

Chapter 8

Do Customer Orientation Strategies Drive an Excellent Customer Experience?

The Case of Abu Khader Automotive


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ABSTRACT

The goal of this chapter is to understand how customer orientation may affect car brand loving clients' attitudes and behaviours during their customer journey. This research provides insights, in the context of the automobile industry, into (i) how customer orientation can enhance customer delight and customer brand love and (ii) the effects of customer delight and brand love on post purchase behavioural intentions. Some 1,300 online questionnaires were distributed to a sample of customers who purchased a vehicle from Abu Khader, a leading Jordanian car dealership, in the years 2020-2022. The results showed (1) that customer orientation is a robust predictor of delight with the shopping experience and car brand love and (2) that these variables triggered positive electronic word of mouth and willingness to pay more for car brands.

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INTRODUCTION

Customer orientation strategies and innovation are inherently connected. In today's dynamic business landscape, an innovation strategy is vital for creating value for customers and maintaining a competitive edge over time (Klassen et al., 2023). In the contemporary landscape, innovation has become ubiquitous. Many organizations now incorporate the concept of innovation into their vision, mission, and objectives, highlighting its pervasive influence on their strategic direction (Kahn, 2018). Companies across various industries are currently focusing on innovation to ensure their success in the markets (Saunila, 2020). In the past few years, the concept of customer journey has been widely adopted by both academics and practitioners driven by the emerging prominence of the customer-centric philosophy in the marketing field (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The growing relevance of customer orientation for companies is driven by the fact that customers engage with businesses through multitude touchpoints across multiple channels and media, leading to increasingly intricate customer journeys (Tueanrat et al., 2021). Consumers become increasingly discerning, so placing them at the center of marketing strategies is fundamental. Innovations in marketing are no longer solely about product features but rather about creating holistic brand experiences that resonate with customers on a deeper level.

As today's customers are better informed and more sophisticated and have higher expectations for products and services than ever before, merely delivering what is promised is no longer sufficient to ensure sustained business success (Lee & Lee, 2020). Customer delight, is a positive emotional state generally resulting from having one's expectations exceeded to a surprising degree (Oliver et al., 1997), and it relates to going that "extra mile" and delivering service that exceeds expectations (Kim et al., 2023). Many factors affect customer delight; to achieve long-term success in this competitive environment businesses must identify these factors and gauge their importance according to customers' needs (Liang et al., 2021). As a topic, brand love interests academics and industry professionals (Ahmad & Guzman, 2023). They place a high value on the concept of brand love since a group of delighted customers who become loyal customers reduces costs and enhances marketing activity (Le, 2021).

The automobile industry is one of the most competitive and dynamic industries in the world (Market and Research, 2023). In the highly competitive automobile business environment, every car dealer is trying hard to make their customers delighted in order to trigger brand love. To achieve brand love and delight, car dealerships need to focus on understanding the important features that customers consider when purchasing a new car. This understanding can help car dealerships to create positive customer experiences, leading to brand love and delight. Superior customer brand experiences can enhance the perceived benefits of a car dealership and reduce the consumer's mental stress and other non-monetary costs (Gulzari et al., 2022). In earlier studies, researchers have not paid much attention to identifying the drivers of customer delight and brand love at car dealerships. This chapter attempts to do so by analysing the drivers and outcomes of customer delight derived from the customer orientation strategies applied in the automobile industry.

The general objective of this chapter is to understand how customer orientation may affect the attitudes and behaviours of car brand loving clients. This chapter showcases a success story of a car dealership company that have effectively implemented innovative marketing strategies on customer orientation lead by their proactive managers, demonstrating their practical applications and outcomes. This research provides insights into (i) how customer orientation can enhance customer delight and customer brand love in the automobile industry and (ii) the effects of customer delight and brand love on electronic word of mouth and willingness to pay more. The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows: in

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