Factors Influencing Automotive Lubricant Consumer Purchasing Behavior: A Conceptual Model

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Abstract: The automotive industry's rapid expansion and rising consumer appetite for automobiles have created an unprecedented demand for automotive lubricants. This surge in demand reflects lubricants' essential role in ensuring optimal performance, longevity, and efficiency of automotive engines and mechanical components. In the present day, consumers exhibit increased precision and selectivity in their purchasing behavior, underscoring the necessity for careful deliberation before making a purchase decision. Given the diverse range of products available, it is essential to understand consumer preferences to ensure that the selection is aligned with market demands and expectations. Thus, this paper aims to develop a conceptual model for automotive lubricant purchase behavior based on the Theory of Consumption Values (TCV), which are divided into five parts: functional value, emotional value, social value, and epistemic value. The consumption value theory, applicable across diverse goods and services, emerges as a valuable framework. Its versatility enables a comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences and behaviors across various markets, facilitating informed decision-making for businesses and policymakers. Through this conceptual model, the paper endeavors to provide insights into the complex interplay of value perception and provide insights into the drivers behind consumers' choices regarding automotive lubricants.

Keywords: *Theory of Consumption Values (TCV), Automotive Lubricant*

1. Introduction and Background

In this era of economic advancement, top-tier products can address nearly every aspect of an individual's life and catalyze various societal transformations. With the rapid economic growth in Asia, every industry faces a pressing need for enhanced logistics and supply opportunities (Khan et al., 2019). This heightened demand stems from the necessity for improved logistic options, particularly in the automotive sector (Kumar et al., 2022). Automotive has become indispensable for Malaysians, given their role in facilitating transportation, especially considering Malaysia's ongoing development of logistical and transportation infrastructure supported by public transportation systems (Jeevan et al., 2023; Yusoff et al., 2021).

In February 2020, Malaysia introduced its National Automotive Policy 2020 (NAP 2020) indicating to propel the country toward becoming a leading hub for automotive manufacturing, engineering, and technology in the region (Hamzah et al., 2022; Iskandar & Ariffin, 2019). This strategic initiative by the Malaysian government is designed to enhance technological competitiveness in manufacturing and expand employment opportunities for Malaysians (Yean, 2021). NAP 2020 consists of three main thrusts, three strategies, and seven roadmaps or blueprints, which will be executed until 2030.

These roadmaps encompass:

Table 1: NAP 2020 Roadmaps

No	Name
1.	National Roadmap for Automotive & Mobility Value Chain (NRAMVC)
2.	National Roadmap for Automotive & Mobility Technology (NRAMT)
3.	National Roadmap for Automotive & Mobility Talent (NRAMTa)
4.	National Roadmap for Automotive Aftermarket (NRAA)
5.	National Blueprint for Automotive Mobility as a Service (NBAMaaS)
6.	National Blueprint for Automotive Robotics (NBAR)
7.	National Blueprint for Automotive Internet of Things (NBAIoT)

Consequently, with the increasing reliance on cars in Malaysia, (Tan, 2022) There arises a significant concern regarding the demand for automotive lubricants (Saidon et al., 2023). These lubricants are essential for

maintaining the functionality of automotive vehicles (Denton, 2020). Automotive lubricants, derived from complex mixtures of base oils and additives, have undergone substantial technological advancements over the years, driven by developments in combustion engines, petroleum refining, environmental regulations, and marketing trends (Abdellatief et al., 2023).

Consumer consumption values directly relate to the products or services being considered and to the products' perceived utility. Hence, comprehending consumer behavior holds significant importance, particularly considering the increased demand for automobiles spurred by NAP 2020 (Iskandar & Ariffin, 2019). This is not merely a trivial matter but an opportunity for companies to boost sales and gain a competitive edge. The potential expansion for businesses within the industry is fuelled by the escalating demand for high-quality, reliable products that meet customer needs. While previous studies have enhanced our understanding, their limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, many of these studies still need to systematically survey perceived values. Instead, they have focused on a limited set of value components while overlooking equally crucial others. Secondly, due to the incomplete selection of value constructs, the existing literature needs to catch up on opportunities to comprehend the relative strengths of different perceived values in shaping consumer behavior. Thirdly, most prior studies have been restricted to descriptive or conceptual discussions and modelling. The current research model is grounded in the original theory of consumption values developed by Sheth et al. (1991), which identifies five critical categories of consumption values: functional value (related to attributes, physical performance, and utility), social value (related to symbolism and group membership), emotional value (related to affective responses), epistemic value (related to curiosity, novelty, and knowledge), and conditional value (related to specific situations

2. Literature Review

Sheth et al. (1991) have introduced a theory focusing on consumer intentions regarding purchasing decisions for goods or services. This theory aims to elucidate why consumers decide to purchase or abstain from purchasing (or using) a particular product and why they prefer one product over another. These consumer intentions stem from various values, including functional value, social value, emotional value, conditional value, and epistemic value. Given the diversity in consumer behaviors, models of purchase decision-making behaviors are customized by different individuals.

Functional Value: Functional value serves as the primary driver influencing consumer choices and is intertwined with practical and physical factors such as reliability, stability, and the product's pricing (Sheth et al., 1991). In alternative research, functional values convey the product's or brand's practical advantages (Carlson et al., 2019). Recent research indicates that functional value can be dissected into two distinct factors: quality value and price value. Quality value pertains to assessing product attributes, such as consistent quality and texture(Tiwari et al., 2022). On the other hand, price value involves the consideration of internal and external reference prices that customers evaluate during the purchase decision-making process (Wei et al., 2020). Within the realm of automotive lubricant products, functional value is considered the primary determinant in consumer purchase choices (Duraisamy, 2022). Brands of automotive lubricant products that excel in reliability, stability, and affordability tend to attract consumer interest due to their functional attribute.

Social Value: Social value refers to the perceived benefit obtained from being associated with one or more particular social groups. (Sheth et al., 1991). An alternative acquires social value through a combination of positive or negative stereotyped demographics, socioeconomic, and cultural-ethnic groups (Gleny & Bernardo, 2023). The concept posits that products extend beyond functional value; they also provide symbolic or social value (Koay & Leong, 2023). Consumers may perceive that certain behaviors are favored by family, friends, colleagues, and others, leading them to be influenced by these beliefs (Rana et al., 2024). From these points, social value in this study will be defined by the impact of one's close social circle and personal social identity, considering the diverse characteristics and options of the product. This value is essential for gaining a deeper comprehension of consumer engagement.

Emotional Value: Emotional value refers to the perceived benefit derived from the emotional states and feelings experienced when consuming a product (Sheth et al., 1991). It encompasses the idea of gaining benefit from a product's ability to evoke specific feelings or emotional states. Emotions are considered to be a significant

factor in consumption activity, with emotions being deemed to be influential in the development of consumers' preferences and preferences, including in the context of automotive lubricants.(Gleny & Bernardo, 2023). Consumer sentiments toward products and services can influence their intent to purchase. Prior studies have demonstrated a significant association between emotional values and green purchase intentions among both European and non-European tourists (Gleny & Bernardo, 2023).

Conditional Value: Conditional value refers to the perceived benefit gained from an alternative based on the specific situation or circumstances confronting the decision-maker (Sheth et al., 1991; Zailani et al., 2019). This implies that factors like time and place play a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviors. Research shows that changes in personal situations can affect consumers' choices in purchasing (Petzold et al., 2019). The concept underscores the idea that the context or circumstances surrounding a decision can impact how useful a product or service is perceived to be (Jackson & Jabbie, 2020). In this scenario, a consumer might opt for a specific automotive lubricant brand because of current promotional campaigns. Consequently, these promotions may lead customers to switch to a different brand for their purchases.

Epistemic Value: Epistemic value, as defined, refers to the perceived benefit obtained from a product's ability to spark curiosity, offer novelty, and satisfy the desire for knowledge (Sheth et al., 1991). When a product possesses epistemic value, it provides consumers with new experiences, fulfilling their cravings for novelty, curiosity, and learning (Hsu et al., 2022). Consumers may opt for such alternatives out of boredom, curiosity, or a desire for something new, different, or fashionable (Siebert et al., 2020). For instance, a consumer may select a particular automotive lubricant brand in pursuit of a distinctive experience. In this research, the study will explore how the performance of cars or automobiles impacts consumer behavior.

3. Research Design

A research design is a comprehensive plan or blueprint that outlines how a research study will be conducted. For this study, a theoretical research design will be employed, focusing on the development and validation of the conceptual model. Initially, an extensive review of existing literature will be conducted to identify key variables and theoretical frameworks related to consumer behavior in the automotive lubricant market (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). These insights will guide the construction of the conceptual model, hypothesizing the relationships between various influencing factors. Following this, the model will be empirically tested using a quantitative research approach (Rahman & Muktadir, 2021). Data will be collected through a structured survey administered to a representative sample of automotive lubricant consumers. The collected data will then be analyzed using advanced statistical techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Hair et al., 2019) To validate the proposed relationships and refine the model. This research design ensures that the conceptual model is both theoretically grounded and empirically validated, providing a robust framework for understanding consumer purchasing behavior in this market.

Significance of the Research
This conceptual paper holds significant importance both in academia and for practitioners in the automotive lubricant industry. Academically, it offers insights into refining operational strategies for automotive lubricant suppliers amidst the increasing demand for high-performance products catalyzed by advancements in the automotive sector (Butt, 2020). By delving into consumption value, the paper illuminates the factors influencing consumer choices, providing practical recommendations for implementation.

By empirically validating the relationships between these factors, the model offers valuable insights that can guide industry practices(Ugalde et al., 2024). Companies can leverage these insights to tailor their marketing strategies, enhance product development and positioning, and improve customer segmentation and targeting. Additionally, understanding the drivers of consumer satisfaction and loyalty enables businesses to refine their customer service and retention strategies, leading to a competitive advantage in the market (Kazungu & Kubenea, 2023). Overall, this model serves as a critical tool for aligning industry practices with consumer expectations, ultimately fostering more effective decision-making and sustainable growth in the automotive lubricant industry.

Several studies have explored factors influencing consumer purchasing behavior in the automotive lubricant

market or related areas. For example, a study by Cvetkov-Čikošev et al. (2021) discusses how various media sources and customer attitudes towards the industry influence consumer behavior, emphasizing the role of traditional and digital media in decision-making processes (Cvetkov-Čikošev et al., 2021). Another study by Bhattacharyya and Thakre (2021)Highlights the importance of psychological factors, such as beliefs and attitudes, which vary significantly between urban and rural consumers in the automotive market. This has shown how significant is the study for better understanding and study.

Despite limitations such as the absence of randomized trials, theoretical testing enhances understanding. Moreover, understanding consumer demand for automotive lubricants is pivotal for formulating strategies to optimize these products, especially considering their environmental impact. This aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (Lee et al., 2020), advocating sustainability and environmental friendliness, and offering valuable support to scholars and researchers exploring similar topics. Practically, the paper aids organizations in incorporating lubricants into their operations, enabling them to develop strategies to enhance profitability and operations while promoting sustainable practices in line with Sustainable Development Goals. By deciphering consumer consumption, enterprises can strive for improved service quality, ultimately contributing to the growth of the Malaysian economy.

Study Limitation
The conceptual paper encounters limitations in data access due to time and resource constraints, hindering a comprehensive examination of the overarching topic. The primary aim remains to investigate the correlation between consumer values in intention to purchase automotive lubricant brands in the automotive lubricant market. Numerous obstacles arise, particularly when navigating the intricate relationship between consumer satisfaction towards the automotive lubricant brand, which can also result in brand loyalty, which further study must be done. This dynamic potentially unveils links between individual personality traits and diverse outcomes, further contributing to the significance of the study in academia and practical applications within the automotive lubricant industry. Additionally, this conceptual paper is delimited by insufficient readings of literature from multi-disciplinary sources, limiting the breadth of theoretical understanding. Investigative limitations also arise; the paper is primarily a review of existing literature, with data collection yet to be conducted. Furthermore, time constraints impede the full exploration of literature related to the topic.

4. Conceptual Model Development

This conceptual paper attempts to determine to understand the relationship between consumers and their intention to purchase automotive lubricants by referring to consumption value. A study has been made on several models with the same approach which has been established by other authors but with different topics such as Green food product purchase intention: Factors influencing Malaysian consumers (Yogananda & Nair, 2019) and The impact of consumption value on consumer behavior: A case study of halal-certified food supplies (Muhamed et al., 2019). Therefore, as shown in Figure 1, the study proposed:
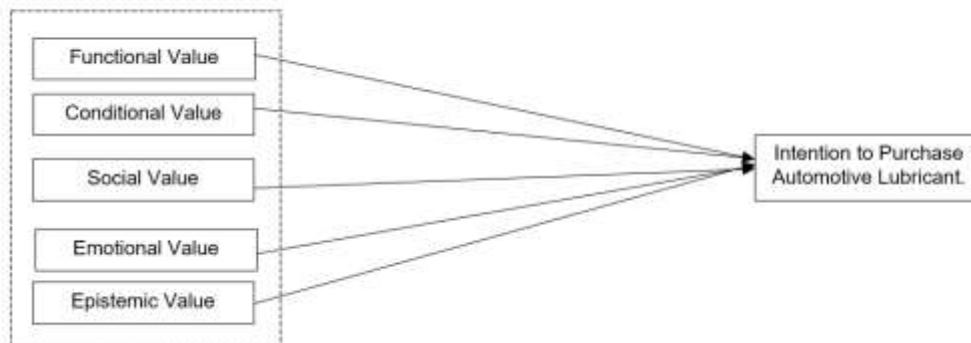
Figure 1: Proposed Research Model

Table 2: Summary of Hypothesis

No	Hypothesis
1.	Functional Value affects the intention to purchase automotive lubricant
2.	Social Value affects the intention to purchase automotive lubricant
3.	Emotional Value affects the intention to purchase automotive lubricant
4.	Conditional Value affects the intention to purchase automotive lubricant.
5.	Epistemic Value affects the intention to purchase automotive lubricant

5. Conclusion

This academic paper aims to explore how the theory of consumption, specifically the concept of consumption value, relates to brand loyalty within the automotive industry. Satisfied customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and exhibit brand loyalty. To achieve this satisfaction, companies must understand the factors influencing it and assess their impact. This study aims to identify such factors within automotive lubricant companies, facilitating improved marketing strategies and product delivery. By pinpointing these factors, companies can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their marketing efforts, minimizing risks and conserving resources. Additionally, this study assesses the organization's readiness and identifies areas of strength to leverage and weaknesses to address. As the automotive industry continues to grow, insights from this study can aid industry players in meeting evolving consumer needs. Future research should also explore other automotive segments, such as electric vehicles, as they are introduced to Malaysia.

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