a given brand by answering only one question that is one stimulus. In this regard, Brucks (1986) and Finlay (1986) agree that it is possible to recourse to a multiple elicitation procedure which suggests that every concept told may be used as a stimulus thereafter. This procedure may last as long as the interviewed consumer is able to say his thoughts in words.

We also chose to draw a table which discretely recalls the main categories in Korchia's typology and proposed to the interviewees to tick the ones they associate with the brand or the ones they think impact their perception of the brand image.

B – Choice of the line of business

We chose to apply our study to the Moroccan automobile market which recorded a lightning growth during the last ten years. A remarkable advance which is not expected to stop as Morocco is finding a place among the biggest car makers in the world according to a survey of Oxford Business Group (OBG) quoting a report of PriceWaterHouse Coopers[1].

In exports, automobile is a business which is making important increases in the Moroccan foreign trade. The value of exports in automobile business made a 17.5% progress year on year in the nine first months of 2013 and sales of cars achieved an increase of 58.3% to generate 8 billion dirhams (1 billion dollars) according to the Moroccan Exchange Authority. This is the result of a governmental policy which aims at attracting more foreign investors and developing car models which seduce large numbers of customers.

Foreign direct investments in automobile business have made a huge progress particularly during the last three years. They increased from 913 million dirhams in 2010 to 3.6 billion dirhams in 2012, according to the Department of Foreign Trade Statistics – 2013.

This important development in automobile business results in abundant supply in this sector. Consumers are now offered a very wide range of car brands that fits the affordability of everyone.

We selected the brands "Honda" and "Seat" which are marketed by the company "Concession Motors" in the city of Agadir. These two brands have quite different images: one is considered rather a luxury brand and the other is more affordable. They were selected for this very reason

as we will be able in the interview to elicit fairly varied statements while staying in the same line of business.

Choice of interviewees

We chose to interview twenty persons – ten women and ten men. Their ages are between 23 and 58 years. They all have a driving license and own or wish to own a car. They all are economically active persons of different socio-professional categories (executives, managers, secretaries, sales persons …) and different social groups. They all show an interest in cars and know different brands on the market which make of them consumers or potential consumers.

Before engaging in interviews, we briefed them about our work and the aim of our study in order to give them some guidance as to the kind of information we want to obtain from them. We then gave the interviewees 10 to 15 minutes to mentally prepare for the exercise and formulate a "speech" in their minds. At the end of each interview we gave them the table containing elements of the brand image typology and asked them to classify those elements by order of importance according to their own perception of the brand image. These categories are given in a very discrete manner; that is to say we gave them hints without any straightforward elicitation.

Results:

Prior to the presentation of results, we deem it useful to explain how we collected statements pertaining to each topic. As we said earlier in this article, the typology of Korchia (2000) offers the basis to design the interview guideline and analyze obtained data. We adapted categories as follows:

Business: Country of origin, strategy. Statements related to the reputation of the brand are also included.

Other organizations: Competitors, Government …

Brand personality: Human personality traits associated with the brand – Statements like nice, elegant … may appear under this category.

Celebrities, Events: For example the famous racing driver "Mehdi Bennani" associated with the brand "Honda". The event "Marrakesh Formula 1 Grand prix" can also be associated with this brand.

Users: Association of the brand with the type of users – features to be defined taking into consideration age, social group, body …

Category of products: Category of products under the same brand name: different models of cars, motorcycles, quads, zodiacs ….

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[1] A network of American business specialized in auditing, accounting surveys and counseling. It is one of the "big "Four" together with Deloitte, Ernst & Young and KPMG.

Usage, Experience: Personal use of the product. This category is suggested when the person concerned speaks about his personal experience with the brand for example.

Price: Very often price is associated with quality.

Communication: All features of business communication (advertisement, promotional actions …), except celebrities and events which appear under a separate category.

Distribution: Here, points of sale are particularly targeted; especially licensee dealers and related services (after-sale services, sales persons, personnel …)

Attributes linked to the product: All physical aspects related to the product (car body, parts, engine, air-conditioning, tires, options …). We included here adjectives linked to the attributes of the product; for example: robust, efficient, good quality …

Functional benefits: Mainly things related to safety needs and transportation.

Experiential benefits: Enjoyment brought by the use of the product.

Symbolic benefits: Need of esteem and differentiation. Things related to personal expression needs.

Attitude: Emotional feeling towards the brand. Sentences like: "I love the brand"; "It's my favorite brand" may appear under this category.

None coded statements: All statements which do not fall under any of the aforementioned categories.
435 statements were collected on Honda and 336 on Seat. The number of statements elicited by interviewees on Honda range is between 15 and 53, and between 13 and 45 on Seat. We used Excel spreadsheet to enter all codes corresponding to each category, separately for each interview.

It is a tough endeavor to obtain information from interviewees because most of them were embarrassed to notice that their statements were audio-recorded. They generally became more relaxed after some time. The number of statements, however, was very limited and some interviewees did not have accurate information on the brand even though they owned a car of that brand, especially women. On the opposite, men had a very accurate and structured idea about the topic.

The number of non coded[1] elicited statements is 12 for Honda and 6 four Seat. This shows that the typology is fairly exhaustive and may perfectly well be applied to automobile business. We therefore need no other typology

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[1] Statements that do not fall under Korchia's model

because Korchia's (2000) is highly relevant to our study – some adjustments may be needed (figure 4) but it remains a very complete platform.

The vast majority of statements, for both brands, belong to the following categories:

Attributes linked to the product: Interviewees could speak much longer on characteristics of cars, their engine, design, parts, options …

Price: Everybody spoke about the quality-price ratio

Brand models: Nearly all of them mentioned the different models they know about the brand

Other organizations: Competitors were extensively mentioned in all interviews

The number of elicited statements and corresponding percentage (Table 2) show the composition of the brand image perception in the memory of the consumer; that is what the person concerned associated with the brand.

For Honda, the most recurrent association for 100% of interviewees is robustness, and this aspect is the strongest association with this brand. Moreover, most of statements were directly linked to the product itself, its characteristics and, above all, its quality and the different models of the brand. Second in rank, we have users: owners of this brand have a specific image of the brand and they belong to an upper social class. Price also is recurrent in the statements of interviewees and they generally agree the price is high. As to communication, many interviewees stressed the lack of advertisement and noted the quasi-inexistence of the brand in publicity actions in the region and in Morocco as a whole, especially when we compare it to competitors on the market who make more efforts in this domain. The weakest association with the brand is "celebrity and event" and even though Mehdi Bennani, who is a very famous Formula 1 racing driver in Morocco and represents Honda, only 2 persons made reference to this information.

For Seat, interviewees also spoke about the characteristics of the product and its quality; but unlike Honda in terms of affordability, the price is considered as a very favorable asset especially when associated with the quality of the product. Many statements also underlined the origin of the product, bearing in mind that Seat brand was bought by a German car maker. The impact of this acquisition is perceived very positive on the brand image. Like Honda, different models as well as competitors and users were mentioned.

For both brands, some categories did not obtain a significant number of associations with the brand, but this has no impact on their strength and their importance. For example, for the category "experiential benefits" (keep in

mind that this has to do with enjoyment brought by the use of the product) a person who used the brand only once may retain a vivid memory thereof and therefore create many new associations with that brand. This is evidence that the percentage of elicited statements in a given category does not reflect its strength.

In the line of business we chose for our study, we need to make a distinction between men and women because the type and also the volume of given information vary remarkably. Men may claim themselves as "knowledgeable public" but they find themselves lost in their description of the product. Women, on the opposite, claim in their majority that their knowledge in the field is very limited but as the interview goes on it turns out that they have a very clear idea about the brand though they remain little afar from technical details.

Conclusion

The typology retained for our study is Korchia's, and the number of non coded statements (the ones which belong to no specific category) is very small, hence the increased number of my statements. Of course, this study shows some limits, namely because the sample is very limited (20 persons) and the procedure followed is free elicitation. However, the objective of determining a typology for the brand image – to be used in our future studies – has well been achieved.
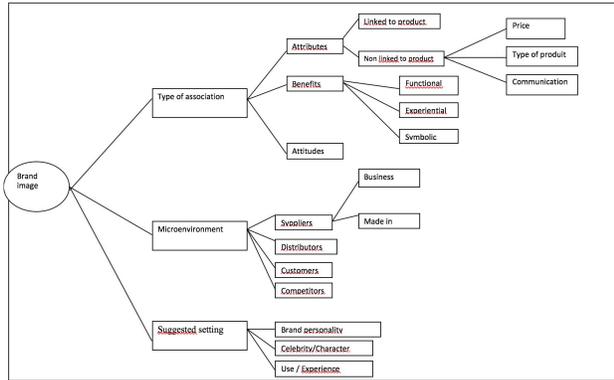
Indeed, the results of this study will be used to measure appropriately how the consumer perceives of the brand image. In the questionnaire to be handed out in the quantitative phase we will ask questions about the 16 categories contained in the model.

Category	Number of AB Honda	Number of AB Seat	% Honda	% Seat	Rank for Honda	Rank for Seat
Business	35	33	8.05%	9.82%	5	3
Other organizations	30	28	6.90%	8.33%	6	5
Brand personality	17	9	3.91%	2.68%	11	12
Celebrities, Events	2	0	0.46%	0.00%	16	16
Users	42	23	9.66%	6.85%	2	7
Category of products	41	30	9.43%	8.93%	3	4
Use, experience	23	14	5.29%	4.17%	8	10
Price	36	49	8.28%	14.58 %	4	2
Communication	23	27	5.29%	8.04%	9	6
Distribution	23	19	5.29%	5.65%	8	8
Attributes liked to the product	94	62	21.61%	18.45 %	1	1
Functional benefits	15	12	3.45%	3.57%	12	11
Symbolic benefits	12	5	2.76%	1.49%	13	14
Experiential benefits	5	4	1.15%	1.19%	15	15
Attitude	29	15	6.67%	4.46%	7	9
Non coded statements	8	6	1.84%	1.79%	14	13
Total of elicited AB	435	336				

Appendixes

Results of semi-directive interviews, number of associations with the brand (AB) for each brand

Figure 1: Typology of Brand image chosen for this study

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