

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW



"WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE
PURCHASE OF CARS IN JORDAN"

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The central question of this thesis is whether or not personal sources of information and word-of-mouth communication influence the purchase of cars in a developing country such as Jordan. With this question in mind, this study was carried out on consumer durables (cars).

A random sample of 600 respondents, who were car owners, was drawn from files obtained from the Jordanian Licence Authority and 600 questionnaires were hand delivered to them. The response rate was 68.5% (i.e., 411 usable questionnaires).

The capital of Jordan (Amman) was chosen for the study as it had 55% of the total population of Jordan and this area contains a cross-section of people reflecting different social classes.

Four objectives were specified for research. They were:

Firstly, to investigate the importance of personal sources in providing Jordanian buyers with the necessary information when buying cars.

Secondly, to examine the influence exerted by personal sources on Jordanian car buyers. For example, what sources influenced Jordanians when buying a particular car.

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Thirdly, to examine if Jordanians give information to other car buyers, whether car opinion leadership exists in Jordan and what characteristics information givers and opinion leaders have.

Fourthly, to examine forms of communication used by Jordanian car buyers when giving and receiving information and the role of word-of-mouth communication and opinion leaders in influencing the purchase decision of cars in Jordan.

The social normative influence of personal sources on the purchase decision of cars was examined, and it was found to have played an important role in the selection of a particular car. Moreover, Jordanians were found to have compared their cars with others cars. Factors such as income, occupation, general opinion, education, and age were taken into consideration when choosing a referent for this comparison.

There were significant differences between car information givers and seekers with regard to certain social characteristics such as; innovativeness or early adoption of new cars, level of influence on others' purchase decisions, level of experience in cars, and level of self-confidence when making the purchase decision. No significant differences were found between information givers and seekers with regard to level of exposure to mass media, level of social

participation and level of interest in the product area (cars).

The findings indicated that the concept of car opinion leadership exists in Jordan, and those opinion leaders were more likely to have these seven social characteristics than non-leaders (followers). Moreover, those opinion leaders were both information givers and seekers which suggests the inaccuracy of the two-step flow model of communication.

A face-to-face form of communication was the most important method used by Jordanians when seeking information from car owners or when conveying information to other car buyers.

The major conclusion of this work is that word-of-mouth communications (through face-to-face interaction) and opinion leaders were found to have played a great role in influencing the purchase decision of cars in Jordan.

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I would, also, like to acknowledge the help and cooperation received from Dr. Luiz Moutinho and Professor J. Livingstone, especially during the literature review and in connection with designing the questionnaire.

Finally, my thanks to all those who have participated in one way or another to make it possible to complete this study.

DEDICATION

To my father, mother, sisters and brothers, who sacrificed so much for me to see this work successfully completed. I dedicate this work.

To those who love me and supported me. I dedicate this work.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction:

The idea that consumers might search for information prior to a purchase decision has been widely popularized by conceptual models such as those of Howard and Sheth (1969) and Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1982). These models explain the concept of search with certain connotations of a systematic approach to decision-making, utilizing a variety of information sources and with clear evaluative criteria.

Great attention has been paid by authors and researchers, in both the behavioural sciences and in marketing research, to examining the degree of influence that different kinds of information sources have on the process of purchasing consumer durables.

Previous studies (e.g. Arndt, 1967a; Rogers E.M. and Shoemaker F.F., 1971; Corey L.G., 1971) of interpersonal communications have focused on the important impact that word-of-mouth communications may have on the purchase of durables. In this respect, marketing researchers (e.g. Robertson T. S., 1968; Engel J. F., Kegerreis R. J. and Blackwell R. D., 1970; Hirschman E. C., 1981) have examined a wide range of product and service categories and household

subsegments. As a result of this research, a concern for the impact of informal or word-of-mouth sources has emerged as a strong interest area within the field of consumer behaviour research.

Word-of-mouth communication in a vast majority of cases was found to have a significant impact on the purchase of different products and services. Foxall (1979) indicated that there is a wide agreement that non-economical factors, such as reference groups and opinion leaders (e.g. neighbouring farmers) may influence farmer's buying decisions. However, he concluded that, "there does not appear to be any consensus of opinion, as to how much importance should be placed on those factors compared with such economic influences as price and availability of credit."

Wilkening (1952) has also obtained confirming results on this point. In a survey which investigated the impact of opinion leaders on the adoption and diffusion of agricultural innovations, he found that these have a direct bearing on the main source of information and influence.

Robertson (1971) studied the effectiveness of various communication sources used by purchasers of new household appliances. He found that personal contacts finally decided the issue in 25% of cases, against a figure of 3% for the mass media, and sales in 5% of cases.

Beal and Rogers (1957) found word-of-mouth sources to be the most important in influencing housewives to purchase new fabrics. Also, Atkin (1966) showed that 80% of women reporting heavy personal influence, changed their patronage to another supermarket, while 48% of those reporting heavy television exposure did so.

Word-of-mouth impact on the purchase of new food products was confirmed by other studies. Fisk (1959) found friends and neighbours to be the most important sources of information and influence concerning new food products, for household meal planners. While Belk (1972) found opinion leaders to have strong influences on their group members attitudes.

A number of Studies (e.g. Le Grand and Udell, 1964; Wicking, 1976; Foxall, 1979; Hassan M.A., 1984; Punj G., 1987) have reported results which indicate the strong impact informal personal sources or word-of-mouth communications have on the purchase of durables.

Taking account of the above, this research is aimed at investigating word-of-mouth communications initiated by Jordanian consumers, as well as explaining the important role that these communications and opinion leaders might play in the purchase of cars within the Jordanian context. Such research is needed to explore this kind of study as a subject area widely neglected in developing countries and a lot of

studies are needed to explore it further, particularly within these countries.

Relevant theoretical literature and empirical studies were looked at to develop a suitable picture to guide research in this area. This study utilized several concepts suggested by earlier studies of consumer behaviour and more specific works in the rapidly growing literature on word-of-mouth communications and the purchase of durables, particular to the developed world.

1.2. Importance of the study:

This study is considered of major importance for the following reasons:

1. Despite the importance of consumers' satisfaction and dissatisfaction and their increased influence on the business sector's profit, the literature on marketing in developing countries has neglected the importance of word-of-mouth communications as an important source of information for the consumers. It is hoped that this study will contribute towards a better understanding of the need to avoid negative word-of-mouth communications by all business sectors and cover, to a certain extent, that gap in the literature.

2. Studies of consumer behaviour in general are almost non-existent in Jordan, hence, this kind of study is particularly

crucial to Jordan. It yields such information that will make for better utilisation of local resources. Through marketing research in general and consumer studies in particular, producers better understand the required outputs that are needed by society's members. Thus, this study provides useful information on the Jordanian consumers, to the government and to all dealers in the business sectors. Further understanding of the behaviour of Jordanian consumers, leading to the purchase of consumer goods in general and durable products in particular, is important to business firms engaged in the marketing of these goods. Insights have been gained into how Jordanian consumers reduce, by the use of simplifying strategies, the cognitive stress and behavioural effort involved in choosing a durable product. This information should be of use to manufacturers, marketers, etc., in the planning of their communication strategies to ensure greater efficiency in their use of resources and greater effectiveness. For example, the distribution and promotional efforts of these firms are directly related to consumer purchasing behaviour, and so effective marketing decisions depend on valid information pertaining to this behaviour.

Furthermore, the consumption pattern in Jordan is marked by a great demand for various imported products and services. This is due to the belief that foreign products are superior to their local counterparts. Hence, local factories utilize only part of their total capacity and therefore, local

manufacturers need to gain a greater understanding, than currently exists, of their locally-made products, thus there is an important need for this kind of consumer study.

This study is also considered to be important to international manufacturers who export their products to the Jordanian market. Those exporters need to have some knowledge about Jordanian consumers in order to be able to effectively compete in this market.

3. Since this kind of exploratory study, relating to word-of-mouth communication and its influence on the purchase of durables, has not been widely examined in the English language in the literature of the developing countries (nations), the findings could serve as a broad basis for future studies.

4. With regard to the Jordanian government and the business sector, this study was undertaken in the hope that it would provide useful information to help both government officials and business sector workers. It could provide valuable information on all Jordanian problems concerned with finding relevant and trustworthy sources of information before, during and after buying products. All this information could help the advertising policy makers in government agencies and business firms to develop credible and accessible sources of information to be used by the consumer to solve and overcome

his problems when he considers buying expensive, complex products like cars.

1.3. Presentation of the study:

The present study is reported in nine chapters, the first of which is the introductory chapter.

Chapter Two attempted to give a general background picture on Jordanian society. It began with giving a geographical description on the state of Jordan and then moves on to discuss cultural, social, and some demographical issues.

This chapter, described the characteristics of the marketing environment in Jordan. This section provided some environmental issues (e.g. the role of the public sector on Jordan's domestic economy, the monopoly system for some essential products, type of consumption used by the Jordanian consumers, etc.).

Characteristics of Jordanian consumers are explained. Characteristics such as an individual's average annual income, geographical distribution of Jordanians, tendency to prefer foreign commodities and services, tendency to buy in bulk and so on.

These geographical, cultural, social and marketing issues,

must be carefully understood by marketers who wish to operate or who are, already, operating in the Jordanian market. Managing successfully, the marketing mix strategy, for example, depends heavily on understanding social and cultural issues in a particular society.

Chapter Three mainly reviewed the literature related to personal sources of information, word of mouth communication, opinion leadership, and reference groups influence on the purchase decision.

The nature of the purchase decision of durable products, factors affecting the level of information search from personal sources, the concept of opinion leadership and characteristics of opinion leaders, and the value of the non-marketer dominated sources of information and its importance to the consumer are all covered in this chapter.

Chapter Four covered mainly the formulation of the research hypotheses and the study questionnaire. It discussed the justification of the research hypotheses, the justification of the method of data collection. It also discussed the rationale for each question included in the questionnaire and the operationalisation of the concepts included in the study and the linkage to the antecedent questionnaire.

Chapter Five discussed the research methodology. It covered identification of the research problem and objectives, the

formulation of hypotheses, the choice of a particular product, research design, the translation and pilot test of questionnaire, response rate of the survey. This chapter, also, covered the statistical package and the statistical techniques used when the data was analysed.

Chapter Six presented the research findings related to the importance of personal sources of information for Jordanian car buyers. It explored the factors which have motivated Jordanian car buyers to search for information from personal sources and the reasons for using these sources. It discussed the types of information sought by Jordanian consumers from these sources, and the reasons for conveying car information by Jordanians to other car buyers.

Chapter Seven explored the influence exerted by personal sources on Jordanian consumers purchase decision of cars. This chapter showed the sources of social normative influence faced by Jordanian car buyers and it investigated whether Jordanian car buyers compare their cars with other cars and what factors are taken into consideration by them when selecting a referent whose his/her car will be compared with.

Chapter Eight examined the existence of car opinion leadership in Jordan. It investigated whether Jordanians give information to other car buyers and what differences exist between car information givers and non-givers regarding some

opinion leaders characteristics (i.e. exposure to mass media, social participation, innovativeness or early adopters or buyers of new cars, influence on other purchase decision of cars, car experience, self confidence when making the purchase decision and level of interest in cars).

The chapter, also, examined whether car opinion leaders in Jordan are more likely to have these characteristics than non-leaders. The validity of the two-step flow model of communication is also examined in this chapter.

Chapter Nine looked at the influence of word-of-mouth communications on the purchase of cars in Jordan. It outlined the forms of communication used by Jordanians when giving and receiving car information from others. Also, this chapter showed the influence exerted by either information givers and car opinion leaders on the purchase of cars in Jordan.

Chapter Ten summarised the main findings of the study, discussed its implications as well as its limitations, and suggested areas for further research in the topic of word-of-mouth communications in consumer and industrial markets. This chapter also included a model which described the use of personal sources of information and word-of-mouth communication in Jordan.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND ON JORDANIAN SOCIETY

2.1. INTRODUCTION:

Jordan is one of the smaller countries on the eastern borders of the Mediterranean and is one of several states which came into being as a result of the First World War. It is bounded on the north by Syria, on the north-east by Iraq, on the east and south by Saudi Arabia, and on the west by Israel. The total population area of Jordan is 97,740 sq km (37,738 sq miles). Jordan is bound to the west by the great Rift, which runs along the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea and down through the Gulf of Aqaba. In the north and centre of the country, the land rises steeply to the east to a line of precipitous hills some 3500 feet above sea level. Beyond these is the plateau region which stretches from the Syrian border down to the town of Ma'an. South of Ma'an the area is mountainous, sloping down to Jordan's only port of Aqaba on the Red Sea. To the east of the country is the vast expanse of the Syrian Desert.

According to the latest census in 1979, Jordan had a population of 2,147,065 people. It has seven main cities, namely, Amman, Zarka, Irbid, Salt, Karak, Ma'an and Aqaba. The largest city is Amman the capital which had, according to the above mentioned census, a population of 1,185,181 people.

Jordan is not an oil producing country, and has also to import most of its basic requirements. All Jordan's development plans have consequently aimed at reducing the trade deficit and increasing economic self-sufficiency.

The country's monetary unit is the Jordan dinar, equivalent to about 3.00 U.S dollar in 1987. The dinar is divided into 1000 fils or, more popularly, 100 piastres.

2.2. The nature of Jordan's social structure:

The nature of Jordan's social structure, its organization and welfare services are rooted in the values and traditions of Arab Muslim Culture. One of the Five Basic Pillars of Faith in Islam is the practice of Alms-giving and care of needy. Furthermore, people's behaviour is heavily influenced by the value, norms and expectations of Islam. Jordan's social structure involves strong kinship patterns. The clan is the basis of the Jordanian tribal society and the extended family is the foundation of rural and urban society and thus there is a strong sense of loyalty to the clan or family.

2.3. Population characteristics:

According to the results of the Housing census in 1955, the population of Jordan was 587,000. According to the 1961 population census the population was 1,952,000, which means that the population has more than tripled in 23 years. The

population census (1979), gave a figure of 2,147,065 people. At the current growth rate of 3.5 percent the population will double again in 20 years. Jordan has no formal population policy, nevertheless, in March 1973 a "National Population Commission" was established to take over the responsibility of planning and promoting a national policy. In common with many other developing countries, the population of Jordan is very young; over 50 percent of the population being under 15 years of age. This young age composition of the population of Jordan is largely responsible for a very high ratio of child dependency. The ratio of dependents to 100 persons in the working age group (15-60) in Jordan is as high as 117. This means that, on the average, each adult has to support at least one child. This exceptionally high ratio, compared to either developed or other developing countries, places a heavy burden on the adult population and also on the national resources (see, Jordan fertility, 1976, published in, 1979).

2.4. Characteristics of the marketing environment in Jordan:

Whoever uses marketing, at whatever level and wherever in the world, the marketing environment in which he or she operating must be understood. There is an intimate relationship between the organisation (whether public, private, commercial or non-commercial) and its ever-changing environment. To be successful the marketer must understand the basic issues, especially the external uncontrollable ones, anticipated

development and respond to them (Kinsey J., 1988). There is no denying that the marketing environment characteristics in any society, are affected by environmental circumstances. Thus marketing environment characteristics have an important role to play in the form and direction of any social activities, especially in the consumer behaviour field and, in particular, in the consumer's face-to-face interaction with others. These characteristics are different from one society to another, and the investigation of these characteristics, therefore, is very important in understanding and developing a picture of the consumers' behaviour and activities within the Jordanian context. These characteristics in Jordan can be summarised as follows:

a. Although the Jordanian market has many dealers, domestic and industrial trades and co-operatives, there is little relevant data about the existing marketing systems, i.e., scarcity of market data and information concerning demand, consumption, opportunities and competition in Jordan.

b. It has been suggested by others (e.g., Hess and Cateora 1966; Saddik 1973) that marketing is viewed in developing countries as a wasteful activity inappropriate to economies, this viewpoint exists in Jordan and too little attention has been given to the role of marketing in economic growth in Jordan. A major cause for this relative lack of emphasis on marketing in Jordan stems from the fact that most if not all

business firms and organisations are production oriented rather than consumer oriented ones.

c. As a developing country, Jordan's public sector plays the most important role in the domestic economy in both the production (e.g., Cement and Phosphate) and in the investment field. Therefore, the private sector still needs to be encouraged, financially supported and relieved of tax in order to expand its role in economic growth.

d. For the purpose of protecting Jordanian consumers, the monopoly system is still employed by the Jordanian government for some essential products (e.g., Oil and Nutritional products).

e. Government intervention for some essential products exists in Jordan. This intervention comes from the fact that the profit and the price for some principal products (e.g., Nutritional products) and services (e.g., transportation fares) had to be determined by the government. This is important since Jordanians tend to have large families and earn low monthly incomes. Hence, such intervention has become a main characteristic in the Jordanian economy.

f. Because of choice availability between domestic and imported goods, Jordanian consumers tend to copy consumption patterns followed in foreign markets. This phenomenon came as a result of Jordan's free economy policy, with a consequent

increase in imports of foreign products, in general, and consumption products in particular.

2.5. Characteristics of the Jordanian consumers:

Howard, J.A. (1977) has explained that consumers' decision processes could manifest themselves in three different ways. These are as follows:

1. Extensive problem solving:

Extensive problem solving behaviour is the type of behaviour which the consumers manifest when confronted with a product they have never encountered before. It has the following characteristics: (a) the consumers need a considerable amount of information in order to decide whether to buy a particular product (b) they take a long time to make up their minds.

2. Limited problem solving:

Limited problem solving occurs when consumers are confronted with a new brand which belongs to a product class already known to them. Behaviour in this case involves evaluating how well the new brand measures up to the known brands in the same product class. Consumers here need less information and their decision time is shorter.

3. Routinised response behaviour:

Routinised response behaviour occurs when the different brands in a product class become relatively well-known to the consumer in terms of quality and price. The behaviour involved is characterised by little need for information and by quick decision.

Consumer behaviour was defined by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1968), as:

"the act of individuals directly involved in obtaining and using economic goods and services, including the decision processes that precede and determine the act." (p.5)

Whatever form the decision process takes, the environmental circumstances of every society exercise an important influence over the form and the processes involved in the consumer's purchase decision. Also, these environmental circumstances are affected by the characteristics of consumers.

In Jordan, the consumer is distinguished by a number of important characteristics which are affected by the environmental circumstances of society, hence they exercise an important influence over the form and the processes involved in the consumer's purchase decision. These characteristics are as follows:

1. The Low level of per capita income:

Although the individual income in Jordan has developed upwards over the last ten years, the average income still ranks among middle level incomes when compared with world standards (Kinsey J., 1988, p. 350).

Table (2.1)

The average income in Jordan and some advanced countries in 1984.

State : Jordan	USA	UK	Austria	France	Japan	Denmark
income:\$1570	\$15390	\$8570	9140	9760	10630	11170

State : Canada	Norway	Switzerland	W.Germany	Finland
Income: 13280	13940	16330	11130	10770

Source: Kinsey J., (1988) "Marketing in developing countries", Macmillan Education Ltd, Hong kong, pp.(350-352).

The Jordanian economy shows certain signs of improvement amidst the continued adverse impact of factors in this area of the world. GDP at current factor cost totalled 1,444.3 million(exchange rate of the Jordanian dinar = 3 U.S. dollars in 1987), that is an increase of 3.3% compared with only 0.8% in 1987). At current market prices, GDP moved up at a slightly quicker pace as it grew 2.8% against 2.1% in 1986

and thus amounted to JD 1,686,3 million. All sectors contributed to this growth with the exception of the construction sector which has been retreating since 1985.

The economic evolution in the last few years in Jordan has rendered most of the increases in the average income ascribable to the doubling of profits and surpluses of the leading senior merchants, and the increased income of skilled workers on non-fixed income sector (governmental employees) who are in the majority.

The increase in the average income in Jordan came as a result of the price rises of commodities, notably consumer goods. Jordanians, therefore, tend to suffer from the relative reduction of their average income when compared with income worldwide. The purchasing power of the Jordanian consumer is still very limited because the increase in the average income falls below the steady rise in standard prices.

2. Geographical distribution of Jordanians:

The geographic distribution of Jordanians has reflected the pattern of rainfall and cultivation. In general, about 87% of the population are concentrated in less than one-eighth of land area, in the north-west uplands. Most of the rest of the population live in a scattered area in various areas of the country.

The rate of increase in the number of inhabitants in urban zones, which has occurred recently, is at the expense of a corresponding decline in the number of inhabitants in rural areas and all indicators point to the fact that this situation will be maintained in the future.

The newcomers from rural areas to urban areas would lead to new norms of consumption because:

a. A large proportion of the population is concentrated in urban zones.

b. The life style in urban areas in Jordan differs from the life style in rural areas, these newcomers will demand new kinds of commodities and services.

c. This new demand could, in turn, create some supply shortages and bottlenecks in the required new commodities and services (e.g., housing, public transport, telephone, etc).

3. Level of illiteracy:

The findings of the Multi-purpose Household survey for 1976 showed that the proportion of illiteracy in Jordan (for those 12 years of age and over) reached 29.3% of the total population in the sample (the size was 14,000 households). This proportion varied greatly between females and males,

that is 40.9% and 17.8%, respectively. Furthermore, the total proportion was only 26% in urban areas in contrast to 44.3% in rural areas. The highest proportion of illiteracy existed among rural females, that is 61.4% of their total (Department of Statistics, 1979). This relatively, high rate of illiteracy in Jordanian society while generally decreasing indicates the obstacles confronting efforts to educate the consumer and promote consumer products.

4. Increase in the number of Jordanian workers abroad:

Jordan's population is, according to the latest census in 1979, about (2.147.065) million and is increasing at an annual rate of 3.8%. Additionally, about a quarter of a million Jordanians are working abroad. Some are working in Arab or other countries, sometimes accompanied by dependents or companions (e.g., wives and family or relatives). Others are abroad pursuing educational aims. This large number of Jordanians working abroad could create a strong influence on the consumer norms and consumer behaviour. When they return home, those workers, for example, will have stronger purchasing power, a new consumer demand pattern, and new consumer habits from the various societies where they worked.

5. Tendency to prefer foreign commodities and services:

Domestic manufacturers and producers need to gain a better understanding of their potential consumers in order to

successfully market their locally-made products, which are at present frequently regarded as inferior to their imported rivals. Therefore, a consumption pattern in Jordan, which can not be overlooked, is the great demand for various imported products and services. Consumers themselves give preference to the kind of goods and services that imitate foreign goods. This pattern of consumption is due to the belief that foreign products are superior to local ones.

6. Tendency to buy in bulk:

A habit exhibited by Jordanians is their willingness to buy in large quantities. This can cause repeated supply shortages and bottlenecks in numerous commodities. Although this habit is inconsistent with the consumer's actual requirement, it exists for the following reasons:

a. The propensity of Jordanians to have large families:

One of the main characteristics of the Jordanians is their tendency to have large families. This characteristic is rooted in their Islamic religious backgrounds, as Islam forbids the idea of birth limit. Therefore, the head of the house has to buy in bulk in order to satisfy the needs of his family and, also, to obtain discount which, in turn, means further purchasing power and/or savings.

b. Social and cultural backgrounds:

Because of social and cultural backgrounds, Jordanians tend to perceive a person who buys in bulk, rather than small, quantities as a generous person. Therefore, anyone who buys small amount (e.g., food) is seen as a miser. For example, this is most apparent when one is invited for a meal. Instead of being offered food for one person he/she is given food enough for several people.

2.6. The research environment:

Research in marketing is particularly important in the Jordanian context in order to understand the consumer who is operating within an extremely complex and versatile marketing environment. At the same time, the successful undertaking of research in marketing in Jordan is particularly hazardous too. While there is an obvious need for good research, there are also enormous barriers to achieving it.

The following discussion considers the barriers relating to to factors within the Jordanian environment pertinent to this study.

a. Lack of marketing information:

Despite the complexity of the Jordanian environment in terms of greater instability regarding supply and demand, different

social and cultural norms and values and more fragmented markets than those experienced in the West, research in marketing which, first and foremost, provides useful information in directing producers to develop marketable goods and suggesting more effective distribution and communication channels, is almost non-existent.

Research in marketing has the ability to allow the optimum co-ordination of activities within any parameters and at any level. Although there is an increasing need for marketing studies to understand the country's complex environment, the value attributed to this function is often underestimated by Jordanian officials and firms. Where a production rather than a marketing orientation exists, motivational research is likely to be regarded as unimportant. It is often found that greater emphasis is given to judgement and indirect informalised feedback from consumers rather than formal consumer or market research. If formal research is undertaken, it is often, primarily, for the purpose of sales analysis. Advertising and product research are totally ignored.

While general marketing literature is available in a very large scale in the West, its existence in Jordan is almost nil and if one or two studies are available, they will suffer from accessibility. Moreover, published research on word-of-mouth communication and consumer behaviour, which is easily available and accessible in the West, is non-existent in

Jordan. This conclusion was reached after a computer search was carried out and consultations with the Jordanian Universities were made.

Although universities and colleges in Jordan should be a potential source for marketing information, they are not. For example, local companies are reluctant to use these institutions to carry out research, even if the skills are available. This is simply because these institutions are not seen as a source of expert advice. Equally, the academics tend to see themselves as educators, not industrialists, and do not want to be involved. This behaviour has been detrimental to the availability and accessibility of marketing literature in Jordan.

Therefore, lack of adequate and accessible information is one of the biggest problems that any researcher can face in Jordan. However, this is the opposite when it comes to the West, where information is widely available and accessible for whoever wishes to carry out a particular study.

b. Social and cultural factors:

One of the most pronounced aspects of the Jordanian culture is religion. Islam in its puritan forms permeates every aspect of life in Jordan. For Jordanians, Islam spells out almost every detail of private and public life to such an

extent that it appears to leave little scope for individual initiative. It is inclined to challenge everything new. Breaking its precepts can lead, at times, to strong punishments.

The view of Islam on "immorality" includes, among other things, not only a failure in fulfilling ones religious obligations but also such matters as the mixing of male and female, listening to music, wearing modern dress, bodily adornment for both men and women, drinking liquor, going to the movies, and believing in evolution. In a sense, Islam is the "spiritual-ego" of Jordanians. Therefore, the values, beliefs and behaviour of Jordanians are in conjunction with religious requirements.

This type of culture restricts the method of data collection that could be used. For example, if a study requires the use of personal interviews, it would be impossible to be carried out especially if the sample included women. Men and women are usually segregated because Islam does not allow the mixing of both sexes. This problem is magnified when it comes to a stranger who is male.

If the study requires the use of telephone survey, the interviewer will run into similar problems. For example, if a respondent happened to be a female, there will be no question about her reaction, the receiver will be put down and this means that the interviewer must not try again. Moreover, the

low level of telephone ownership among Jordanians makes this method more impossible especially when a random sample is to be used. Further, the use of observation will run into restrictions due to Islamic Culture.

There is no comparison between the way women are treated in Jordan and the way they are treated in the West. For example, there is no segregation in the West, and researchers could conduct telephone and personal interviews with women and men without facing the problem that exists in Jordan.

Education:

Education is an important factor in determining the type and quality of human resources available and it would influence such attitudes as decision-making and willingness to accept change, also plays an important part in perpetuating cultural attitudes.

However, because of the recent history of Jordan, the levels of education among the general public is lower than that in the West. Therefore, this factor is likely to affect the outcome of any study to be carried out in that society. To avoid this, the researcher must make sure that his respondents understand the study questions as they are meant. Moreover, the researcher must use tactful means (e.g. understanding, respect, appreciation and sociability) in order to secure the co-operation of the study respondents

especially those with low levels of education. The low level of education among the general public in Jordan could become a real and serious problem for any researcher if he did not deal with this matter very tactfully.

Language:

Language is one of the major cultural issues and it is the most obvious difference between cultures. Arabic is the prominent language for Jordanians and the State's official language.

The literature on word-of-mouth communication is usually generated in the West particularly in the USA and UK. Since this study was concerned with the Jordanian society, the questionnaire had to be translated into Arabic and some concepts had to be tested using more than one statement/item. This was due to the fact that some concepts used in the West mean different things when translated into Arabic. For example, knowledge and experience in the UK or USA is usually measured through the use of one or two statements or questions (see section 4.3.2 in Chapter Four). These two concepts mean more than two things in Arabic, therefore, the researcher had to use four statements (i.e., Q3a, Q3b, Q3c and Q3d). The same is applicable to some other concepts which were measured through the use of more than one statement or item. Furthermore, when the sample of the study was found to

be heterogeneous, the language used in the Arabic version was made as simple as possible.

Hence, language is another important cultural factor which could affect the final outcome of any study if inaccurate or unclear language was used. Complete understanding of the peculiarity must be fully understood and people's way of thinking must be carefully considered.

c. Sampling limitations:

One of the reasons for restricting the focus of this research to cars is related to sampling problems. Since the generalisability of the research findings on the population of study was necessary, random sampling technique was necessary. This sampling technique was possible in this study as the researcher was allowed access to the files of the Jordanian License Authority which contained the names and addresses of car owners living in the area of study.

However, it is impossible for anybody to find official or unofficial files concerning Jordanian owners of other durables. Moreover, there are no accurate registers on population characteristics (e.g. age/sex breakdown), inaccurate telephone directories, no maps or outdated maps. When official files concerning any aspect of Jordanian life do not exist, the best approach to conducting a study will be through the use of convenience, judgement or quota sampling

techniques. Such methods will be cost effective although they might not yield the most accurate results.

In contrast, the opposite is found in the West, where it is possible to get a good idea of the total population under study. For example, its composition, location and the rest. From this a probability based sample can be drawn up regarding any matter, with predictable error and deviation from the universal.

d. Legal environments:

The legal environment is composed of laws, government agencies, and pressure groups which influence and constrain various organisations and individuals in society (Kotter, 1988).

The legal environment in Jordan is crucial, Without obtaining the agreement of the government, almost no study would be financially sponsored. The legal environment in Jordan affects any study in two major ways. Firstly, in the selection of the subject and secondly, in the fieldwork.

The selection of the subject:

Post graduate research and other major studies have to have the full approval of the sponsoring body, which is governmental in most cases. Once the subject has been

selected and approved, changing it is a very difficult job. If the researcher chooses to change the subject of study, he will be severely punished. For example, this study had to be approved by a committee working together at Mu'tah University.

The fieldwork:

No survey could take place in Jordan without obtaining the necessary approval of the government. For example, the researcher of this study had to get permission from the Department of Public Statistics to conduct the survey.

If the study was not approved or permission was not given to the concerned researcher to conduct his survey, the study would never be possible. Thus, the legal environment in Jordan is one of the most important factors which could potentially jeopardise any study.

2.7. Conclusion:

In this chapter, various cultural issues pertinent to Jordan have been discussed. The nature of the marketing environment and its characteristics in Jordan have been explained. It has been argued that the behavioural aspects of consumers, taken in conjunction with consumer characteristics, interact with the environmental circumstances to play an important part in

consumer purchase decisions in any society. Moreover, examination of these aspects highlight the problems faced by the consumer during and after the purchase of products and in identifying their attitudes towards those problems, develop a better marketing strategy and an effective use of the marketing mix elements.

The social and cultural issues, discussed in this chapter, have a great influence on the importance of word-of-mouth communication for Jordanian consumers.

For example, as Islam, which motivates its members to consult each other, is the mainspring of culture in Jordan, the influence of word-of-mouth communication on making decisions (e.g., purchase decisions) would increase.

The low level of per capita income, for example, would increase the level of financial risk perception (as the results showed in chapter five) when buying an expensive product such as a car. Consumers who are on a low level of monthly incomes are very anxious to get the right product for their money. Therefore, they use word-of-mouth communication with friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours in order to buy the right one.

The research environment was also discussed and factors such as lack of marketing information, social and cultural factors, sampling limitations and the legal environment were

highlighted. These factors, as shown earlier, impose enormous problems and restrictions on the researcher and the research.

CHAPTER THREE
LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction:

Studies of product-related conversations have typically looked at the motives of participants, to explain word-of-mouth occurrence. Investigations have tended to classify participants as either senders or receivers and have sought explanations in terms of risk reduction, dissonance reduction, opinion leadership, and information acquisition.

The importance of word-of-mouth in influencing a buyers' purchase decision is well-documented (e.g., Arndt 1967a; King 1966; Richins M., 1983). There are essentially three areas of research which provide the bulk of the evidence to support the existence of the powerful role that word-of-mouth plays in the diffusion of innovations.

First, there is research on the classification of the buyer's mental process into sequential stages of awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption. It is asserted that, although a buyer becomes aware of an innovation mostly through the mass media, it is word-of-mouth sources which are mostly used by the buyer at the critical stage of evaluating the innovation (Roger 1962).

The second area of research is the well-known hypothesis of the two-step flow of communication. This asserts that the mass media influences a small group of individuals called opinion leaders, who in turn influence the masses (already aware of the innovation) to adopt the innovation (Katz, 1957).

The third area of research is somewhat indirect and more general. It deals with the influence of reference groups in the acquisition of products and services including innovations (Brooks 1957; Bourne, 1957).

All three areas of research have one additional aspect in common. All of them have, by and large, dealt with innovations which are either (1) radically new, for which there existed no product class concept prior to introduction, or (2) introduced into those existing product classes which would be considered as high-risk because of the enormity of economic, social, and personal consequences entailed in their purchase and consumption.

Marketing firms have traditionally been interested in consumer satisfaction, and with good reason. Customers continue to purchase those products with which they are satisfied, and in telling others about particularly pleasing products, they may influence the brand perceptions of those with whom they communicate.

The topic of this study is the impact of word-of-mouth on the purchase of durable goods by Jordanian consumers. In this literature review, the researcher will identify the role of this type of interaction and influence on the consumer purchase of durables, and explore in particular those areas that one might expect to prove most relevant to this study.

3.2. The Nature of Durable Goods and The Decision-Making Processes:

In earlier times, marketers could arrive at a fair understanding of consumers through the daily experience of selling to them. But the growth in the size of firms and markets has removed many marketing decision makers from direct contact with their customers. Increasingly, managers have had to turn to consumer research. They are spending more money than ever to study consumers, trying to learn: Who buys? How do they buy? When do they buy? Where do they buy? Why do they buy?. Kotler P., (1984) noted: "Understanding the buying behavior of the target market is the essential task of marketing management under the marketing concept"(p.121).

Generally, much of buying behaviour is more or less repetitive brand choice decisions. During his life cycle, the buyer establishes purchase cycles for various products, which determine how often he will buy the products. For some products, his cycle is very lengthy, for example, the infrequent buying of durable products. Many other products

have a short purchase cycle, for example, fast moving products. However, Moutinho, L. (1987) stated:

"Consumer behaviour refers to the process of acquiring and organizing information in the direction of a purchase decision and of using and evaluating products and services. This process encompasses these stages of searching for, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services."(p.5)

This description of consumer behaviour shows that, buyers often face the dilemma of wanting to purchase a product, and yet hesitating to buy because it involves taking the risk of suffering some type of loss. When faced with this dilemma, the consumer is confronted with a variety of methods which could be used to reduce the risk of loss. For example, he could rely on his previous success with a brand, study published test results on the product, seek advice from friends, or try a free sample.

Consumer behaviour theory is ,therefore, concerned with, how, when, and why consumers buy products. In more general terms, "the objective of consumer behaviour as a field of inquiry is to understand, explain, and predict human actions in the consumption role" (Ward and Robertson, 1973, p.6). This broad and complex arena has been the focus of a vast number of studies looking at particular aspects of the process.

Consumers' consumption of goods and services is virtually a

continuous process which exhibits many consistent and repetitive patterns. Consumer behaviour in the main is, habitual and, once established, slow to change.

A widely varied inventory of goods must be maintained by the consumer in order to facilitate continuous consumption activities. Since most goods eventually "give up" their utilities, replacement purchases must be made intermittently. Consumers commonly anticipate future requirements and periodically store goods (e.g., food) for future use. This is possible largely because of the habitual, repetitive nature of most consumption.

Although much consumption and purchasing behaviour exhibits habitual, often "routine", characteristics, even casual observation and experience reveal a wide diversity in this behaviour among consumers. These elements of diversity and change suggest that a number of factors, many of which are subject to alteration over time, enter into individual family consumption and purchasing decisions. Thus, the decision-making that precedes even habitual consumption may have characteristics of truly deliberative problem-solving behaviour.

Consumption decision-making deals with complex sets of perceived risk, including financial risk, functional or operational risk, socio-psychological risk and individual psychological risk. The determination of consumption goals

requires choices amongst perceived risk that have been grouped together in some type of weighting system. The matter is further complicated by the need to forecast future risks; purchasing precedes consumption, and results in commitment to a particular set of consumption goals.

Decision-making, leading to a purchase, entails a process of comparing the perceived problem-satisfying qualities of goods and services with consumption goals. Just as alternative goals exist, alternative goods and services, offering different qualities, are found. A process of selection is thus required. The future problem of selecting the right qualities of goods and services must be predicted. The entire decision-making process can thus be conceived of as a matching of expectations of future problems with expectations of obtaining the right qualities of alternative goods and services. Each set of expectations must be made in the context of uncertainty; forecasting future risks (i.e, long term of commitment, financial, functional or operational, socio-psychology and individual psychological risks) can not be made with complex accuracy.

Although nearly all goods are purchased for future consumption, they vary considerably in the degree to which purchases result in commitment to future consumption. Some must be consumed soon after purchase, such as perishable foods. Others may be purchased long before consumption, such

as pain killers. Variation also occurs in the "shelf-life" of the purchase. Fashion clothing may be worn for one or a few seasons; cars may be used for years. In general, the purchase of goods which need not be used soon after purchase and which offer utilities over extended time periods result in a long period of commitment. Most durable goods purchases result in long commitment, which can be modified only by the sale or trade in of the item before the end of its life. Thus, these purchases are likely to entail careful consideration of future needs and habits, avoidance of future risks (i.e., risks associated with purchasing the product) and finding a specific product to match these expected needs and habits.

The long commitment associated with durable goods purchases, alone, does not entirely explain the frequent observation that consumers devote considerable time and effort to making these purchases. It is true that infrequently made decisions, whose "consequences" are known to extend relatively far into the future, can not be guided by habitual behaviour, as Katona and Mueller (1955) point out, but neither are they necessarily characterised by truly deliberative problem-solving behaviour. Every purchase requires expenditure that could have been used for alternative purchases or savings. The risk factors (i.e., long term commitment, financial, functional or operational, socio-psychological and individual psychological) provide a useful approach to the classification of goods in terms of the degree of deliberative, problem-solving behaviour associated with their

purchase. Short commitment, low-priced purchases can be illustrated by such items as breakfast cereal, gasoline, and movie attendance. A short commitment, high-priced purchase might be an airline ticket; moderate deliberation precedes the purchase because the ease of forecasting such a short term future need is partly offset by the relatively high price of the ticket. Durable products evoke deliberate purchasing behaviour for quite different reasons: the long-term commitment (also long-term future needs are more difficult to anticipate); the financial consequences of an incorrect decision is serious; functional or operational, socio-psychological and individual psychological reasons are important as well. There have been attempts to produce comprehensive models of the consumer decision process. For example, the Engel Kollat, and Blackwell model (Engel and Blackwell, 1982), the Howard-Sheth model (Howard and Sheth, 1969), Farley and Howard model (1974), the Howard-Ostlund model (Howard and Ostlund, 1973), the Howard model (Howard, 1977), and the Nicosia model (Nicosia, 1966). The Engel Kollat and Blackwell, the Howard and Sheth and the Howard models are explained in this section.

Despite the differences between these models in terms of their concepts and the relationships between these concepts, they all represent a problem solving process whereby the consumer feels the need to purchase a product (problem recognition), searches for information on the different alternative products that he can buy (search), evaluates

these alternatives (alternative evaluation), and then makes his decision (choice). They are all, as Engel and Blackwell (1982) point out, extended problem solving models. There has been a growing recognition in the past few years, that this kind of extended problem-solving model is likely to be relevant only for a proportion of the purchases a consumer makes. Thus a distinction is, currently, increasingly being made between "high involvement" and "low involvement" consumer decisions (e.g, Houston and Rothchild, 1978; Vaughn, 1980; Kassarian, 1982; Richins M., L., 1983).

Durable products are usually expensive, often complex and sometimes socially and psychologically significant. Puto C., P., (1987), studied the farmer's purchase decision of farm machinery. He stated:

"however, recent findings in the study of decision making under conditions of uncertainty (e.g, risky choice) represent potential opportunities for increasing our knowledge of this important and complex facet of consumer behaviour". (p.301)

He continued:

"of particular interest is the fact that several recent reviews in behavioural decision theory have concluded that individual choice varies with the nature of the decision environment." (p.301)

Durable products are risky (i.e, expensive, have long term of commitment, are often complex, sometimes socially and psychologically significant and so on). Therefore, consumers may employ deliberate purchasing behaviour.

However, researchers (e.g., Cunningham, 1967b; Arndt, 1967b; Punj G., 1987), found that, word-of-mouth can affect the purchasing decision in the search and information gathering stage, also word-of-mouth can affect this decision through other routes. In the Howard-Sheth model (1969), word-of-mouth and reference group influence is treated as an "exogenous variable" and it is included under the heading "social and organisational setting". This variable affects the consumer's attitude, brand comprehension, intention and motives, and through its effects on motives, this variable can indirectly affect the consumer's choice criteria. If we look at the Howard model (1977), we notice that Howard did not include in his flow chart, the effects of the external variables of the previous Howard and Sheth model on the various constructs of the decision process. However, he clearly acknowledged the effects of word-of-mouth influence on this process in his description of his model (Howard, 1977). He suggested that social influence, transmitted mainly by word-of-mouth, affects the "information exposed" construct in the model (p.205) and it will consequently affect the brand concept in the identification construct.

Furthermore, Howard suggests that interpersonal influence

affects, in different degrees, all the three types of purchasing processes (i.e., routinised response behaviour, limited problem solving and extensive problem solving) which he distinguishes, but most particularly limited problem solving, and extensive problem solving. He proposes that in routinised response behaviour, (buying a familiar brand in a familiar product class) the consumer's need for information is minimal and so is the effect of social influence. However, in limited problem solving (buying a new brand in an established product class), the consumer's beliefs and attitudes towards the brand will be subject to word-of-mouth influence "especially when, as is often the case, the contribution of a product to choice criteria is unclear" (p. 178). Howard also suggests that interpersonal influence affects the choice criteria (through the social reasons for buying a product, e.g., to be more respected by others) and the confidence constructs in this type of decision. Finally, Howard suggests that interpersonal influence in the extensive problem solving type of decision (perceived as generally occurring in purchasing a new brand in a new product class) is very strong, especially in the determination of the choice criteria (Munir, A., 1985).

The Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell model (Engel and Blackwell, 1982), define a high involvement purchase decision as one which has high personal relevance for the individual as a consequence of one or more of a range of factors, such as

high costs, long term commitment to a product, and the impact on the consumer's self and social image. This model incorporates the effects of social or word-of-mouth influence on the various stages and variables in the purchasing decision. According to this model, word-of-mouth influence (perceived in the model as reference group influence) can directly affect life-style and normative compliance and informational influence. Through its affect on life-style, group influence can indirectly affect constructs. It can also affect motives, the evaluative criteria, and problem recognition through the evaluative criteria, the consumer beliefs, attitudes and intentions as well, of course, as search. Through normative compliance, group influence can also affect intentions and choice (Munir, A., 1985).

3.3. Factors affecting the level of information search:

The topic of information search has received great attention in the literature (e.g., Moore and Lehmann, 1980; Biehal and Chakravarti, 1986; Fletcher, K., 1986). An understanding of consumer information-seeking activities, essential in the design of efficient communication, distribution and merchandising strategies by marketers and retailers. Moreover, public agencies concerned with consumer welfare require improved knowledge of buyer information search.

In the area of durable goods purchases, studies have

typically sought to determine the amount of search conducted by consumers prior to purchase, as well as to identify the major influences on such search. Various measures of search have been reported, including retail store visits, sources and types of information used, alternatives considered, purchase decision duration, as well as comprehensive indices used on combinations of these items (Newman and Staelin, 1973). Results indicate considerable diversity of search concerning consumers, many appearing to do little, if any, implicit information gathering. Questions have been used, however, as to whether past measures of search accurately reflect the full extent of buyer information seeking (Newman and Lockeman, 1975).

Newman and Staelin (1973) studied consumer usage of four distinct information sources for durable goods-personal (friends and neighbours), neutral (books, magazine articles, and pamphlets), advertising and retail outlet - but reported data only for each source individually and without indication of intensity of source usage. The study did indicate, however, that uses of different sources were positively intercorrelated.

The variability in source usage noted by Newman and Staelin (1972,1973) and the broad, overall patterns of search noted by Claxton, Fry, and Portis (1974) together suggest that distinctive patterns of source usage may characterise buyers of durable goods. Some individuals, for example, may prefer

to limit their prepurchase search to certain kinds of sources, whereas others may choose to consult a wider variety of sources.

However, the search for further information, may be viewed as a suitable way of reducing decision uncertainty, or the degree of risk perceived, which may be inherent in decision-taking. Cox (1967a) argued that where a decision is viewed as a risk taking activity, then a buyer's search for information may be seen as a way of reducing decision uncertainty, that is a risk reducing mechanism.

There are many factors that can affect the level of information search. the following discussion will explain.

3.3.1. Perceived risk and information search:

The concept of risk in relation to consumer purchase, was first introduced by Bauer (1960) who suggested that the consumer perceives risks because purchasing a product involves consequences, some of which are likely to be unpleasant, which the consumer cannot anticipate with certainty. Bauer also proposed that consumers "develop decision strategies" in order to reduce the risk associated with the purchasing decision. Brand loyalty and susceptibility to group and personal influence are two of such strategies. Webster (1970) raises the issue in relation to industrial markets when he noted:

"Because purchase decisions involve uncertainty and risk, buyers seek information which will help to assess the consequences of alternative purchases. In some instances the information provided by marketers and through advertising display, salesmen and other promotional methods is sufficient. As the amount of perceived risk in a purchase increases, however, it is likely that the buyer will seek additional information from those who have had experience with the product and who are seen as being more objective and trustworthy than commercial sources. Word-of-mouth information seeking through informal channels may thus be an attempt to correct for perceived deficiencies in formal, marketer-provided communications" (Webster, 1970, p.186, in: Kiel, 1978).

Cunningham (1967b) found a relationship between high perceived risk and probability of being involved in word-of-mouth activity for two products, headache remedies and fabric softeners, but not for dry spaghetti. He could find no relationship between the level of perceived risk and the number of people talked to, the recency of talking and the frequency of talking

Howard, Sheth (1969), argued strongly that the buyer actively seeks information when he is just beginning to purchase a product class. They wrote:

"When the buyer is just beginning to purchase a

product class, such as making a purchase required by a change in his life, he lacks experience, he has neither well defined choice criteria nor any knowledge of the various brands and their potential. He, therefore, actively seeks information from his commercial and social environment" (p.26).

Therefore, word-of-mouth is likely to affect the purchase decision process, when acquiring information about a product or range of products. Here, the consumer might be exposed to product information from marketer-dominated sources, such as advertising and salesmen in retail stores, from neutral sources such as consumer magazines, and from non-marketer dominated sources or personal sources such as friends and relatives. Also, the consumer might deliberately seek this information from these sources (Munir, A., 1985).

Recent research on the attitude-behaviour relation, conducted by Jaccard J., (1988) has emphasized the importance of studying attitudes toward behavioural alternatives for predicting and understanding behaviour (e.g., Pagel and Davidson, 1984; Jaccard and Becker, 1985; Jaccard and Wood, 1986).

Jaccard J., (1988) has also investigated the effects of incomplete information on the evaluation of behavioural alternatives for two different decision topics in particular.

This study tried to investigate the respondents reaction to missing information when evaluating banks and political candidates. One of the research findings was:

"Because the occurrence of missing information is a relatively common situation, an understanding of these processes is important to gain insight into attitude formation and the behavioural choice of individuals. It is evident from our research that theories of attitudes formation and choice should confront the problem of reactions to missing information"(p.591).

Concerning the durable goods purchase, many studies have been undertaken on consumers' use of different sources of information. These studies have been designed to show the amount of search conducted by consumers prior to purchase (e.g., in terms of retail store visits, sources and type of information used), as well as to identify the major influence in such a search. These studies have been conducted by numerous researchers, among them Katona and Mueller, 1955; Udell, 1966; Hempel, 1969; Newman and Staelin, 1973; and Claxton Fry and portis, 1974; Jaccard, J., and Becker, M., 1985; Jaccard J., 1988). The studies range across numerous product categories, and most indicate that the majority of consumers visit three or fewer stores during the search. Fewer reports have been published on the use of advertising as a source of information seeking. Katona and Mueller (1955) and Udell (1966), for example, found that the percentage of of respondents reporting use of advertisements ranges from 15

to 30%.

In the area of durable goods, it has been suggested by Newman and Staelin (1972) and Claxton (1974), that, distinctive patterns of source usage may characterise buyers of these goods. Some individuals, for example, may prefer to limit their purchase search to certain kinds of sources, whereas others may choose to consult a wider variety of sources.

Claxton, Fry and Portis (1974) identified three basic patterns of information gathering among buyers of furniture and major appliances: (1) non-thorough, (2) store intense, and (3) thorough and balanced.

They found that the non-thorough pattern was characterised by few retail store visits and the use of few out-of-store information sources. The store intense pattern was characterised by many retail visits but little else. The thorough and the balanced pattern consisted of many retail visits and the use of out-of-store sources. Details were not provided, however, about specific types of information sources used.

Newman and Staelin (1973) ,mentioned earlier, studied consumer usage of four distinct information sources for durable goods: personal (friends and neighbours), neutral (books, magazine articles, and pamphlets), advertising and retail outlets. But they reported data only for each source

individually and without indication of intensity of source usage. The study did indicate, however, that uses of different sources were positively intercorrelated. So, consumers were found to use all the above sources of information. Also, Punj G., (1987) wrote:

"because consumers probably use the information they are exposed to in making product-related decisions in advance of their actual purchases. A consumer may decide what make of car to own next, several months before a contemplated purchase" (pp.79,80).

However, Westbrook and Fornell's (1979) results showed that major appliance buyers can be classified according to distinctive patterns of purchase information source usage. The common observation is that, buyers of durable goods tend to use more than one source of information, and to some extent, the results indicated that personal sources are regarded as the main sources.

The above notion was also confirmed by Thorelli (1971), Kiel and Layton (1981) and recently by Hugstand, Taylor and Bruce (1987).

Munir, A., (1985) indicated that the level of information needs to be at a certain level and also needs explaining. Here we have the "superordinate" concept of perceived risk and the related notion of confidence in one's decision making

ability. That is, consumers are likely to undertake information search when they believe that there is some risk attached to the consequences of making an incorrect decision and further information will reduce this risk.

The notion that purchasing products involves risk for the consumer is widely recognized in the consumer behaviour literature. Bauer (1960) argued that consumer behaviour involves risk because any action he takes will produce consequences which he cannot anticipate with certainty. Bauer also indicated that consumers develop decision strategies to reduce perceived risk and suggested brand loyalty and being susceptible to group influence as two of these strategies. In the latter case, Bauer proposed that the consumer does not only use reference group values as consumption norms, but also uses the judgement of the people around him to check the wisdom of his choice.

Arndt (1967c) studied the diffusion of a new product through a college community. He found that the probability of a subject's being exposed to word-of-mouth communication and the level of perceived risk did not vary and furthermore, the percentages of those receiving favourable pressure, no pressure and unfavourable pressure remained fairly constant regardless of the level of perceived risk. However, when the data is controlled for each individual's social integration in the community, those non-integrated high perceived risk

individuals were nearly three times as likely to engage in word-of-mouth than the non-integrated low risk group. A further confounding influence is that high perceived risk individuals are more brand loyal and hence less interested in adopting the new brand. Furthermore, of the high risk perceivers, who did engage in prepurchase comment, 26% reported they initiated the conversation as opposed to 20% of low risk perceivers. Perry and Hamm (1969) also reported results which suggest the higher the perceived risk in the purchase decision the greater the personal influence on that decision.

It can be expected, therefore, that the search for further information increases as the degree of perceived risk increases. Hence, the relative importance of word-of-mouth and interpersonal communication may be increased. Lanzetta and Kanareff (1962) were able to suggest that the intensity of information search increased, with problem uncertainty and decision importance.

Hugstad, Taylor, and Bruce (1987), stated:

"The last recommendation is the most challenging. It is to review the opportunities to create favourable word-of-mouth communications about your products or services. Taken together, friends and relatives are the most frequently consulted sources of information at any level of perceived risk". (p.46)

Several studies have supported the notion that consumers do perceive a degree of risk in making purchasing decisions (e.g., Cox and Rich 1967 (originally in 1964); Cunningham 1965, 1967a). Cox (1967c), suggested that perceived risk can be viewed as having two components: the consequences that might occur as a result of a given purchase (functional, economic, and psychological) and the uncertainty of the occurrence of these consequences. Cox suggested that consumers try to reduce risk by reducing uncertainty rather than by reducing the amount at stake or the seriousness of the consequences and that information seeking is one of the strategies that consumers adopt to do this.

Other studies by Perry and Hamm (1969) and Barness (1977) also supported the existence of a positive relationship between the degree of the risk in a purchase decision and the degree of personal influence on that decision, i.e., the higher the degree of risk in a purchase decision, the greater the interpersonal influence on that decision (see also the drug diffusion studies by Coleman, Katz and Menzel (1964) and Bauer and Wortzel, 1966).

A positive relationship between perceived risk and information seeking from personal sources was also reported. Cunningham (1967b) argued that consumers perceiving high risk in the purchase of an unknown brand, were more likely to initiate product-related conversation, and when they did,

were more likely to request information than those who were low in perceived risk. Arndt (1967b) also reported that high risk perceivers were more likely to seek information from personal sources, and that the impact of word-of-mouth pressure was stronger for high risk perceivers than for low risk perceivers. Similarly, Sheth and Venkatesan (1971) also reported that the high-risk group in their sample sought information from personal sources significantly more than the low-risk group (In: Munir, A., 1985)

3.3.2. Personal factors:

Personal factors are the second component of determinants which affect the parameters of information search. The following discussion will explain the most important of these.

3.3.2.1. Self confidence:

In the marketing literature confidence has two distinct meanings as initially highlighted by Cox and Bauer (1964). One dimension is that of generalised self confidence (a personality variable more correctly called self esteem). The other is specific self confidence and relates to the respondent's confidence in performing a specific task or in solving a specific problem. Both these concepts were seen as being related to risk perception and inducement and gained a great deal of attention in the 1960's and 1970's (Fletcher

K., 1986).

However, Newman and Staelin (1971) found that with people of no experience or adverse experience of the product and who also were low information seekers, those low on self confidence took much less time to make the decision than those of higher self confidence. Arndt (1967c) found a "statistically suggestive" relationship between self confidence and exposure to word-of-mouth, with low self confidence subjects receiving less word-of-mouth. Bell (1967) notes that where the individual has low specific self confidence, concerning automobile purchases, the individual is more likely to pay attention to, or take along, a purchase pal. This team tends to work as a unit in the purchase situation (In: Kiel, 1978).

Fletcher (1986) suggests that if self confidence mediates a person's susceptibility to social influence, then opinion leaders and word-of-mouth communication should be of major importance, where low self-confidence is at low level.

3.3.2.2. Social integration:

The degree to which an individual is socially integrated within his community, his relationship with friends and the amount of social interaction he undertakes will affect the nature and type of overt information search (Kiel, 1978).

Cunningham (1966) concluded that, users who are high in perceived risk, would reduce risk through conversations, and thus, a greater proportion of the high risk perceivers would be classified as talkers than low risk perceivers.

Wallach, Kagan and Bem (1962) found a positive link between group members' conversations and risk reduction. The researchers concluded that, if the members of a group engage in a discussion in which a consensus is reached regarding the degree of acceptable risk in the decision they make, then, their conclusion is to pursue a course of action more risky than that represented by the average of the prior decisions of each individual separately. This finding was supported by considerable evidence from researchers covering a wide range of types of risk, and was contrasted with two more likely, or at least equally plausible explanations: (a) that there would be a shift toward the average of individual opinions of the members when a group consensus was reached, (b) that the group would move toward greater conversation, when required to arrive at a consensus through discussion.

Brown (1965) strengthened the finding from his review of a number of studies on the subject. One study cited by Nordhy (in Brown, 1965) found that for certain types of problems, group discussion produced a shift toward less risky decisions. Brown concluded that the nature of the problem may engage either a value on caution or a value on risk taking

and the group decision will be more extreme than the individual decision in the direction of the value engaged. He suggested two reasons: Firstly that, the value engaged will influence the flow of information, so that more relevant information will be elicited supporting the value than opposite it. Secondly that, group discussion makes the individual aware of other's positions, and since individuals seem to like to perceive themselves at least as cautious as the average person, they will tend to shift in the direction of the group consensus.

Katona and Mueller (1955) also noted a strong reliance on friends and relatives in decision making. They wrote:

"More than 50% of buyers turned for advice to acquaintances and in most instances looked at durable goods owned by them. Even more striking is the finding that a third of durable goods buyers bought a brand or model that they had seen at someone else's house, often the house of relatives" (p.45).

It appears that consumers low in self confidence undertake less information search as do those who are less socially integrated within the community.

3.3.3. Socio-Demographic factors and information search:

Most of major studies of information search behaviour have

looked at socio-demographic variables as predictors of the amount or type of search undertaken. A summary of the major findings of such studies is contained below.

3.3.3.1. Education:

Katona and Mueller (1955) noted that well-educated consumers were more likely to obtain information from friends and relatives. Katona and Mueller wrote:

"...the strata of the population that may have the greatest need for information are the least likely to look for it" (p.56).

Also, they indicated that, the lower educated consumers visited fewer stores, made less use of printed material, especially made less use of neutral information sources and also made less use of interpersonal sources of information.

Udell (1966) found that those with higher education tended to shop in more stores than those with less education.

Newman and Staelin's (1972) study of new car and appliance buyers found that less than high school education was associated with substantially less information search, than an education of twelve grades plus vocational training or a college degree.

They also noted that the advanced degree group, however, (masters, doctorates, professional degrees) reported the same

amount of information search as the group with less than high school education. Their data did not explain why.

Hence, the Newman and Staelin results support those of Katona and Mueller (1955) that lower education leads to less search but also raises the possibility that people with very high educational qualifications are also prone to undertake less search. In addition Thorelli (1971) reports that Norwegian consumers with a higher educational level consult a range of product information sources more extensively for a major purchase and are generally more informed and aware of sources of consumer information than are consumers with less education (In: Kiel, 1978).

3.3.3.2. Income:

Some researchers have argued that after a certain income level is reached, information seeking, or the use of information sources, begins to decrease.

Katona and Mueller (1955) concluded that, middle class income individuals when contrasted with those of high and low levels of income, were more likely to have engaged in search activity prior to the purchase of selected products.

Eighmay (1973) hypothesized that as income increases, so does information acquisition - as there is an increasing number of

alternatives which one can afford.

Thorelli (1971) found that Norwegian consumers with high incomes consulted a range of product information sources more extensively for a major purchase. This, was perhaps because they habitually consulted more general product information sources and were more aware of the existence and nature of specialized consumer information services than were those of lower income.

Claxton, Fry and Portis (1974) reported that families with incomes greater than \$9,000 were more likely to be more "thorough" searchers than "non thorough".

However, Riter (1966-1967) found no significant relationship between the number of stores shopped for a colour television and the income of the shopper. Farley (1964) also found no relationship between income and search (In: Kiel, 1978).

It seems, therefore, that the relationship between income and information search is inconclusive.

3.3.3.3. Age:

Katona and Mueller's (1955) study of both consumer durables and sports shirts found that, the older head of the household and his wife were less likely to have engaged in search activity prior to the purchase decision.

With regard to personal sources, Feldman (1966) in personal interviews, found that younger, less experienced people were more likely to turn to a neighbour or friend in selecting a doctor. Older people, without children, more often used non-personal sources of data such as the yellow pages.

With regard to impersonal sources, Udell (1966) reported that of 173 purchasers, 52% of those less than 25 years of age shopped in two or more retail outlets, whereas only 37% of those over 25 years shopped in more than one retail outlet.

Hemple (1969, In: Kiel, 1978) indicated that as age increases, the duration of search, extent of information seeking and extent of product examination all decreases. These findings are consistent with those of Fisk (1959) who found that the high interpersonal communicators tend to be younger people and Jefferson (1972) who found that printed periodical sources are considered to be more important by younger car buyers than by older car buyers.

It appears that the amount of information search behaviour decreases with age.

3.3.3.4. Occupation:

In the industrial field no relationship to occupation was found (Luffman, 1974), unless an attempt to improve status was in progress, in which case the purchasing unit emphasised

the market research aspect of the job, rather than the mechanical aspects of perceiving and placing orders (Fletcher, K., 1986).

A strong relationship is to be expected between occupation, income and education resulting in an expected similarity of relationship between occupation and information search as was found for education/income and information search. These results, in fact, were found with one exception i.e., sales/clerical people undertook considerably more deliberation than their education and income level might suggest (Kiel, 1978).

Newman and Staelin (1972) also indicated that, the higher the status of the occupation of the head of household the more information search which is likely to occur.

3.3.3.5. Social class:

Keiser and Kuehl (1971) investigated both income and social class and found exposure to and utilisation of, mass media and interpersonal sources were not related to social class, but social class and the amount of store visits were positively related in the upper classes. (Fletcher K., 1986). Bruce and Dommermuth (1968) indicated that less search is undertaken by the lower classes, with the amount of search then rising for the working classes but falling later for the middle and upper classes. Fry and Stiller (1970), however,

found no differences in either the search scope (number of brands tried) or search duration (a number of different brands was tried until brand loyalty established) between working and middle/upper middle housewives.

Anderson and Ratchford (1976) found there was no significant variation in information search except that Rich and Janis found more frequent shopping behaviour in the upper classes. (Fletcher K., 1986).

3.3.4. Product experience:

The relationship between the level of product knowledge and information seeking from personal sources, seems consistent with the results of several studies of information seeking in general (from both personal and impersonal sources). For example, Green, Halbert and Minas (1964) found that the degree of existing information reduces the subject's desire to require more data, and the greater the prior uncertainty, the more information the subjects required.

Udell (1966) found a strong relationship between experience and information use. When questioning purchasers of small electrical appliances on what "their most useful source of information" was, Udell found past experience was the most important of the marketer non-controllable sources. Of all controllable and non-controllable sources of product

information this source was by far the most important to buyers of small electrical appliances.

Newman and Staelin (1972) found that greater than average consultation with friends and neighbours was associated with a lack of knowledge in judging a product.

Newman and Staelin (1971) reported that satisfaction with the old product leads to differences in the buyers decision times for the product. Satisfied users had noticeably shorter decision times than those who were not fully satisfied or had not regularly used the product before. They also reported that satisfied users were able to gather information more quickly.

May's (1969) study of automobile brand choice over various purchases also lends support to the effect of satisfaction on future purchases. May found a strong relationship between past history with a brand and probability of repurchase of the same brand. For those individuals with a history of three consecutive purchases of the same brand, 73% made a fourth purchase of the same brand, as opposed 43% who only had a history of the last of the previous three purchases being the same as the new purchase.

Other studies, reported a negative relationship between purchasing experience (an aspect or a determinant of product knowledge) and information search from all sources (Moore and

Lehmann, 1980; and Kiel and Layton, 1981).

However, the effects of previous experience and the diversity of such experience will be mediated by the length of time between the past purchase and the present purchase and the consumer's ability to recall past experience. Recall will mediate the effects of previous experience on information search behaviour (Kiel, 1978).

3.3.5. Characteristics of the source of information and perceived risk:

In this part, an attempt will be made to explore the potential influences that some sources characteristics have on an audience (customer), under different levels of perceived risk, or risk buying situations. This may also indicate, to what extent followers are ready to accept and to be influenced by opinion leader's opinions, under different degrees of perceived risk.

Joseph and Howard (1987) found that, knowledge about the mere number of positive and negative attributes possessed by a brand, is an important component of a consumer's knowledge structure. They presented a series of experiments that illustrated the unique character of frequency knowledge and its potential role in decision making. In general, they found that frequency knowledge can influence judgement and choice, particularly when other types of information have been poorly

encoded, poorly remembered, or poorly understood.

For the purpose of this study, we will deal only with the most important source attribute. The following discussion will concentrate on the credibility of the source of information.

Several studies (e.g., Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Kelman and Hovland, 1953; Hoch and Ha 1986; Kevin and Richard, 1987), argued that the more credible the source, the more likely it is that its message will get a favourable perception, even in the case of a high degree of perceived risk.

Kevin and Richard (1987), investigated the effects of the available information environment on the consumer's ability to make an accurate assessment of the best alternative in a choice set. They found that, a consumer's perceptions of the usefulness of an informational environment are strongly associated with the level of information quality and quantity. They wrote:

"The informational environment affects the manner in which subjects process the available information which, in turn, affects the decision effectiveness" (p.212).

However, earlier study conducted by Hovland and Weis (1951) presented two groups of students with identical

communications, dealing with antihistamine drugs, atomic submarines and the steel shortage and the future of the cinema. For each communication, one highly credible and low credible source was used. The results showed that opinion change in the direction advocated by the source was greater for high credibility sources than low credibility sources. What emerged from this study was that the higher credibility source was perceived by respondents to be more fair and more just than low-credibility sources.

Similarly, in a study by Kelman and Hovland (1953), respondents were introduced to three sources: a high-credibility source (court, judge), a neutral-credibility source (a respondent) and a low-credibility source (a respondent who had a criminal record). The results indicated that the greatest opinion change was attributed to the high-credibility source, followed by the neutral-credibility source. The researchers concluded that the opinion change was due more to the respondent's evaluations of the source fairness and trustworthiness than to their expertise.

However, Kibera (1979, In: Munir A., 1985) confirmed the above conclusion empirically. His results demonstrated that a high source credibility (agriculture officer) has a greater effect on respondent's attitude than low source credibility (local cooperative union officer). Credibility of the source of message will also influence communication responses of potential adopters of an innovation. Hence, he reached the

conclusion that "the higher the credibility of the source, the higher the attitude or opinion change".

Hoch and Ha (1986), conducted research on, the advertising and ambiguity of product experience. They found that, consumers say that they do not believe the claims of advertisers, but at the same time they found advertising helpful in making decisions. However, they argued that interpersonal influence and other sources of information may influence the effect of advertising on product testing. They stated:

"It is not clear how long advertising can influence product testing behaviour or what will happen when competitive ads are present; interpersonal influence and other sources of information may mitigate the effect of advertising on product testing" (p.230).

Thus, source credibility may help to reduce customer's perceived risk, regarding the innovation as well as to encourage them to accept it. However, the amount of perceived risk to which the individual decision maker is exposed will be a vital factor in his decision-making.

Levitt (1976) conducted a study to analyse the relationship between such factors as source credibility, customer competence and the degree of risk, and the potential effects that they may have on the adoption or rejection of an

innovation. The data revealed that with the stability of high source credibility, the power of source effects varied according to customer's competence, and the degree of risk in decision situations. Regarding the degree of perceived risk, the study showed that, in high-risk situations, the greater the personal risk to the responding sales prospects, the more persuasion it takes to get him to switch from a product he is currently using.

Thus, since the main concern in this study is to explore the influence of word-of-mouth on the purchase of durables by the Jordanian consumers, one assumption which may be possible is that the degree to which the source is credible to the customers, may influence the degree of potential opinion leader's impact on these customers to switch to try or to buy another new competitive brand. Further illustration may predict that, as the degree of customer's loyalty toward brands or sources becomes high, the task of opinion leaders to persuade these customers to switch to other products or sources becomes more difficult and vice versa.

3.4. Opinion leadership:

Marketers have recognised interpersonal communications as an important medium for idea exchange. The diffusion of ideas has always attracted the curiosity of people for varied reasons. Katz and Lazarsfeld (1965), in the classic Decatur Study found interpersonal communication to be involved more

frequently and to have greater impact, than any of the mass media in brand switching for small food products, soap, cleaners and household goods. Furthermore, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) initially defined opinion leaders as those individuals who are, "likely to influence other people in their immediate environment".

Whyte (1954) in his study of air-conditioner ownership in Philadelphia row houses, noted that although white-collar neighbourhoods were homogeneous in terms of age and socio-economic status, ownership of air conditioners was clustered within neighbourhoods, rather than distributed throughout the blocks. Whyte interpreted the clusters of ownership as evidence of a "powerful communication network".

Fisk (1959) found "family, friends and neighbours" to be the most important sources of information about new food products for household meal planners. King (1963) noted personal influence to be an important variable in adoption of new fashions. Nicosia (1964) documented the importance of personal influence in auto insurance purchasing. Feldman (1965,1966) found that new residents in a community relied primarily upon friends, neighbours and co-workers in selecting physicians. Cox (1963) pointed out that interpersonal communication is an important complement to the mass media in reaching consumers.

However, research interest in the dynamics of interpersonal communication, as a vehicle for the exchange of information and a source of influence, was first given major impetus by Lazarsfeld et al (1955). In the 1940s the concept of opinion leadership emerged as a part of the two-step flow model which hypothesized that the mass media does not influence an audience directly, but works through a network of interpersonal communication. This concept has been defined in various ways. It was defined as a source of information, or as a source of influence and as well as both information and influence.

Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1986) wrote that:

"Opinion leaders are innovative and positive toward new products, tend to be more socially active, fashion conscious, independent and they are more interested in the topic under discussion than others are" (p.316)

Schiffman, L. G., et al (1975) defined an opinion leader as "a person who influences the actions or attitudes of others" (In: Moutinho, L., 1987, p.9).

Schiffman and Kanuk (1978) defined opinion leadership as:

"the process by which one person (the opinion leader) informally influences the actions or attitudes of others, who may be opinion seekers or merely opinion recipients. This influence is informal and usually verbal, through it may be

visual as well"(p.262).

Berelson and Steiner (1964) described opinion leaders as:

"Those trusted and informed people who exist in virtually all primary groups, who are "models" for opinion within their group, who listen and read in the media, and who pass on information and influence to their circle of relatives, friends and acquaintances"(p.550).

This view has been confirmed by many researchers (e.g., Lancaster and White, 1975; Delozier, 1976; Robinson, 1977; Turnbull and Meenaghan, 1981). However, for the purpose of explaining the concept of opinion leadership, its benefits and the criticisms which are directed at it, the research will look at some of the researchers' viewpoints to the extent that they explain it. The characteristics of opinion leaders as indicated by the writers and researchers will be highlighted.

Turnbull and Meenaghan (1981) discussed the two-step flow model, they stated that information comes, first, from change agent to opinion leaders, who will carry this information to the passive audience segments to influence their behaviour. The concept was also investigated by other researchers (e.g., Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971; and Robinson, 1976). They argued that the first step of the two-step flow is transferring of information from source to opinion leaders. Whereas, the

second step is spreading of influence from opinion leaders to their followers (In: Hassan, 1984). A major factor in the two-step model, therefore, is the role played by individuals interacting with each other and increasing the effect of mass media communication. Hence, an important aspect of this view is that the mass media is not so powerful nor so direct in its effect as once thought. Thus, the concept helps to clarify the role of mass media/interpersonal influence. Rogers (1982) mentioned that, there is likely to be a flow of messages from sources by mass media channels to a receiver, who in turn reacts to the message and/or passes it on to those individuals with whom he interacts.

Cox (1970) proposed that, advertising does not affect, directly, its audience, but works with and through many mediating factors such as audience predisposition and personal influence (e.g., word-of-mouth advertising).

However, the two-step flow model does not exclude some kind of flow of information from the mass media to the passive audience. The most important benefit of this concept is that, it helps to show the significance and impact of interpersonal influence on the passive audience. Additionally, it helps to focus on the influence between mass media and interpersonal communication.

Wicking (1976) stated:

"it encouraged marketers away from an atomistic model of society, and it challenged and changed the notion that ideas and influence flow down the status levels of society in a "trickle-down effect". It stimulated a great deal of research: either to replicate and strengthen the two-step model or to develop extended models recognising a more complicated multi-step model." (p.26).

However, it seems clear that while the model is an accurate reflection of elements of the communication process, several criticisms can be levelled against it. One of these criticisms is that it is not easy to apply this concept practically. (Rogers 1972, In: Wicking, 1976, p.25) noted six limitations of the hypothesis:

1. It implies a passive audience, and active information-seeking opinion leaders. Opinion leaders may not be active seekers of information and may not be passive in communication to followers.
2. The two-step masks multi-stage communication processes or, in the other direction, may underestimate the direct impact that the mass media may have on a very large audience.
3. It over-emphasizes the importance of the mass media to the opinion leader.

4. The basic study, and certain follow-up studies, did not take into account time span. Opinion leaders may simply have early knowledge of ideas.

5. As originally formulated, it ignored the time dimension involved in decision-making. Subsequent studies have shown that knowledge and persuasion acceptance stages exist for opinion leaders and followers, and that for both groups the mass media is important at the persuasion stage.

6. The implied dichotomy of opinion leaders and followers is misleading, as opinion leadership is a continuous variable and non-leaders are not necessarily followers.

Moreover, contrary to the assumption of the two-step flow model, several studies reported that opinion leaders receive information from others as well as give information to others. Arndt (1973) reported that opinion leaders (those who receive high sociometric choices as sources of information) were active communicators about a new food product, as both transmitters and receivers of word-of-mouth information. Summers and King (1969) reported that opinion leaders in fashions, food, household cleaners and cosmetics were more involved in receiving word-of-mouth interactions about products within their area of influence than were non-opinion leaders. Summers (1970) found that opinion leaders in fashion are frequently recipients as well as transmitters of

information - only 12% of the leaders reported that they did not receive information about women's clothing fashion in the six months preceding the interviews. Reynolds and Darden (1971) also reported that opinion leaders tend to be information seekers. Sheth (1971) suggested that consumers play both the "influencer" and the "influenced" roles. He found that 25% of the respondents in his study, who reported that they were influenced by another person in adopting new stainless steel razor blades, also reported that they attempted to influence someone else and Wicking (1976) found that his respondents, who were influenced in their decision to buy a dishwasher by earlier adopters of this product, also reported talking about their dishwashers to other people after they had made the purchase.

Myers and Robertson (1972) have reported results against the two-step flow model. The results indicate the existence of an interaction and a two-way influence process, rather than a one-way, influence as suggested by the two-step flow model. Myers and Robertson studied the dimensions of opinion leadership in twelve product areas including furniture, appliances, automobiles and fashions, and found that people who influence others are themselves influenced by other people in the same product area. Such results have led Robertson (1978); to suggest that personal influence can be recipient-initiated and a two-way influence, since both participants in interpersonal communication might influence each other, and Foxall (1981); to assert that the research in

this area has shown that "leaders and non-leaders are involved in a dialogue which allows a far-richer exchange of information than the simple two-step idea allows" (In: Munir, A., 1985).

Turnbull and Meenaghan (1981) reported that, the influence exerted by opinion leaders is not of equal importance at all stages of the adoption process and further, the two-step flow model suggests that the primary source of influence for the opinion leader is the mass media, when in fact, he is also influenced by fellow community members when arriving at his decision.

Furthermore, one may ask whether it is possible to identify all opinion leaders' characteristics. A great deal of research has been conducted in this area (e.g., Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955; Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971; Robertson, 1971; Armstrong and Feldman, 1976; Cosmas and Sheth, 1980).

Rogers and Shoemaker (1971, In: Hassan, 1984) developed their explanation of opinion leadership according to some variables including external communication, accessibility social status and innovativeness. Within these variables they advanced some generalisations, as follows:

1. Opinion leaders have greater exposure to mass media than their followers.

2. They are more cosmopolitan than their followers.
3. They have greater change agent contact than their followers.
4. They have greater social influence than their followers.
5. They are more innovative than their followers.

Klapper (1966) stated that, opinion leaders are usually supernormative "group" members and that they are especially familiar with and loyal to group standards and values. Katz (1957) addressing the same issue, talks of opinion leaders being empowered to act in this capacity by other group members.

In fact, the research on the characteristics of opinion leaders does not seem to have had much success in determining these characteristics of gregariousness, innovativeness, and a high level of interest in the product area. The characteristics of opinion leaders especially demographic areas, depend on the social situation and the product category under consideration (see, Midgley, 1977; Foxall, 1981; Engel and Blackwell, 1982). Foxall (1981) suggests that "opinion leaders defy general description" (p.48), and that opinion leadership " is largely situationally determined" (p.49).

Thus, it can be seen that there is evidence in the literature which suggests that the two-step model of communication does not seem to adequately provide a good account and description of the word-of-mouth process in consumer behaviour contexts. Also, it seems that the utility of the opinion leadership concept, implicit in this model, has not been demonstrated yet by the marketing research in this area (Munir A., 1985).

3.5. The value of the non-marketer dominated sources of information and its importance to the consumers:

A great deal of work has been devoted to studying the role of information in the consumer's purchase decision from the point of view of the consumer. Studying the consumer's use of information requires an examination of the information from all sources in the environment, which enters into the consumer's purchase decision. Davison (1959) described the function of communications as follows:

"...communications serve as a link between man and his environment, and their effects may be explained in terms of the role they play in enabling people to bring about more satisfactory relationships between themselves and the world round them" (p.344).

Davison assumes that "people gradually accumulate and carry around with them a substantial quantity of information about these aspects of the environment and that they are important

to them;" he added, however:

"...if a person's need change, or if his environment is altered, then he usually has to abandon at least some of his stored-up information, since this leads him to follow lines of action that are inefficient in gaining from him a satisfactory adjustment to his environment... Habits, attitudes, and an accumulated stock of knowledge about those aspects of the environment that concern us most go a long way toward shaping our actions, but this stored-up information must be supplemented by a follow of current data about the world around us. The more complicated our needs and the more shifting the environment, the greater our requirements for current information become" (pp.348-349).

This functional view of communication rests on a social psychological explanation of human behaviour in terms of the relationship between the individual and his environment. Research and theory in social psychology have provided strong support for the idea that the individual responds to his perceived environment and that the structuring of his perception can usefully be considered as a social process. Understanding of behaviour rests first, therefore, on knowledge of the actor's "definition of the situation", which constantly undergoes change. This process of change occurs through communication with other people, who together, through "consensual validation", continually create the "social realities" to which the individual responds: the

creation of structure in unstructured situations occurs through the process of communication (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955).

From a general functional standpoint, people may receive information useful to them, in their purchase decision, from a variety of sources and through a variety of channels. Information can be received through face-to-face interaction and messages can be received through impersonal media including all the "mass media" of communication.

As mentioned before, the most important earlier research dealing with the relative importance of information sources was the Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) study of marketing "shifts" among a sample of women in Decatur. This study reveals the rating of alternative sources of influence in the Decatur study showed other people most important, followed by radio, newspaper and magazine advertising.

Studies of consumer use of information sources have indicated variation among products and consumers in the type of sources consulted (Engel, Kollat and Blackwell, 1968) but have provided little explanation of the differences. They employed univariate and bivariate rather than multivariate analysis. A few researchers have reported findings on buyers of consumer durables which, among other things, provided indications of the relative importance of sources (Katona and Mueller, 1955; LeGrand and Udell, 1964; W. Bell, 1963).

However, as already noted, consumers can search for product information from marketer-dominated sources, such as advertising and retail stores, and from non-marketer dominated sources or personal sources (the people with whom the consumer has a social relationship such as friends, colleagues, relatives and neighbours - so salesmen are not included in this category except when they also happen to be involved in a social relationship with the consumer). There is evidence in the literature which suggests that the latter can be important sources of product information for the consumer.

The studies that investigate the relative importance of different sources of information differ in the criteria they use to determine the importance of these sources. There are also indications in the literature which suggest that alternative sources of information differ in their usefulness to the consumer, depending on what type of information (e.g., price or durability) he requires (e.g., Hampel, 1969; Houston, 1979; pinson C., 1986; Joseph and Howard 1987; Westbrook R. A., 1987). Westbrook R., A., (1987) examined consumer affective responses to product/consumption experiences and their relationship to selected aspects of post-purchase processes of automobile owners. The research analysis confirmed hypotheses on the existence of independent dimensions of positive and negative effect. Both dimensions of effective response are found directly related to the favourability of consumer satisfaction judgements, extent of

seller-directed complaint behaviour, and extent of word-of-mouth transmission. Westbrook (1987) stated:

"Moreover, consumers appear more likely to voice their product/consumption experiences to other consumers to the extent that those experiences to other consumers involve notable affective elements - good or bad - independently of their overall judgements of satisfaction and/or seller-directed complaint actions. Satisfaction actually shows a weak negative relationship to word-of-mouth once the affective influences have been partialled out, suggesting it is the affect that stimulates the "web of word-of-mouth" rather than satisfaction per se, thereby qualifying conventional marketing wisdom" (p.267).

Nevertheless, the research in this area seems consistent in indicating that non-marketer dominated personal sources (from now on they will be called "personal sources" only) are often more effective and have more impact than marketer-dominated sources on the decision to purchase both durable and non-durable products.

In his review of previous research, Munir, A., (1985) concluded that friends and relatives were the most frequently consulted sources of information for durable goods buyers. Katona and Mueller (1955) found that 50% of the buyers asked their acquaintances for advice and looked at durable goods owned by them.

Also, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) reported that personal contacts were the most frequently mentioned sources of information by their respondents, being the most important factor in influencing their decision to switch brands of non-durable products. This source produced, therefore, the greatest number of effectively exposed individuals and had the highest impact on the brand-switching decision. Radio, newspaper and magazine advertising, and sales people had less impact. Haines (1966) attempted to measure the relative effectiveness of different sources of product information in purchasing frequently purchased non-durables. He reported that personal contacts were the second most effective source after product trial, whilst television advertising (not included in the Katz and Lazarsfeld's study), magazine advertising, and availability in the store, scored less highly.

Le Grand and Udell (1964) found that 51.7% of their respondents reported consulting friends and acquaintances before buying television sets or furniture, which made this source the second most frequently used after newspaper advertising (mentioned by 55.7% of the respondents). Furthermore, friends and acquaintances were ranked first in being the most helpful source of information. Udell (1966) reported that discussions with friends, relatives and neighbours came second, after past experience with the product, as a helpful, and most helpful source out-of-store information in purchasing small electrical appliances.

Newspaper advertising and television advertising were ranked third and fourth, respectively, in being helpful sources of information. Bell (1963) also reported results which suggest that personal sources of information were more important to consumers than the mass media in purchasing consumer durable goods. Similar results were also reported by Davis, Gultinan and Jones (1979) on the consumer's choice of retail services such as dry cleaning, car repairs and hair-dressing where personal sources were found to play a more important role than the marketer dominated ones.

Hamilton (1976) in his study of the influence of informal groups on the consumer's choice of a washing machine, found that personal sources of information have more impact on this choice than advertisements, thus he argued that, if advertisements can act as sources of information in purchasing washing machines, so can neighbours, friends and relatives and to a great extent.

Engel, Black and Kollat (1978) reviewed the research in this area and found that, while the marketer-dominated sources were ranked higher than personal sources in terms of exposure (receiving information through a certain source), the latter were ranked first in terms of effectiveness in most of the studies reviewed.

Similarly, although there is a widely recognized belief in diffusion of innovation research, that the importance of

personal sources of information alter over the different stages of the adoption process. However, since their importance to the consumer is higher in later stages of this process (e.g., Beal and Rogers, 1957; Midgley, 1977; Britt, 1978; Richins, 1983; Pinson C., 1986; Jaccard J., 1988), the important role that other people play in affecting the adoption decision, is widely recognized (e.g., Midgley, 1977; Engel and Blackwell, 1982). Several marketing studies reported results which indicate the strong impact that personal sources have on the adoption decision.

Arndt (1967b) reported that exposure to favourable word-of-mouth was found to increase the probability of purchasing a new food product, while exposure to unfavourable word-of-mouth decreased the probability of adoption. Engel, Blackwell and Kegerries (1969) reported that word-of-mouth was the most important source in the adoption of a new automotive diagnostic centre. For example, they found that friends, relatives and neighbours were the most influential in their decision to try the centre. The percentage of innovators who used personal sources of information changed over the purchase process from 25.1% to 84.8% in the final stage. Sheth (1971) reported that 36% of the buyers of new stainless steel razor blades were made aware of this new product by other people, and 48% of the respondents were influenced to adopt by other people.

Berning and Jacoby (1974) reported that consumers or innovators, acquired significantly more information from the "friend" source in purchasing a new product, than they did in purchasing an established one. Wicking (1976) reported that the majority of his respondents, indicated that personal sources had the greatest influence on their decision to purchase dishwashers. More specifically, Day (1974) reported that word-of-mouth was nine times as effective as media advertising in changing unfavourable or neutral attitudes towards a new product, to favourable ones.

Therefore, much attention has been paid by authors and researchers in both the behavioural sciences and marketing research, to examining the degree of influence that different kinds of information sources have on the purchasing decision. An obvious point in the purchasing decision, where word-of-mouth influence is likely to affect the purchase decision, is the process of acquiring information about a product or range of products (e.g., Arndt, 1966; Schein, 1981; Kevin L. K. and Richard Staelin, 1987).

Interpersonal sources of information play an important role in the process, since any social action always starts with face-to-face relationships among people in any social system. Schein (1981), pointed out that, societies, families and organisations are all human groups, and face-to-face relationships among the members of these groups are a basic element of any social action. Whatever else we need in the

way of systems, procedures and mechanisms, the process of social action always starts with face-to-face relationships among people. Further, according to Katz (1957), personal is more effective than the mass media, because it is non-purposive, flexible and trustworthy. The mass media, he believes, more often play a reinforcing role in the strengthening of predispositions and of decisions already taken. Interpersonal relations are also believed to have three main functions:

1. as a channel of information.
2. as a source of social pressure to conform.
3. as a source of social support in decision-making.

Consistent with the foregoing notion Renolds and Darden (1971), referred to the effective role of interpersonal communication on the process of acquiring information on a product by stating that, students of human behaviour recognise the mediating effects of interactional process on individual behaviour. One process interpersonal communication has become a focal point for considerable research in marketing, and the importance of this process for the dissemination of product-related information has been widely documented.

Word-of-mouth advertising is also seen as having a significant but unexplained effect on the purchasing

decision. Arndt (1966) noted that, word-of-mouth has been thought to be an almost mysterious force, the effect of which was taken for granted. However, he concluded that, the causal mechanisms of word-of-mouth have not really been given much more attention, the popular notion of the power of word-of-mouth is more a truism developed through usage than a fact supported by empirical evidence.

Moreover, Czepiel (1979) emphasised that not only word-of-mouth and opinion leaders affect the rate of acquiring information about a product, but also, they influence its direction.

The effective role that personal sources of information (in terms of opinion leaders, word-of-mouth and interpersonal communication) might play on the purchasing decision, has also been emphasised by authors and researchers of social psychological literature, among Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), and the review by McGuire (1969). Marketing literature on this subject includes Whyte (1954); Haines (1966); Arndt (1966); Engel, Blackwell and Kegerreis (1969); Rogers and Shoemaker (1971); Midigley and Dowling (1978); and Brown and Peter (1987).

Mate (1981) carried out research investigating the impact of word-of-mouth on the optimal advertising strategies of firms marketing a new product in a competitive environment. The

results showed that word-of-mouth appears to have a significant impact on the rates of penetration of the two brands involved in the study. The study demonstrated that the amount of word-of-mouth used, affected the rate of change in the numbers of new customers. In markets characterised by little word-of-mouth communication, a firm can expect to observe a steady decline in the rate of change in the number of new customers. But, in markets with substantial word-of-mouth, the firm can experience a wide variety of patterns in the growth of new customers. However, the findings emphasised that the degree of source's usage and influence varies according to two variables; the stage of penetration of the new product and the degree of loyalty towards certain brand or brands.

Fry (1981) Parasuraman (1981) and Still et al (1982) concurred with this. They found interpersonal and word-of-mouth communications had greater influence on the adoption and diffusion of an innovation than mass media.

However, Crane (1972) suggested that media sources and word-of-mouth channels were approximately equal in their ability to encourage switching of store patronage. Klapper (1966), advised that personal influence may be more effective than persuasive mass communication, but at present, mass communication seems the most effective means of stimulating personal influence. Moreover, Webster (1967), found trade journals were slightly more important and effective than

personal sources.

Thus, taking the above into consideration, personal sources of information seem to have a more significant impact on the process of acquiring information and on the purchasing decision than mass media.

There is strong evidence to suggest that the degree of an information source's influence on the process of acquiring information about a product, may be affected by such variables as the brand loyalty, cultural factors and receiver's characteristics. There are other factors which may also have their influence on the process, such as the type of product-related information (e.g., whether the product is consumer or industrial), and the degree of uncertainty or risk that products may be seen to have (Hassan, 1984).

3.6. Reference group influence on product and brand purchase decision:

For some time, social scientists have recognized group membership as a determinant of behaviour. The fact that people act in accordance with a frame of reference produced by the groups to which they belong is a long-accepted and sound premise (Merton and Rossi, 1967).

Reference groups were originated in social psychology. Hyman (1942) coined the term in a study of social status when he

asked respondents with which individuals or groups they compared themselves. This initial characterization was followed by additional research (Sherif, 1956, originally 1948) and numerous refinements (Campbell et al, 1960; French and Raven, 1959; Merton, 1957; Sherif and Sherif, 1964; Shibutani, 1955; Smith, Bruner and white, 1956) which clarified and expanded the meaning of the concept. For example, Kelley (1968) distinguished between reference groups used as standards of comparison for self-appraisal (comparative) and those used as a source of personal norms, attitudes, and values (normative).

This developing body of literature provided the basis for a series of applications undertaken in a number of fields. For example, Hyman and Singer (1968) noted that the concept had been applied in studies of farmers, scientists, alcoholics, newspaper people, the mentally ill, consumers, voters, juvenile delinquents, and opinion leaders (p.7).

The concept of reference groups has been used in a variety of ways. For example, a reference group can be a membership group or a non-membership group or aspired group (see, Sherif and Sherif, 1956, p.177; and Merton and Rossi, 1967, p.33); a reference group may not be a "group" in the literal sense, it can be a "person" or even a "social category" (see, Sibutani, 1977, p.132). Therefore, reference group influence on the individual can be that of the small groups to which he

belongs, as well as that of the groups, individual, or social categories to which he relates.

In addition to investigating the presence of reference group influence within identifiable groups, there have been a series of consumer research studies into specific aspects of reference group influence. Venkatesan (1966) attempted to test the differential effects of compliance (Kelman, 1961) and reactance (Brehm, 1966) in an experiment involving subjects selecting the "best" from among identical suits under different forms of group pressure. He was able to establish the influence of voiced group sentiment on a subject (compliance). However, the method used in operationalising reactance has been questioned (Clee and Wicklund, 1980). Burnkrant and Cousineau (1975) demonstrated that people use other's product evaluation as a source of information about products.

In a study of consumer brand choice, Witt (1969) confirmed earlier non-marketing studies which indicated that group cohesiveness influenced behaviour. The far-reaching influence of groups was suggested by Cocanongher and Bruce (1973), who found that socially distant reference groups can influence consumers if consumers hold favourable attitudes toward the members or activities of that group. Taking a somewhat different approach, Witt and Bruce (1970) found the operation of group influence related to the extent of social involvement associated with the product being investigated.

Stafford (1966) found individual brand choice was affected by group influence.

The concept of group influence in consumer research has been further refined through studies of various aspects of the social influence process. Witt and Bruce (1972) suggested the existence of at least seven different determinants of influence including perceived risk, expertise of the referent, and the individual's need for social approval.

Moschis (1976) found that consumers use both reflective and comparative appraisal (Jones and Gerard, 1967) in product choices. That is, they engage in direct, verbal interaction to determine the reference group's evaluation as well as observing the behaviour of reference group members with regard to the decision under consideration.

The construct is commonly used by marketing practitioners. Reference group concepts have been used by advertisers in their efforts to persuade consumers to purchase products and brands. The portraying of products as being consumed in socially pleasant situations, the use of prominent/attractive people endorsing products, and the use of obvious group members as spokespersons in advertisements (Kotler P., 1984), are all evidence that marketers and advertisers make substantial use of potential reference group influence on consumer behaviour in the development of their communications. Alluding to reference groups in persuasive

attempts to market products and brands, demonstrates the belief that reference groups expose people to behaviour and lifestyles, influence self-concept development, contribute to the formation of values and attitudes, and generate pressure for conformity to group norms.

Many marketing studies have attempted to explore the various types of group influence on product and brand decisions. In a study conducted by Stafford (1966) to examine group influence on brand choice of bread, he concluded that, even bread which is low in visibility, complexity and perceived risk was susceptible to group influence. Therefore, Ford and Ellis (1980) replicated Stafford's study and found that bread was not susceptible to group influence.

Another study was conducted by Witt (1969) on group influence on the member's brand choice of four non-durable products (i.e., beer, aftershave lotion, deodorant and cigarettes). He found that group influence on member's choice varied significantly across products. Witt and Bruce (1970) investigated further this variation, and found similar results.

Witt and Bruce (1972) investigated the symbolic importance of the product and group structure on group influence on the individual's brand choice of several non-durables (e.g., coffee, detergents, frozen vegetables). They concluded that,

the symbolic importance of the product and group structure effect group influence on the individual's brand choice. Cunningham (1978) examined group influence on the purchase of two food products and reported similar results to those of Witt and Bruce (1972).

In his book "Consumer Behavior, an Integrative Approach", McNeal J., U., (1982), wrote:

"Reference groups may exert major influence on the purchase of conspicuous goods and services. A product (or brand) is conspicuous to the extent that it can be seen and identified by others. It is also conspicuous to the extent that it has an outstanding, attention-quality. A product may be conspicuous in either or both ways. For example, both your car (the product) and its brand are conspicuous, and both purchases are likely to be influenced by reference groups" (p.189).

Lessing and Park (1978) studied reference group influence on the consumers brand choice of twenty durable and non-durable products. They found that group influence was at its highest on brand choice of durables.

Hamilton (1976) found that the majority of his respondents had used their friends, neighbours, and relatives as reference groups in their purchasing decision. He also added that, consumers choose a type of product similar to the one owned by the members of these groups.

Wicking (1976) found that friends, relatives and acquaintances had a great influence on the purchase decision of new dishwasher buyers in Scotland. He also found that the majority of his respondents had bought the same brand of dishwasher as the one owned by their friends, relatives or acquaintances.

From the previous discussion, it could be concluded that, consumer's choice of products which are durable, expensive, complex, and socially visible, are susceptible to group influence.

3.7. Conclusion:

Investigating word-of-mouth's impact on the purchase of durables suggests that it may play an important role. However, since the other chapters of this research will present findings, the researcher will include a continuous reference to the relevant literature on word-of-mouth communications and influence and other related areas, in an attempt to relate the results of this research to those reported in the literature. This literature review aims only at providing a framework for this research by delineating the role of word-of-mouth communications and influence on the consumer purchase of durables.

In a variety of research situations, therefore, word-of-mouth communications play a very important role in the purchase decision processes. As consumer decision models suggest, these communications can affect information input through the information which the consumer obtains from other people. These models, also, suggest that buying durables can involve external search as these products involve high risk perception. The research reviewed, on personal sources, suggested that those who have adopted an innovation, influence those who have not yet adopted one and therefore, consumers may consult those who adopted an innovation when making their purchase decisions.

It has been fairly extensively documented that innovators

influence later adopters. The innovator provides social display leading to awareness, he may provide legitimation for other consumers that the item is an acceptable purchase, and he may directly encourage others to buy.

The fact that consumers search for information from others suggests the potential inaccuracy of the two-step flow model of communication. Several studies reviewed in this literature indicated that consumers search for information from others, and, "opinion leaders" receive, as well as, convey information. These results of the previous research oppose the assumptions of the two-step flow model of communication. Therefore, word-of-mouth can occur as a one-way or two-way form of communication, and its influence may occur as a result of verbal or visual communication. Word-of-mouth was found to affect other variables in the purchase decision. It can affect beliefs, attitudes, evaluation criteria and problem recognition.

The nature of opinion leadership, opinion leader's definition and characteristics (i.e., exposure to mass media, social participation, early adopters or buyers of new products, their level of influence on others purchase decision, experience in the product area, self-confidence, and their interest in the product area) have been discussed. The relative importance of opinion leaders should be considered by marketers, they (the marketers) should try to make use of

them, to promote or diffuse their new products. However, current research and theory on the topic of opinion leadership, leaves much to be explored, for example, how to identify opinion leaders, and how to persuade them to promote these new products.

Previous studies on reference groups suggest that, group brand choice knowledge and similarity of brand choice are related. If a group member's brand choice is to be influenced by the brand choices of his fellow group members, the individual must be aware of their brand choices. Also, if the individual is to attribute sanction influence to his group with respect to his brand choice behaviour, he must believe that his brand choice behaviour will be known by the groups.

Reference groups influence behaviour in two major ways. Firstly, they influence aspiration levels and thus play a part in producing satisfaction or frustration. If other members of a particular reference group (for example, neighbours) are wealthier, more famous, better gardeners, etc., one may be dissatisfied with ones own achievements and may strive to do as well as the others. Secondly, reference groups influence kind of behaviour. They establish approved patterns of using ones wealth, of using ones prestige, of designing ones garden. They ,thus, produce conformity as well as contentment (or discontentment). These two kinds of influence have, in general, a great deal in common, both imply certain perceptions on the part of the individual, who

attributes characteristics to the reference group which it may or may not actually have, both involve psychological rewards and punishment.

Consumer behaviour decision models suggest that reference groups can affect the consumer purchase decision. It can affect problem recognition, search for alternatives, alternative evaluation, and choice and therefore, consumers' beliefs, attitudes, and motives can be affected.

This research suggests the potentially important role that personal sources of information or word-of-mouth communication may have on the purchase decision of durables within the Jordanian context. This study will provide information on the behaviour of Jordanian consumers, in general, as well as providing specific answers to important questions such as, do Jordanian consumers search for information?, and if they do , when?, how?, and why do they do so?.

CHAPTER FOUR
FORMULATION OF THE HYPOTHESES
AND THE STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

This chapter deals with two main issues; the research hypotheses and questionnaire design. In particular, it covers the following issues:

1. The formulation and justification of the research hypotheses.
2. The justification of the method of data collection.
3. The rationale for each question included in the questionnaire.
4. The operationalisation of the concepts included in the study and the link to the antecedent questionnaire.

4.1. Formulation and justification of the research hypotheses:

The scope of the hypotheses used in this study is limited to those variables which are amenable to measurements and testing in the field "Jordan" and also to reflect the objectives of this research. On completion of the detailed review of the relevant literature, it became apparent that

new hypotheses would have to be developed to test the study variables in the context of Jordan. The main reason for developing such hypotheses arose from the researcher's own understanding and knowledge of the social and cultural context of Jordan. This was based not only on personal experience but also in studying Jordanian society for a number of years. This meant that hypotheses had to be developed within the range of the researcher's own experience of Jordanian culture. It was as a result of such knowledge and understanding, after full consideration of other possibilities that the following variables were chosen.

1. Financial risk and information search from personal sources.
2. Amount of product knowledge and experience and information search from personal sources.
3. Product complexity and information search from personal sources.
4. Cost of search and the use of personal sources.
5. Social contacts and information search from personal sources.
6. Satisfaction with the car and conveying information to other buyers.
7. Car comparison and buyer's similarity to the referent's income, opinions and values.
8. Information givers and exposure to mass media.
9. Car opinion leadership and sex.

10. Car opinion leadership and level of education.

The following discussion covers the research hypotheses and justifies them.

A. Factors affecting information search from personal sources:

As reported in section 3.3, consumer's decision to seek information from others and the extent of this information search depends on his evaluation of the costs and returns of such a search. Moreover, many factors were put forward to explain information search from personal sources. These factors are:

1. Level of perceived risk associated with buying a particular product.
2. Level of product knowledge and experience.
3. Product complexity.
4. Level of self-confidence in making a purchase decision.
5. The length of the period of commitment associated with buying a particular product.

1. Level of perceived risk associated with buying a particular product:

For decades the concept of perceived risk has been formally related to the study of consumer behaviour. This concept was

first introduced by Bauer (1960), when he argued that consumers perceive some degree of financial, physical or social risk when purchasing many products and services. He also argued that consumers "develop decision strategies" and ways of reducing risk, that enables them to act with relative confidence and ease in situations where their information is inadequate and the consequences of their actions are incalculable.

Some of this risk reducing behaviour might include the seeking of product information from others. However, since people are biologically and psychologically different, one should remember, that their susceptibility to risk perception will vary and thus, their information search in general and that through word-of-mouth, as well.

Since the level of risk perception varies among people, one should conclude that a risk for person A, might not be a risk for person B. In order to identify how risk might vary between individuals, the researcher believes that this concept must be treated multidimensionally rather than looking at it as a single factor.

Previous research (e.g. Roselius, 1971; Hisrich, Dornoff and Kernan, 1972; Peter and Tarpey, 1975; Engel and Blackwell, 1982, Fletcher, 1986) stressed the need to treat perceived risk multidimensionally and they used various facets of risk. The facets they stressed and used were as follows. Financial

risk, which is related to the financial loss that the consumer may face in order to repair or maintain the product. Social risk, which is related to the way other people think of the chosen product as to whether the product is suitable or unsuitable for buyers. Psychological risk, which refers to how buying a bad product would affect the way the buyer regards himself. Functional risk, which is related to whether the product would provide the desired performance. Physical risk, which is related to whether the danger of using the product is high.

It was expected that Jordanian car buyers would seek car information from others, in order to get the right car for their money and also to avoid any financial losses such as constant repair and high maintenance costs. This expectation was based on the fact that Jordanians have a low level of per capita income when compared with world standards. (see Table 2.1)

Based on the above, the researcher put forward the first hypothesis, namely:

H1. In Jordan, the extent of information search from personal sources is related to the financial risk associated with buying a car.

2. Lack of product knowledge and experience:

It could be said that buyers are more likely to seek product information when they have little knowledge or experience to make a purchase decision. Although the level of information search may vary from one person to another, this relationship has been widely documented (e.g., Newman and Staelin, 1972 and 1973; Kiel and Layton, 1981; Moore and Lehman, 1980; Fletcher, 1986).

This factor was found to be one of the most important motives for western consumers to search for product information. However, the researcher expected that this factor would not apply for Jordanian car buyers. This comes from the researcher's knowledge of Jordanian society, where individuals would not encompass the idea of their not possessing the relevant knowledge. Therefore, based on the above, the researcher put forward the second hypothesis.

H2. The extent of information search from personal sources does not relate to the amount of product-knowledge and experience of cars in Jordan.

3. Product complexity:

Studies of consumer search have reported that consumers have a high tendency to seek product information when the product to be purchased is technical or mechanical and complex.

Moreover, evaluating mechanically complicated products requires knowledge and experience and if the consumer does not have this, there is a high possibility of making the wrong purchase. Thus the risk implied in buying a low grade product would entail frequent mechanical failure and hence high maintenance costs. (E.g. Bauer, 1960; Howard and Sheth, 1969; Claxton, Fry and Portis, 1974).

It was expected that Jordanian buyers, as is common with other buyers, would ask for advice when the product to be purchased was of a complex nature. Thus hypothesis three was put forward.

H3. The extent of information search from personal sources is related to product complexity in Jordan.

B. Reasons for information search from personal sources:

Previous research (e.g. Katz, 1957; Newman and Staelin, 1972; and Berning and Jacoby, 1974; Midgley, 1983) have indicated that buyers make much use of personal sources because the latter are 'non-purposive', flexible, trustworthy and entail minimal cost in both time and money. It was also reported that, the social integrity of an individual within his community and his relationship to his friends and his social contacts, will affect the nature of his information search. Therefore, it is quite reasonable for the researcher to

argue that buyers would choose sources which yield an optimum combination of information cost and value. Cost depends on time and effort as well as financial outlay and value depends on the amount and type of information needed, as well as the buyer's perception of source adequacy, competency and trustworthiness.

Advertising is frequently used to create awareness, cultivate interest and prompt product inspection. Due to ease of access, advertising is likely to be widely heard or seen. However, advertising content is limited by space time and cost constraints, in addition to advertiser objectives and criteria for communication effectiveness. The consumer may regard information in advertising, as accessible and easy to see or hear but not necessarily trustworthy because it represents the seller.

Books, pamphlets and articles may provide good information but their use requires time and patience coupled with the ability to comprehend and evaluate them.

Taking both the above and the researcher's own Jordanian background into account, two hypotheses were developed to help him explore the reasons for the Jordanian car buyer's use of personal sources of information.

1. Cost of Search:

Because of the low level of per capita income, the researcher expected Jordanians would make greater use of personal sources when buying a particular car. This expectation was based on the idea that Jordanian car buyers would ask for information when visiting friends, neighbours or relatives. This would not cost them money and the time spent could be viewed as enjoyment. Therefore the hypothesis put forward was:

H4. In Jordan, the extent of information search from personal sources is related to the cost associated with it.

2. Social contacts:

As previously shown, the literature indicated the positive relationship between social contacts and information search. The researcher expected the same relationship to exist in Jordan. This expectation comes from the fact that Jordanians usually visit their friends, etc, on a regular basis (i.e. four to five times a week). Thus, it was expected that this would reflect on the level of information search from personal sources. Based on this, a hypothesis was forwarded that:

H5. The extent of information search from personal sources

is related to the amount of social contacts in Jordan.

C. Reasons for conveying information to other car buyers:

Studies of consumer satisfaction (e.g. Warland, Herrmann and Willitts, 1975; Andreason, 1977; Westbrook, 1980; Richins, 1983) have reported that, consumers who are dissatisfied with products they have purchased, would complain and thus dissatisfaction and complaint behaviour are positively linked. The literature also indicated, that consumers continue to both buy and tell others about products with which they are satisfied. However, it was expected that Jordanians would complain about their cars if dissatisfied but not convey information when satisfied. The latter expectation was based on the fact that, those who are satisfied would have quality cars. The researcher did not expect those buyers to talk about being satisfied with their cars because this might incur such criticism, most common in Jordan, that they were boasting or were intending to offend those who could not afford a similar product. Hence:

H6. Jordanians do not convey satisfaction with a product to other car buyers.

D. The social comparison process:

Numerous researchers (e.g. Stafford, 1966; Bott, 1968; Witt,

1969; Moschis, 1976; Goethals and Zanna, 1979; Ellis and Ford, 1980) have acknowledged the impact of social groups on consumer behaviour. They reported that, individuals do compare themselves to others and employ certain criteria when selecting a referent for comparison. For example, Bott (1968) indicated that, factors such as, income, occupation, education and opinions or values are usually considered by individuals (with some variation) when selecting a referent for such a comparison.

Due to the frequency of social visiting (four to five times per week) in Jordan, it was expected that this high level would lead to direct or indirect car comparison with others. The researcher expected that, certain criteria would be employed by Jordanians when this type of social comparison occurs. Hence:

H7. Jordanian consumers engage in social comparison with those whom they perceive as similar in income, opinions and values.

E. Identification of car opinion leaders:

The overall purpose of the remaining three hypotheses is to help in the identification of the characteristics appertaining to Jordanian opinion leaders. The scope of the three hypotheses is limited to the following variables, i.e. exposure to the mass media, sex and education.

1. Exposure to the mass media:

The existing literature (e.g. Summers, 1970; Martilla, 1971; Corey, 1971; Baumgarten, 1975; Feick and Price, 1987) suggested that opinion leaders are more frequently exposed to different sources of information and in greater depth, than those who are information seekers.

It was expected that information givers and car opinion leaders in Jordan would have the same characteristics. This expectation comes from the researcher's belief that, any person (whether from the West or Jordan) interested in a particular area, would search for information on it. Hence:

H8. Information givers are more exposed than seekers to the mass media in Jordan.

2. Sex and opinion leadership:

The literature on demographics did not indicate clear differences between opinion leaders and followers with regard to the above. There is a great deal of documentation on the dependence of opinion leader characteristics on social situation and product category. (E.g. Midgley, 1977; Foxall, 1981; Engel and Blackwell, 1982; Feick and Price, 1987).

There are fundamental differences in Jordan in the way in

which males and females are viewed within the family unit. Thus, in this essentially male dominated society, the man is viewed as an asset and the woman as a liability. From birth women can feel unimportant and dependent. Jordanian women have a limited role in public life and perhaps there is a tendency to exaggerate the importance of the Jordanian male in relation to the female. Hence:

H9. Car opinion leadership is related to sex in Jordan.

3. Education and opinion leadership

Although the existing literature did not provide clear differences between opinion leaders and followers with regard to education, the researcher expected this to be so in Jordan.

On account of high levels of general education in the West, respondents to research carried out there, may not have viewed education as important when seeking advice. Conversely, however, because of the relatively low level of education in Jordan, those who sought information did so from the better educated, whom they perceived as opinion leaders. Hence:

H10. Car opinion leadership is related to the level of education in Jordan.

The above sections of this chapter considered the hypotheses

and explained their particular formation. The following sections deal with the justification of the data collection method used, question rationale, the operationalisation of the concepts included in the study and the link to the previous questionnaire.

4.2. Method of data collection:

While the theoretical debates still going on as to what method of data collection is most suitable to a particular study, one must not forget the practical problems involved. For example, inductive research is considered to be the right approach especially when the research's social and cultural environment have never been investigated.

Inductive research aims at describing the culture and life style in a society being studied in accurate way to the way that the members of the society see it themselves. The main idea of this type of research is not to seek causes and explanations, as it is the case with survey-style research, but rather to "tell it like it is" (McNeill, 1990). As a result of the accurate description, the researcher may develop theories about why the people in the concerned society behave as they do. Moreover, hypotheses are usually expected to emerge from the research as it progresses, rather than be generated and developed from the start and used as a guide to the kind of data that is required and collected.

Inductive research implies different forms, for example, ethnographic research and comparative analysis for generating grounded theory. If inductive research is successfully carried out in Jordan, its findings might differ from those concluded in this study as all the concepts would be generated from Jordanians themselves. For example, the following exhibit suggests some steps which might be taken into consideration in conducting longitudinal focus group study in Jordan. This example is a general outline of the main features involved in adopting such an approach, leaving aside the possibility of social and cultural restrictions identified in chapters two and four.

Exhibit (4.1)

An example of longitudinal focus group study in Jordan

Potential buyers, as opposed to those who have indicated a desire to buy, might be identified through a researcher placing advertisements in a wide range of Newspapers, Radio, Television, Cafes and Mosques. This procedure could be regarded as a necessary step, as there are no official records available through which a researcher can identify potential buyers. To carry out a longitudinal focus group study, the following points might be necessary.

1. To encourage people to respond to such advertisements, which should have a telephone and contact address, the researcher might have to offer some incentives. For example,

free transport to the place where the study would be held, food and financial rewards might be relevant.

2. Once the time and the place are agreed between the researcher and his respondents, he might have to transport those respondents to the place where the study would be held. This is important as those buyers might not have cars to use. Moreover, at this stage, the researcher would require to explain the purpose and the significance of the study. He would also need to make the respondents aware of the time-span of the study. Based on discussions with the gathered respondents, the researcher would then choose those most suitable for the purpose of the study project. This is essential for a successful outcome to the research and is a crucial stage in the study. Furthermore, Mosques and Cafes might be appropriate places for such a study.

3. The next stage is the selection of the method of data collection. Investigating the influence of word-of-mouth communication on the purchase decision processes, for example, might require the use of longitudinal focus group as a method of data collection. The necessity of using this method comes from the fact that the purchase decision implies many stages. In each stage, many complicated issues related to word-of-mouth communication could arise and have their influence. Thus, the method of longitudinal focus group would allow the researcher to acquire as rich and detailed and understanding of the behaviour of individuals in each stage

of the purchase decision. Questions related to word-of-mouth communication might be raised, sub-categories related to the study could appear and provisional answers might be provided by respondents. The adoption of this method should allow the researcher to gather qualitative data on many issues such as: How buyers come to realise the need for buying a particular product and what is the role of word-of-mouth communication at this stage? How buyers would evaluate the different alternatives available to them? What sources of information do they use and why? What factors would motivate them to use a particular source? What is the role of personal sources of information and word-of-mouth communication in influencing the final outcome and who would be involved at this stage?

4. A constant comparative method for generating grounded theory, for example, might be used to analyse qualitative data. In this method, the data gathered from respondents is coded and filled into the relevant category or categories of the study and variation between respondents' demographic characteristics might be considered. Data comparison within each category is important, as this would allow the researcher to realise the similarities and differences between respondents' answers and comments. These comparisons would indicate to the researcher, for example, how buyers come to realise the need for buying a product? Where do they search for product information and how information sources are evaluated?

The progress in data analysis would allow for the emergence of new categories, such as, what factors motivated buyers to search for information and which sources were used? what types of information required and what factors used to choose a source of information?

However, in the final stage of the analysis, the number of sub-categories in each main category is reduced by integrating related sub-categories and at the same time maintaining the distinctions between them. This is important as it allows the researcher to organise the main categories into a coherent structure which would then be illustrated in the final report.

The points included in this exhibit are only suggestions and the researcher cannot guarantee the success of such a study. For instance, female buyers would not be allowed to participate in such a study. Furthermore, doubts would persist as to whether Jordanian male buyers would be willing to participate in this lengthy process. They mostly start work very early in the morning and return late at night. The man is also solely responsible for fulfilling other needs of his family, for example, shopping and visits to the doctor. In addition to this, time will also be spent praying at least five times per day. These factors would place various restrictions on the potential for such an approach in the Jordanian context. The social and cultural restraints on

female participants and the unwillingness of Jordanian males to involvement in such a process makes such a study unlikely.

However, the research designer has a wide variety of survey techniques on which to draw. These may be considered either singly or in combination (Aaker and Day, 1986). In survey research the building of data collection techniques come about mid way through the research process. This is determined by the preceding stages of deciding what sort of information is required and the form which it will take. These will determine subsequent stages (e.g., non-response coding problems, various kinds of biases, statistical problems).

The researcher should remember that the method of data collection should be agreed with the respondents and sometimes access to informants has to be negotiated. There are also many practical arrangements in order to ensure that the required information meets time and cost allotments.

The following discusses the three principal methods (i.e. personal interviews, telephone and mail or self-administered questionnaires) of data collection and it explains why the self distributed questionnaire is considered to be a suitable method in Jordan:

1. Personal interviews:

Usually personal interviews offer researchers many advantages such as, flexibility in obtaining the required data, identification of respondents, low rate of non-response, good control of all respects of sample distribution, respondents are observed, avoidance of ambiguity and a high quality response. Despite all these advantages, however, this researcher has doubts of the suitability of this method when applied to Jordan and for the following reasons:

a. The population with regard to this study, was defined as car owners, regardless of whether as an individual or a family and only those living in Amman and the surrounding districts. According to the latest population census in 1979, Amman had a population of 1,185,181 (55% of the total population of Jordan). No statistics exist on the number of males and females. Generalising the research findings on the population of study required the use of random sampling procedures. Therefore, the researcher assumed that, the chances of male and female being represented in the sample were the same.

This assumption meant that 50% of the sample of the study might be female, though from personal experience of Jordanian culture, the researcher knew that data collection from women would be impossible. This because Jordanian women would not be allowed to be interviewed by a stranger and particularly a

male. The researcher was therefore, convinced that any attempt to collect data from female car owners would be a practical impossibility.

b. Even if male car owners dominated the sample, the researcher still doubted their willingness to be interviewed for a lengthy period of time (possibly two to three hours). Jordanian men mostly start work very early in the morning and return late at night. The man is also responsible for shopping and visits to the doctor, for example.

c. As the study is concerned with investigating word-of-mouth communication and its influence on the purchase of cars in Jordan, the research findings had to be generalised for the population of study. In order to do so, a large sample had to be used. The time and resource constraints of a PhD has made it impossible for the researcher to use personal interviews.

d. Personal interviews require the involvement of the interviewer with the respondents. This involvement might create bias, which in turn would make it difficult for the researcher to generalise the findings for the population of the study. Therefore, one of the most important disadvantages to the study was removed.

2. Telephone:

Telephone surveys offer researchers many advantages, such as the possibility of contacting large samples, no field staff are required, it is a quick way of obtaining information and call backs are simple. However, as previously mentioned, investigating word-of-mouth communication implies large issues and, therefore, the cost per response will be high. Thus the total cost of a telephone survey for this study would be prohibitive.

3. Self-distributed questionnaire:

Taking the above considerations into account, it was decided that a self-distributed questionnaire would provide the most suitable form of data collection. This method worked well in other studies (e.g. Storer and Stone, 1974; Lovelock et al, 1976). Lovelock et al, (1976) recommended personal delivery and collection of self distributed questionnaires as being particularly appropriate for surveys involving personal information and lengthy questionnaires of the type used in this study. This method increased the possibility of a high response rate, as the consumer might feel obliged to answer the questionnaire as promised.

Having discussed the principal methods of data collection, the following deals with the use of five-point scales.

The use of five-point scales:

Attitude, behavioural or psychological scales are carefully constructed sets of rating scales usually designed to measure one or more aspects of an individual's attitude or behaviour toward some object. Some properties or dimensions, especially when measuring attitudes and preferences, appear to have natural origins on an ordinal scale (Tull and Hawkins, 1987).

Any researcher planning to, use rating scales, has to weigh their advantages and disadvantages before making the final decision. Rating scales could offer the researcher advantages such as, wider use in marketing, in general, and consumer behaviour in particular, require less time to answer and analyse, have a wider application than most other methods and may be used with a large properties or variables. However, these scales should not be taken for granted by any researcher because of the disadvantages associated with them. One deficiency of using rating scales is the vagueness of "strongly agree" and "agree", "strongly disagree" and "disagree", "to a very great extent " and "to a great extent" and "very true" and "true". The difficulty in distinguishing between these term stamps a question mark on the equivalency and perhaps the stability of these scales. Moreover, if respondents could not distinguish between, "strongly agree" and "agree", for example, the researcher might not be able to explore respondents' extreme attitude towards some object.

The itemized scales, such as those used in this study, might present another problem. These items/statements might not measure what they were intended to measure, or they might not say exactly what the respondent would like to express and this might result in an inaccurate research findings. However, itemized scales probably increase reliability because the more detailed statements help respondents to develop and hold the same frame of reference as they use the form.

The value of rating scales for measurement purposes depends upon the assumption that a respondent can and will make good judgements. However, before we accept respondent's ratings, we should consider the tendencies to constant error. Three of the most common types are the errors of leniency, central tendency and halo effect (Tull and Hawkins, 1987).

The error of leniency occurs when certain respondents are either "easy raters" or "hard raters", the latter being an error of negative leniency. For example, if a respondent liked or disliked an item or a statement in the questionnaire, he might give extreme rating without being objective. Moreover, respondents, sometimes, are reluctant to give extreme judgements and this fact accounts for the error of central tendency. This is the usual case when they do not understand the itemized scales. The third error concerns the halo effect, which means the systematic bias that the respondent introduces by carrying over a generalised

impression of the subject from one rating to another. Halo effect is one of the most pervasive errors; it is especially difficult to avoid when the subject being studied is not clearly defined, not easily observed, not frequently discussed, involves reactions with others, or is a trait of high moral importance. These types of problems could appear in any study using rating scales and therefore, respondents' bias might occur and, thus, inaccurate research findings as a result. However, this study used rating scales for the following reasons:

a. It was believed that Jordanian car owners would not have adequate knowledge of word-of-mouth communication and therefore, the use of other questions than closed-ended ones would not secure the required information to complete this study. Moreover, the use of five-point scales, gave respondents the chance to rate themselves as to e.g., their level of car knowledge, the amount of information they were seeking, etc.,. This 1-5 scale gives point (1) the least value and thus, (5) the greatest value.

b. The use of a five-point scale made it easier for respondents to answer the study questionnaire as this method was straightforward and flexible. Hence, respondents' cooperation was secured. Moreover the sample of the study was of those Jordanians who already owned cars. This meant that the survey would take place after the buyers had manifested

their purchase behaviour. Therefore, it was thought that if some respondents were not sure about their position on any one statement/item or question, they should be able to indicate their neutrality, as all respondents were told that point (3) on the scale indicated "uncertain". Also it was believed that the use of items/statements would remind respondents of their purchase behaviour.

c. Previous questionnaires, in this field, used this type of measurement on a large scale. Hence, the researcher decided to use the same or similar measurements. This decision was made to maximize the validity and reliability of the study.

d. A significant amount of research in marketing, particularly consumer-orientated research, relies on ordinal measures. The most common use of these is in obtaining preference measurements. Attitude measures are also often ordinal in nature (Tull and Hawkins, 1987). However, in order not to lose the advantage of obtaining further information, additional space was provided where relevant in the questionnaire.

4.3. The rationale for each question and the link to previous questionnaires:

This section of the questionnaire design is concerned with explaining the different questions included in the questionnaire and the reasons for asking such questions.

Moreover, it shows the use of concepts included in the study and the link to previous questionnaires.

4.3.1. The rationale for each question included in the research questionnaire:

The research questionnaire, which is reproduced in the appendices was composed of 35 questions which can be classified into ten main sections. The following Table shows the questions and the hypotheses related to each section.

Table (4.1)

Main sections of the questionnaire and the study hypotheses

Section and hypotheses	Questions
1. General information search from both personal and impersonal sources.	Q1. In general, when you were considering buying your latest car did you ask/search for information about it (e.g., from advertising, magazines, newspapers, friends, etc)?
2. Factors affecting the level of information search from personal sources. Three hypotheses were related to this section ,i.e., H1, H2 and H3	Q3. Please indicate below, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements. Q4. How important did you perceive the following statements when you were considering buying your latest car. Q5. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statement? Buying a car is a very risky business. Q8. When you were considering buying your latest car, did you approach anyone (e.g., friends, relatives or neighbours) for advice, information or opinion? Q9. How much information did you ask/search from your

Table (4.1) continued:

	relatives, friends or neighbour?
<p>3. Reasons for information search from personal sources.</p> <p>Two hypotheses were used in this section, i.e., H4 and H5</p>	<p>Q6. How frequent do you visit or participate in social events (e.g., engagements, weddings and birthdays) with your friends, relatives and neighbours?</p> <p>Q11. Please indicate below, the extent to which would you agree or disagree with the following statements.</p> <p>Q29. In your opinion, how credible were these sources of information.</p>
<p>4. Types of information required from personal sources.</p>	<p>Q12. With regard to your latest car, could you please indicate below to what extent did your friends, relatives or neighbours provide you with information about the following.</p> <p>Q13. When you approached your relative, friend or neighbour, did he provide you with different types of information on cars?</p>
<p>5. Reasons for conveying information to other car buyers.</p> <p>One hypothesis was used in this section, i.e., H6.</p>	<p>Q14. Except when you were considering buying your latest car, do you talk to your friends, relatives, or neighbours about your car?</p> <p>Q15. If yes, how often would you talk about your car to your friends, relatives, etc.?</p> <p>Q16. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements.</p> <p>Q17. How true would you see the following statement?</p>
<p>6. Sources of personal influence faced by Jordanian car buyers.</p>	<p>Q18. When you were considering buying your latest car, has anyone said to you, for example, you should buy; I want you to buy; or I would like to see you buying this kind of car?</p> <p>Q19. In your personal opinion, to what extent did they influence your decision of whether or not to buy your latest car?</p> <p>Q20. Please indicate below who were they and how important was their opinion or influence on whether or not to buy your</p>

Table (4.1) continued:

	latest car?
<p>7. Factors taken into consideration when choosing a referent for car comparison.</p> <p>One hypothesis was related to this section, i.e., H7.</p>	<p>Q21. When you were considering buying your latest car, did you compare or were you willing to compare it with those owned by your friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbour?</p> <p>Q22. If yes, please indicate below how similar/dissimilar do you view your friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours (whom you compared or whom you were willing to compare your latest car with) in terms of the following.</p> <p>Q23. How important do you consider the following factors when you want to choose a friend, relative, colleague or a neighbour for either comparing or being willing to compare your car?</p>
<p>8. Characteristics of car opinion leaders.</p> <p>Three hypotheses were used in this section, i.e., H8, H9 and H10.</p>	<p>Q8 and 9 explained earlier.</p> <p>Q24. Has anyone (e.g., friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours) approached you for advice, information or opinion before buying their own cars?</p> <p>Q25. How much information did you give them when they approached you for advice?</p> <p>Q27. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following state ment.</p>
<p>9. The influence of word-of-mouth communication on the purchase of cars in Jordan.</p>	<p>Q10. Please indicate below what form and frequency did your communication take?</p> <p>Q26. What form and frequency did their communication take?</p> <p>Q28. How important were the following sources in providing you with the required information of whether or not to buy your latest car?</p> <p>Q30. To what extent would you say your communication (i.e., exchanging information) with your friends, relatives or neighbours influenced your decision of whether or not to buy your latest car?</p>

Table (4.1) continued:

10. Demographic factors.	Q31. Please indicate below your level of education.
	Q32. What age group are you in ?
	Q33. Into which of the following groups does your monthly income fall ?
	Q34. Are you
	a. Male
	b. Female
	Q35. Please state your present occupation.

These ten sections and the questions included in the above Table are discussed in turn.

1. General information search (both from personal and impersonal sources):

This part of the questionnaire contained two questions. Question 1 gave the researcher a general picture of respondents' information search from both personal and impersonal sources. This allowed the researcher to deduce that impersonal sources (such as, magazines and newspapers) and personal sources (such as friends and relatives) were used by Jordanians to search for the relevant information about the prospective car purchase. Moreover, this question was necessary, because respondents were asked in question 28 and 29 to assess the importance and credibility of personal and impersonal sources.

Question 2 was eliminated from the study because of its similarity to question 9 and would have caused confusion, as they both related to the amount of information search.

2. Factors affecting the level of information search from personal sources:

This part of the questionnaire included questions which aimed at identifying the factors affecting the level of information search from personal sources by Jordanians. These questions are 3,4,5,8 and 9.

Question 3 examined some of the factors which motivated the Jordanians to search for car information. Questions 3a, 3b, 3c and 3d attempted to examine respondents' knowledge and experience of cars. These questions were also used in testing hypothesis number 2. Question 3e and 3f were designed to examine whether or not Jordanians view cars as a complex product and also to test hypothesis number 3. Question 3g and 3h examined whether the price of the car was a factor in information search. Question 3i, 3j and 3k examined respondents' self confidence. Q3L examined whether the long period of commitment was a factor in information search.

Question 4 was used as a multidimensional measure of risk. Question 4a examined the financial risk and this question was used to test hypothesis number 1. Question 4b investigated the social risk. Question 4c attempted to discover the

psychological risk. Question 4d tested the functional or performance risk. Finally, question number 4e examined the physical risk associated with buying a car. All these dimensions were used in order to examine whether or not Jordanian buyers considered these as factors for information search. To double check respondents' perception of risk, the researcher used question number 5 as a single overall measure of risk.

Question 8 was used to investigate whether or not Jordanian car buyers approached other people (e.g. friends and relatives for advice. This question was used to divide respondents into two groups: users and non-users of personal sources. This allowed the researcher to examine whether significant differences existed between these two groups, regarding factors, such as, product knowledge and experience, product complexity, risk perception etc.,.

Question 9 examined the amount of information sought and was employed to discover the level of reliance on personal sources of information.

3. Reasons for information search from personal sources:

This part of the questionnaire included questions 6,7,11 and 29 and was used to assess the buyer's reasons for information search. Question 6 examined frequency of social visiting and participation in social events, such as engagements,

weddings, etc.,. The overall purpose of this question was to discover a respondent's social contacts within his community and also to test hypothesis number 5.

Question 7 was designed as a multi-item measurement to double check respondent's social contacts with his community. However, this question was eliminated from the study, as the reliability analysis gave a low Cronbach Alpha value (Alpha <0.5 suggested by Peter J. 1979).

Question 11 was intended to identify other reasons for information search from personal sources. Questions 11a and 11b were used to investigate whether or not respondents considered their personal sources flexible in providing the required information. 11c examined whether or not respondents considered their personal sources of information to have a high level of experience in cars. Question 11d was used to find out whether the low level of cost (i.e. time and money) was behind the use of personal sources of information. Moreover this question was used to test hypothesis 4.

In question 29 an attempt was made to assess the respondent's view on the credibility they attach to both personal sources (e.g. wife/husband and children, friends and colleagues) and impersonal sources (i.e. car showrooms, newspapers and magazines). This was necessary in order to examine whether credibility of information was a reason for the use of

personal sources.

4. Types of information required from personal sources:

The fourth part of the questionnaire aimed at identifying the types of car information sought by Jordanian consumers from their personal sources. It was covered by two questions (12 and 13). Question 12 listed 6 types of car information and asked respondents to indicate the extent that their personal sources could provide each of the types listed. Question 13 was used as a double check on respondents as to whether personal sources provided them with different types of car information.

5. Reasons for conveying car information to other buyers:

The fifth part of the questionnaire dealt with reasons which have motivated Jordanians to convey car information to other buyers. It comprised four questions (14-17). Question 14 examined the willingness of Jordanians to talk about cars without having to consider buying a car. This question also isolated those willing and those who were not willing to talk about cars. This was important for testing the two groups against factors such as, satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their own cars. Question 15 investigated how frequently Jordanians talked about cars when not intending to purchase one. This question was later dropped, as the information was considered as being provided in 14, 16 and 17. Question 16

examined some of the reasons for conveying car information to other Jordanians. In question 16(1), questions 16 a, b and c examined whether or not Jordanians would convey information to other people about their dissatisfaction with a particular car. In 16(2), questions 16 a, b and c investigated whether or not Jordanians would convey information to other people about their satisfaction with a particular car. Moreover those questions included in part 16(2) were used to test hypothesis number 6.

Question 17 examined other reasons for conveying car information. Question 17a investigated whether or not respondents experience would motivate them to convey car information to other buyers. Question 17b examined whether or not Jordanians would convey car information to other people in order to show themselves as knowledgeable. Question 17c was concerned with investigating whether or not Jordanians would convey car information in order to convey social status. Finally question 17c asked respondents to indicate whether or not they would convey information to their friends, relatives or neighbours if they realised that certain advertising was not credible.

6. Sources of personal influence faced by Jordanian car buyers:

This part of the questionnaire included questions intended to assess the consumer's view on sources of personal influence

he was subject to. Three questions (18-20) were used to cover this. Question 18 isolated those respondents whose purchase decision was influenced by other people from those whose decision was not. It also examined whether or not significant differences exist between the two groups regarding sources of personal influence such as, wife/husband and children, parents, relatives, close friends and colleagues.

Question 19 was used in order to investigate the level of influence these personal sources might have on the purchase of cars. Moreover, this question was used to illustrate whether personal sources just provide buyers with information or actually influence the purchase decision itself.

Question 20 included different sources of personal influence (e.g. wife/husband, children and parents) and it asked respondents to indicate the sources of influence and their influence on the purchase decision.

7. Factors taken into consideration when choosing a referent for a car comparison:

This part of the questionnaire included questions which were intended to examine whether or not Jordanian buyers engage in car comparison processes and if they do, the factors taken into consideration when comparison occurs. This comprised three questions (i.e. 21-23).

Question 21 asked respondents whether or not they compare their cars with other cars. This was necessary to isolate those who compare their cars with others from those who do not. The former were asked to answer question 22 and 23. Question 22 provided a list of factors such as income, occupation, general opinion, education and age. This question asked respondents to indicate the level of similarity between them and those whom they compare their cars with, against the listed factors.

Question 23 asked respondents to indicate the level of importance they attach to the above mentioned factors. These two questions (22 and 23) were important to test hypothesis number 7 and the identification of the factors employed by Jordanians for their chosen referent for car comparison.

8. Characteristics of car opinion leaders:

The eight part of the present questionnaire was devoted in the main, to identifying the characteristics of car information givers and opinion leaders, with regard to seven social characteristics (i.e. exposure to mass media, social participation, early buyers or innovation, level of influence on other's purchase decision, experience, self confidence and level of interest in the product area. This part included four questions (i.e. 8, 9, 24, 25 and 27). Questions 8 and 9 have been dealt with already.

Question 24 was used for identifying those who give car information to others and those who do not. This question was needed to identify the characteristics of car information givers and opinion leaders.

Question 25 gave the researcher a general picture of car information givers. This question was important in showing the intensity of word-of-mouth communication pertinent to car buying in Jordan.

With reference to the information required to identify the characteristics of information givers and car opinion leaders, respondents were asked question 27. Question 27a and b were used to examine the level of exposure to mass media amongst car information givers and opinion leaders. Moreover, the two questions (i.e. 27a and b) were also used to test hypothesis 8.

Question 27c, d and e were designed to examine the level of social participation. Question 27f and g examined buyers' early adoption of cars. Questions 27h and i were used to investigate the level of influence car information givers and opinion leaders have on others' purchase decisions. Questions 27j and k examined the level of experience of car information givers and opinion leaders. Question 27l and m investigated the level of self confidence they had when buying and judging cars and 27h and o, their level of interest in cars.

9. The influence of word-of-mouth communication on the purchase of cars in Jordan:

The ninth part of the questionnaire was concerned with identifying the form(s) of sending and receiving car information, importance of sources of information (personal and impersonal) and the level of influence of word-of-mouth on purchase decisions. This was a four part question (i.e. 10, 26, 28 and 30).

Question 10 and 26 were designed to investigate the most frequent form of communication (i.e. telephone, mail or face-to-face) used by Jordanians when conveying or receiving car information. In question 28, an attempt was made to assess the importance they attach to both personal sources (e.g. wife/husband, children, friends and colleagues) and impersonal sources (e.g. car showrooms, newspapers and magazines). This question allowed the researcher to provide evidence on the importance of either sources in furnishing Jordanians with the required information.

Question 30 examined the level of influence that word-of-mouth communication had on the purchase of cars.

10. Demographic factors:

The last part of the research questionnaire asked respondents

to identify their level of education, age, monthly income, sex and occupation. This part included questions 31 to 35 inclusive.

The data provided by these questions was used to examine whether relationships exist between respondents demographic factors and/or information search from personal sources; conveying car information to others; the influence of personal sources on others' purchase decision; the demographic characteristics of car information givers and opinion leaders.

The information provided on sex and education was used to test hypotheses 9 and 10. However, after the field work had been completed and for data analysis purposes, respondents occupations were classified into six categories. These were based on those of the 'International Labour Office Classification of Employed Workers by Occupation' and were obtained from the 'Yearbook of Labour Statistics, 1988'.

1. Professional, technical and related jobs.
2. Administrative and managerial jobs.
3. Clerical and related jobs.
4. Trading and business and related jobs.
5. Services, teaching and related jobs.
6. Transport, labour and related jobs.

4.3.2. The operationalisation of the concepts included in the study and the link to the antecedent questionnaire:

Consideration should be given to social and cultural characteristics, for example, social activity for women in Britain may comprehend, going to the cinema, going out for a drink or going to a club to play Bingo. In Jordan, the majority of women, if not all, would consider these forms of entertainment as taboo. In consideration of this, the questions used to measure the different concepts in this study were either similar to those used in previous research or adapted or developed to suit Jordanian culture. Those newly operationalised concepts were not, as far as the researcher is aware, operationalised in the literature but had been explained or defined. Moreover, those newly operationalised concepts were constructed from their definitions or explanations in the literature.

The following Table summarises the linkage between the study constructs and the antecedent questionnaire. These constructs are discussed in turn.

Table (4.2)

The study constructs and the linkage to the antecedent questionnaire

Construct	page	Reference where construct is used
Information search:	148	Newman and Staelin, 1972 Maxey, 1972 Hugstand, Taylor and Bruce, 1987 Hisrich, Dornoff and kernan, 1972
<u>Factors affecting information search:</u>		
A single overall measure of risk	154	Fletcher, 1986 Cunningham, 1965
A multidimensional measure of risk	155	Fletcher, 1986 Roselius, 1971
Product knowledge and experience	157	Fletcher, 1986 Punj, 1987 Roa and Monroe, 1988
Product complexity	159	McQuiston, 1989 Puto, 1987 Westbrook and Fornell, 1979
Cost of product	160	Maxy, 1972 Ratchford, 1980 Erickson and Johansson, 1985
Confidence in decision making	162	Punj, 1987 Fletcher, 1986 Hisrich, Dornoff and Kernan, 1972
Period of commitment	163	It was operationalised being guided by its definition.

Table(4.2) continued

Reasons for information search from personal sources:

Source credibility	165	Maxey, 1972
Flexibility of personal sources	165	It was operationalised being guided by its definition.
Experience	166	Bearden and Etzel, 1982
Cost of search	167	Slama and Tashchian, 1985
Social contacts	168	Douglas and Urban, 1977

Reasons for conveying product information:

Dissatisfaction	171	Singh, 1988 Punj, 1987 Richins, 1983
Satisfaction	172	This concept was operationalised in a similar way to dissatisfaction.
Experience, Knowledge and social status	172	Knowledge and experience were shown and linked earlier. Social status was Constructed being guided by its explanation in the literature. (E.g., Sheth, 1971)
Credibility of advertising	174	It was operationalised in a similar way to dissatisfaction.

Table(4.2) continued:

Sources of personal influence	175	Fletcher, 1986
Level of personal influence	176	Kohli, 1989 McQuiston, 1989 Midgley, 1983
Sources of personal influence	177	Fletcher, 1986 Bearden and Etzell, 1982
Factors taken into consideration when choosing a referent for car comparison	179	It was constructed being guided by its explanation in the literature. (E.g., Bott, 1968)
<u>Characteristics of car opinion leaders:</u>		
Self-designated questions	182, 183	King and Summers, 1970
Exposure to mass media	184	Feick and Price, 1987
Social participation	185	Douglas and Urban, 1977
Innovativeness or early adoption of cars	185	Feick and Price, 1987 Douglas and Urban, 1977
Level of influence on the purchase decision	187	Kohli, 1989 Feick and Price, 1987
EXperience	188	Fletcher, 1986
Self-confidence	189	Punj, 1987
Level of interest in the product area	189	Feick and Price, 1987

Table (4.2) continued

<u>The influence of word-of-mouth communication:</u>		
Forms of receiving and conveying car information	191	They were constructed being guided by the forms of communication available in Jordan.
Level of word-of-mouth influence	192	Kohli, 1989 McQuiston, 1989
<u>Demographic factors:</u>	193	Education, age and sex were operationalised in the usual way with simple multiple choice selection. Income and occupation were operationalised in a particular way to suit the Jordanian society.

The following discusses the constructs included in Table 4.2. and links them to the antecedent questionnaire.

Information search:

The area of information seeking has been extensively researched. Numerous studies on the amount of information search, have been reported. These studies have adopted different methods of measuring the amount of information sought by buyers. Methods such as: (1) number of trips made by buyers to stores and shopping centres (Le Grand and Udell, 1964; Udell 1966; Newman and Staelin, 1972; Westbrook and Fornell, 1979; Ratchford, 1980). (2) Length of time and planning that the buyer used in looking for information

(Sheth and Venkatesan, 1968; Newman and Staelin, 1972; Midgley, 1983; Punj, 1987). (3) Number of product alternatives and attributes considered (Newman and Staelin, 1972; Westbrook and Fornell, 1979; Ratchford, 1980, Punj, 1987); (4) number and types of sources of information consulted (Bennett and Mandell, 1969; Newman and Staelin, 1972 and 1973; Westbrook and Fornell, 1979; Gilly and Zeithaml, 1985).

It is clear that information search could be measured through the use of different methods other than information acquired and therefore the use of one method may not produce the accurate picture of the amount of information sought by buyers. Most of these studies (mentioned earlier) have quantified information search by the use of structured questionnaire and rating scales. This quantification may have overlooked some important issues as to allow the buyer himself to answer questions such as, why they made frequent trips to stores and shopping centres; why they took so long to make up their mind; how they planned for the purchase; why they considered different product alternatives and attributes; how they determined these attributes, etc.,? However, time, financial and other constraints may limit a researchers choice in measuring information search.

Newman and Staelin (1972) examined the amount of external information search by using three methods (1) types of

information required (2) sources of information consulted and (3) number of visits made by buyers to stores and shopping centres.

This study used similar methods to the first two of Newman and Staelin. The two methods were implemented by asking respondents questions 8, 12 and 28 included in this study.

Question 8 examined whether or not Jordanian buyers search for information from personal sources. The question being:

Q8. "When you were considering buying your latest car, did you approach anyone (e.g. friends, relatives or neighbours) for advice?"

Yes..... No..... Do not know.....

This question is similar to that of Newman and Staelin (1972), his question being:

"Did you talk with friends or neighbours about different brands of.....?"

Yes..... No.....

In the other two questions (12 and 28), five point scales ranging from "to a very great extent" to "not at all" were used. Question 12 being:

Q12 "With regard to your latest car, could you please indicate below to what extent your friends, relatives or neighbours provide you with information about the following?"

Many types of information were given in the question, e.g:

a) Make or place of purchase.

A similar question was used by Maxey (1972). In his study on "Interpersonal influences in consumer purchase decisions of new automobiles", he used the following question.

"Do you feel that any of the family members you talked with assisted you in your decision as to the make and model of the car you purchased."

Yes.... Probably.... Uncertain..... Doubtful.... No.....

The another question used in this study, to examine the sources of information used by Jordanians was question 28. This question was:

Q28 "How important were the following sources in providing you with the required information on whether or not to buy your latest car?"

Five point scales were used and different personal sources were provided in the question. This question is similar to that used by Hugstad, Taylor and Bruce (1987). They examined "the effects of social class and perceived risk on consumer information search". Their question on information sources was:

"How often each of the following sources was consulted when a purchase was contemplated in each of the three perceived risk categories?"

The sources of information given in the question were: newspapers, relatives, magazines, friends, salesmen at stores and TV and radio.

The alternative responses they gave were:

Usually... Sometimes..... Not too often.... Never.....

However, this study was concerned with investigating word-of-mouth communication that occurs between the buyer and his friends, relatives and neighbours. Thus evaluating the amount of information search by asking respondents about the number of visits/trips made to shops/stores is irrelevant. Moreover, since the survey of this study was going to take place after the buyers had exhibited their purchasing behaviour, it was feared that the buyers might not remember the time spent or the visits they made to their friends, relatives or neighbours. Hence these two methods (i.e., time spent searching for information and number of visits made by buyers to their friends, relatives and neighbours) were not used. Based on this, the third method used in this study to examine the amount of information search, was by giving the respondents the freedom to rate themselves on a five-point scale ranging from "a very large amount" to "not at all". This was done by asking question 9:

Q9. "How much information did you ask/search from your relatives, friends or neighbours?"

This question is similar to the one used by Hisrich , Dornoff and Kernan (1972), who examined "risk perception in store selection." Their question being:

"When purchasing carpeting (draperies, furniture) in a retail store, do you seek information regarding the store."

very often.....often.....sometimes.....once in a while....
never.....

Factors affecting information search:

As mentioned earlier in this study, previous research has dealt with many factors of information search. The following shows the in which theses factors were operationalised in the questionnaire.

Perceived risk:

The notion, that buying a product involves risk to the buyer, is widely documented in the literature of consumer behaviour (e.g. Cunningham, 1965; Spence, Engel and Blackwell, 1970; Roseliu, 1971; Midgley, 1983; Hugstad, Taylor and Bruce, 1987). There are two ways of measuring risk perception. The first is a single measure and the second is a multidimensional measure. The first gives only, a general picture of whether the product to be purchased is viewed as entailing risk. Furthermore, risk is a matter of individual perception, and as such should be viewed as a subjective

concept. Thus a single overall measure is inaccurate in the case of risk perception.

A multidimensional measure should be viewed as a more accurate one than a single overall measure. The accuracy of a multidimensional measure comes from the fact that it introduces different facets of risk. This would allow buyers to explain what type of risk they perceive when buying a particular product. The facets which are usually included in a multidimensional measure are: financial, functional (performance), physical, psychological and social risks. For example, a buyer would be able to say a product carries risk because of financial consequences and not because of the social risk. With this argument in view and in order to be on the safe side, this study used both measurements.

A single overall measure of risk:

In this study, question number 5 was used as a single overall measure. The question was:

Q5 "To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statement?"

"Buying a car is a very risky business." [*Direct translation from Arabic into English*]

This question is similar to a single overall measure used by

Fletcher (1986). His question being:

"On the whole, considering all sorts of factors combined, about how risky would you say it was to buy a video."

A five-point scale ranging from "very risky" to "not at all risky" were used. However, Fletcher has used this single overall measure together with a multidimensional measure which made his findings on risk perception more accurate and acceptable.

It is surprising to see Cunningham (1965) relying only on a single overall measure to examine risk perception. If he had used a multidimensional measure besides his single overall measure, his findings might have been more attractive. Nevertheless, his single overall measure is similar to the single overall measure used in this study. His question being:

"We all know that not all products work as well as others. Compared to other products would you say that there is a great deal of danger; some danger; not much danger; or no danger, in trying a brand of aspirin, floor wax, dry spaghetti, you have never used before?"

A multidimensional measure:

In this study, question 4 was designed as a multidimensional measure of risk. This question is typical of that used by Fletcher (1986). Fletcher's multidimensional measure was:

"You could lose money on a video recorder because it needing repair and high maintenance costs"

"Friends and colleagues would think a video recorder was't right for me, or was unsuitable"

"A video recorder wouldn't fit in with my self-image (i.e., the way I think about myself"

"A video recorder would have something wrong with it or not work properly"

"A video recorder may be unsafe or a danger to use"

Roselius (1971, p.58) measured risk multidimensionally and through the use of five-point scales. The dimensions that he included in the study were:

1. Time loss: "When some products fail, we waste time, convenience and effort getting them adjusted, repaired or replaced."

2. Hazard loss: "Some products are dangerous to our health and safety when they fail."

3. Ego loss: "Sometimes when we buy a product that turns out to be defective, we feel foolish or other people make us feel foolish."

4. Money loss: "When some products fail, our loss is the money it takes to make the product work properly, or to replace it with a satisfactory product."

Product knowledge and experience:

Previous research on information search has reported positive relationships between an individual's product knowledge and experience and his information search activities. It is widely accepted that buyers are more likely to seek product information when they perceive their product knowledge and experience as low, or inadequate for making the purchase decision. Previous studies (e.g. Le Grand and Udell 1964; Newman and Staclin, 1972; Ratchford, 1980) have investigated the individual's external information search by using different methods such as, the number of trips made by buyers to store and shopping centres, length of time and planning that a buyer used looking for information and the number of product alternatives and attributes that buyers sought. Although these methods may be used to examine the amount of information search, the major weaknesses of these studies is that they have assumed that these methods of information search were adopted by buyers because they lack product knowledge and experience. Taking into consideration, the biological and psychological differences amongst individuals, we could project that their ability to make decisions would also vary. On this basis, even individuals with the same level of product knowledge and experience may vary in their confidence to judge or buy a product.

Hence, although information search relates, in the main, to the lack of product knowledge and experience, those concepts

should be examined with great care. Therefore, those studies previously mentioned, should not have relied solely on the methods they used to indicate a buyer's lack of product knowledge. Instead, they should have examined an individual's product knowledge and experience and then used these methods to relate them to information search. However, the measures of an individual's product knowledge, as used in previous studies, fall into three categories. The first measures an individual's perception of how much they know, the second category measures the type, amount or organisation of an individual's recall and the third, measures the amount of purchasing or direct experience with the product. (See for example, Monroe, 1976; Staelin, 1978; Park and Lessing, 1981).

The first of these methods was used in this study, respondents were allowed to indicate the level of knowledge and experience they had. Four statements (Q3a, b, c and d) with five-point scales were used. These statements are similar to those used in studies such as Fletcher, 1986; Punj, 1987; Roa and Monroe, 1988).

For example, Fletcher measured the product knowledge and experience of his respondents by the use of the following questions.

"How much experience have you had using this sort of product?"

Great deal					Not at all
5	4	3	2	1	

"How much knowledge or information do you feel you have on video recorders?"

Great deal					Not at all
5	4	3	2	1	

Fletcher did not express much about the validity or reliability of these two measures except to say that his measures were similar to those used in previous studies.

Product complexity:

Buyer's perception of the functional risk, attached to durables is, usually, increased as the complexity of the product increases. A microwave, for example, might not be perceived by the buyer as being mechanically complicated when compared with cars and thus he may have less motivation to search for information than the car buyer. Buyers of durables, in general, would have a higher tendency to search for information than those of non-durables. It was concluded, therefore, that buyers of durables did this because of the mechanical complexity of the product, (see, for example, Westbrook and Fornell, 1979; Fletcher, 1986; Puto, 1987; McQuiston, 1989).

In this study, the concept of product complexity was measured on five-point scales in response to two statements. The

operationalisation of the concept of product complexity into two statements was based on the idea that it would make it more easy, simple and clear for the respondents of the study. The questions being:

Q3e "If my car breaks down, I won't know what has gone wrong with it."

Q3f "Cars are complex and difficult to evaluate."

These two statements combined are similar to that used by McQuiston (1989). In his study on "Novelty, complexity and importance as a causal determinants of industrial buyer behaviour", McQuiston used statements to measure the factors that affect interpersonal influence between the participants during the purchase decision. One of the factors he used was product complexity. The statement was:

"Because of the complex nature of this product, we had to involve more people than we usually do for capital equipment purchases."

Strongly agree.... agree.....neutral... disagree... strongly disagree.....

Cost of product:

In the multidimensional measure, financial risk was defined as..."it relates to the risk of losing money on a product because of necessary repairs and high maintenance costs".

(Fletcher, (1986). Although financial consequence was included in the questionnaire, it was felt that it would be necessary to include another question, to examine whether the price of the car would influence information search. In this study, car price was measured on a five-point scale, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree", in the response to the two statements, Q3g and 3h. These being:

Q3g "In general, cars are expensive and I had to be careful when thinking about my latest car."

Q3h "The price I paid for my latest car was higher than that of other cars I had before ,therefore, I had to be careful and search for more information."

Previous research (e.g. Maxey, 1972; Ratchford, 1980; Erickson and Johansson, 1985) measured price by the use of rating scales. In his study on "interpersonal influence in consumer purchase decisions of new automobiles", Maxey (1972) used a five-point scale to measure the importance of price regarding interpersonal influence and the purchase of a particular make. The question being:

"Please indicate the importance of the following reasons for buying the particular make of car you bought."

One of the reasons included in his question was "price of car".

The options given in his questions were: very important, important, somewhat important, not very important, unimportant.

Confidence in decision making ability:

It is widely accepted that buyers are most likely to seek product information when their confidence in their ability to judge a product is low. For example, the buyer is more likely to feel the latter when the product is a complicated one. (E.g. Hisrich, Dornoff and Kernan, 1972; Fletcher 1986; Punj, 1987).

Those studies have distinguished between the two types of self confidence. The first is, general self-confidence (which relates to self-esteem) and the second is, specific self-confidence (which relates to the ability to judge a product). For example, Fletcher referred to a specific self-confidence to investigate information search with regard to video buyers and renters in Scotland. His question being:

"In general how confident are you about yourself as a judge of video recorders."

Highly					not at all
5	4	3	2	1	

Punj (1987) used specific self-confidence to examine car information search. A five-point scale ranging from "no

confidence" to "total confidence" was used. His question being:

"During the time you were thinking about buying a new car and deciding which car to buy, how much confidence did you have in your ability to judge cars?"

These researchers may be correct in distinguishing between general and specific self confidence for the West, but this is not the case in Jordan. Confidence in Jordan refers to all aspects of life, whether buying a product or the management of personal or social activities. There is no such thing as general self-confidence and specific self-confidence in Jordan, where self-esteem relates to ones confidence in all aspects of life. Therefore, this study used the buyer's overall self-confidence to investigate their information search. The concept was measured on five-point scales in response to three statements. These being:

Q3i "I feel I am not sure of myself amongst strangers."

Q3j "In general, I feel I am not confident about my abilities."

Q3k "My self-confidence was not enough to judge cars."

Period of commitment:

Engel and Blackwell (1982) stated that the period for which the buyer will be committed to a given product affects his

perception of the risk associated with the purchase. Therefore, the longer the period of commitment to a product the higher the consumer's tendency for information seeking.

This concept was operationalised in this study by the use of a single straightforward statement (i.e. Q31).

"A car can last more than five years, therefore, I was concerned about buying a car which would keep running smoothly, with minimum repairs."

As far as the researcher is aware, no previous study showed how this concept could be operationalised. However, it was constructed being guided by its definition.

Reasons for information search from personal sources:

Previous research (e.g. Maxey, 1972; Newman and Staelin, 1973; Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Midgley, 1983; Hassan, 1984) reported many reasons for information search from personal sources. These reasons are: credibility of personal sources, source flexibility, social contacts, experience and the low level of cost of search from personal sources. The following will show the way these concepts were operationalised in the questionnaire. These concepts are included in the questions 6, 11 and 29.

Source credibility:

As indicated in the literature, personal sources are often seen as more credible in relation to product information because their information is based on actual, product experience. The consumer may regard information in advertising to be accessible and easy to be heard and seen but not necessarily trustworthy because it represents the seller. In this study, the concept was operationalised through the use of question 29. Five-point scales were used and different personal and impersonal sources were given in the question. The question being:

"In your opinion, how credible were these sources of information?"

This question is similar to that of Maxey (1972), who measured the credibility of automobile advertising with that for other luxury goods by the use of the following question.

"In general would you say that automobile advertising, such as, that seen on television and in magazines, in comparison with advertising for other goods is."

More believable..... Somewhat more believable.....
 equally believable..... somewhat less believable.....
 much less believable.....

Flexibility of personal sources:

Newman and Staelin (1973) stated that, advertising content is

limited by space, time and cost constraints, in addition to advertiser objectives and criteria for communication effectiveness. They added that , friends and neighbours could be seen as open minded and therefore of use in information search.

Flexibility of personal sources was measured in this study through use of statements 11a and b. Five-point scales ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" were used.

Q11a "I asked my friends, relatives or neighbours because I needed to know many things about cars. For example, the car's engine and its economy of operation."

Q11b "Approaching a friend, relative or neighbour allowed me to take my time (e.g. my friend, relative or neighbour would not have to go to serve another waiting customer."

The reason for using these two statements is the fact that, as far as the researcher is aware, no previous research has shown how flexibility of sources of information can be measured.

Experience:

Another reason for consulting personal sources of information is for the benefit of their product experience. Newman and Staclin (1973) indicated that, personal sources may supply

detailed experienced information. One might expect, therefore, that personal sources would be consulted by buyers who want to learn a good deal about the product and/or obtain other people's evaluation of it.

In this study, experience of personal sources was measured through the use of statement Q11c. A five-point scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" was used. The statement being:

Q11c "My friend, relative and neighbours has been buying and driving cars for many years and have a lot of experience."

This statement is similar to that of Bearden and Etzel (1982). They investigated reference group influence on product and brand purchase decisions. To examine why people search for information from their friends, they used the following statement with six-point scales ranging from "agree" to "disagree".

"An individual would seek information on pool tables from fellow workers who are familiar with them."

Cost of search:

It has been hypothesised that the buyer would choose sources which yield an optimum combination of information cost and information value. Cost refers to time and effort as well as financial outlay. The use of books, pamphlets and articles

requires time, patience and the ability to read and understand the information. The time and effort required to shop in a number of retail outlets is high. (Newman and Staelin, 1973).

Thus, it was considered of interest to examine the way Jordanians view the cost of search from personal sources of information. To do so, this concept was operationalised in straightforward statements such as Q11d. The statement being:

Q11d "Approaching my friend or relative or neighbour would cost nothing (e.g. This does not incur travelling expenses)."

In their study on "Selected socioeconomic and demographic characteristics associated with purchasing involvement", Slama and Tashchian (1985) used similar question. They examined whether consumers place concern on the time and money spent during their purchasing decision. Six-point scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree were used. The measurements were:

"You can save a lot of money by clipping coupons from the newspaper."

"I don't like to waste a lot of time trying to get good deals on groceries."

Social contacts:

Individual's relationship with friends, relatives or

neighbours and the amount of social interaction he undertakes will affect the nature and amount of information search. The high level of social interaction between the individual and his community leads to high exposure to personal sources of product information. (E.g. Moschis, 1976; Ellis and Ford, 1980; Midgley, 1983). Taking into account the social activities Jordanians undertake, social contacts were measured in question 6.

Q6 "How frequently do you visit or participate in social events(e.g., engagements, weddings and birthdays) with your friends, relatives and neighbours?"

A similar question was used by Douglas and Urban (1977). In their study on "Life-style analysis to profile women in international markets", they compared woman's life-style in the U.S, U.K, and France. Woman's involvement in social activities in these three countries were measured by the use of the following two statements:

"I like parties where there is lots of music and talk."

"I am involved in many activities outside the whom."

Six-point scales ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" were used.

Reasons for conveying product information:

The importance of word-of-mouth communication in influencing a buyer's decision to buy a product is widely accepted. While work progressed in this area, only satisfaction and dissatisfaction were used in previous research to explain word-of-mouth communication. (E.g. Warland, Herrman and Willits, 1975; Swan and Combs, 1976; Andreasen, 1977; Richins, 1983; Singh, 1988). These studies gave different conclusions in response to consumer's reactions to dissatisfaction such as (a) making a complaint to the seller (b) telling others about the unsatisfactory product or retailer (c) switching brands. In this study, the researcher attempts to find out whether Jordanians convey product information for reasons besides satisfaction and dissatisfaction. To find out whether Jordanians talk about cars, outside a purchase decision, respondents were asked question 14.

Q14 "Except when you were considering buying your latest car, do you like to talk to friends, relatives or neighbours about your car?"

Yes.....No.....Don't know.....

This question is similar to that used by King and Summers (1970). In their study on "overlap of opinion leadership across consumer product categories" they used the following question:

"In general, do you like to talk about _____ with your friends?"

Yes.....No.....

Dissatisfaction:

In this research dissatisfaction was measured by the use of 3 statements (i.e. Q16-1a, b and c). Likert type five-point scales ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" were used. These being:

Q16-1. I would talk to my friends relatives or neighbours if:

- a. The car's performance (i.e. engine reliability, road handling, driving comfort and economy of operation) was not good.
- b. The servicing (e.g. maintenance) was not good.
- c. The spare parts were not available.

In previous research (e.g. Richins, 1983; Punj, 1987; Singh, 1988) dissatisfaction was measured through the use of rating scales.

The statements used in this study to measure dissatisfaction are similar to a question used by Singh (1988). He used ten items with six-point scales to investigate consumer complaint interactions and behaviour one of his statements was concerned with whether or not consumers would speak to their

friends about their bad experiences. This being:

"How likely is it that you would:

Speak to your friends and relatives about your bad experience."

Satisfaction:

This concept was operationalised in the same way dissatisfaction was operationalised. The reason for operationalising satisfaction in the same way was the fact that both concepts (satisfaction and dissatisfaction) are two side of one coin, i.e. both of them occur as a result of buying a product or a service. The statements used to measure this concept are Q16 - 2a, b and c. (see questionnaire).

Other factors in conveying product information:

Four more concepts were brought into the research to investigate this matter. These concepts were: experience, knowledge, social status and credibility of advertising. All these concepts are included in question 17.

Experience, knowledge and social status:

Sheth (1971) reported that, personal sources can serve the function of informing the buyers in addition to influencing them. This seems plausible, because a person who possesses information on a new product, which is highly advantageous,

probably will be eager to pass on the information to ingratiate himself with others and thus, strengthen his personal friendships, or satisfy his own ego in exhibiting new knowledge.

In order to investigate whether Jordanians manifest the above, it was decided to examine whether people's experience, knowledge and social status would motivate them to convey car information.

These three concepts were measured on five-point scales in response to three single statements. The statements are:

Q17 How true would you judge the following statements?

- a. I would advise my friends, relatives or neighbours about cars because they see me as an experienced car buyer. (Experience).
- b. I like telling my friends, relatives or neighbours about cars and I encourage them to approach me for advice because I have a lot of information about cars. (knowledge).
- c. I talk to my friends, relatives or neighbours about my car because they know I always buy a quality car. (Social status).

Knowledge and experience were shown and linked to the antecedent questionnaire, however, social status was constructed being guided by its explanation in the literature. (e.g., Sheth, 1971)

Credibility of advertising:

Newman and Staelin (1973) suggested that the consumer may regard information in advertising to be accessible, easy to hear and see. However, its trustworthiness might not be perceived by buyers as high because it represents the seller. The retail outlet potentially is a source of much, presumably competent, information on product availability, features and costs. Its trustworthiness is suspect, however, because of proprietary interests. This concept was treated the way dissatisfaction was treated in this study. The researcher expected that, the more incredible the content of the advertising, the more dissatisfied Jordanians would be. Therefore, question 17 examined whether Jordanians would convey information if they suspected the content of the advertising. This concept was measured on five-point scales, in response to one single statement. The statement was:

Q17 How true would you see the following statement?

- d. "I would talk to and advice my friends, relatives or neighbours about cars if I realised that the content of advertising message was not true."

This concept was constructed based on the concept of dissatisfaction. It was shown earlier how consumer's dissatisfaction with a product was operationalised. It was believed that, dissatisfaction with a service could be measured in a similar way. Since advertising is a service,

then dissatisfaction with credibility of advertising could be operationalised on a five-point scale.

Sources of personal influence:

The importance of an individual's social environment on his behaviour has long been a subject of interest to sociologists and social psychologists. Much evidence has been amassed on the influence of groups on member behaviour and marketers have generally accepted the reference group construct as important in at least some types of consumer decision making. Accordingly, numerous researchers have examined the impact of social groups on consumer behaviour (e.g. Witt, 1969; Witt and Bruce, 1972; Moschis, 1976; Filiatrault and Ritchie 1980; Bearden and Etzel, 1982) have demonstrated that products are usually susceptible to group influence.

Although the results of these studies indicated that informal social groups influence consumer behaviour, one could question their findings on the influence process itself. For example, not all products are susceptible to the same personal influence. As products vary, the informal social groups influence vary as well. Robertson (1971) stated that, products low in visibility, complexity and perceived risk and high in testability are less susceptible to personal influences than products high in visibility, complexity and perceived risk and low in testability. In order to examine whether this type of influence occurs in Jordan, respondents

were asked question 18. The question being:

Q18 "When you were considering buying your latest car has anyone said to you, for example, you should buy; I want you to buy; or I would like to see you buying this kind of car?"

Yes.....No.....Do not know.....

This question was asked in this way to make it as simple as possible to the study respondents. However, it is similar to that used by Fletcher (1986). In investigating interpersonal influence on others purchase decision of videos., Fletcher asked the following question:

"If you were to consider buying a video, or when you did consider it, would/were any other people involved in the decision?"

Yes.....No.....

In order to examine the level and the sources of influence faced by Jordanian car buyers, the researcher used questions 19 and 20. These were as follows:

Level of personal influence:

To examine the level of influence that personal sources have had on the purchase decision of Jordanian buyers, respondents were asked question number 19. The question was:

Q19 "In your personal opinion, to what extent did they influence your decision of whether or not to buy your latest car?"

This question is similar to the one of Kohli (1989). In his study on "determinants of influence in organisational buying", Kohli measured individual's influence in a buying centre by the use of the following question:

"To what extent did his participation influence the decision eventually reached."

Very large

Very small

1

2

3

4

5

Others (e.g., Midgley, 1983; McQuiston, 1989) measured personal influence through the use of five-point scales.

Sources of personal influence:

To examine who exerted this influence and the importance of this on Jordanian purchase decisions, the researcher used question 20. Five-point scales ranging from "very important" to "not at all" were used. This being:

"Please indicate below who they were and how important was their opinion or influence on whether or not to buy your latest car?"

- a. Wife/husband and children.
- b. Parents.
- c. Relatives.
- d. Close friends.

- e. Colleagues.
- f. Neighbours.

This question is similar to that used by Fletcher (1986). In his study on "search behaviour: an analysis of information collection and usage during the decision process", he examined sources of interpersonal influence by the use of the following question:

"Who were they and how much were they involved?"

Wife
 Husband
 Child
 Relative
 Friend

Fletcher used five-point scales ranging from "involved a great deal" to "not at all". Bearden and Etzell (1982) examined the influence of family members through rating scales. His statement was:

"An individual's decision about whether or not to buy a pool table would be influenced by the expectations of family members".

Agree					Disagree
6	5	4	3	2	1

Factors taken into consideration when choosing a referent for car comparison:

Moschis (1976) found that consumers use reflective and comparative appraisal on product choice. That is they (the consumers) engage in direct, verbal interaction to determine reference group's evaluation as well as observing the behaviour of reference group members with regard to the decision under consideration.

Bott (1968) indicated that individuals tend to compare themselves with friends, relatives, colleagues and neighbours, particularly those whom they perceive as similar to them in one or more of the following factors: income, occupation, education and opinion or values.

To examine whether Jordanians compare their cars, respondents were first asked a simple question (i.e., Q21):

"When you were considering buying your car, did you compare or were you willing to compare it with those owned by your friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours?"

Yes.....No.....Do not know.....

In order to ascertain the factors that Jordanians take into consideration when choosing a referent for their car comparison, the researcher used two simple questions, Q22 and

Q23.

Question 22 was used to measure the similarity between the buyer and his chosen referent for car comparison. Five-point scales ranging from "very similar" to "very dissimilar" were used. The question was:

"Please indicate below how similar/dissimilar you view your friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours (whom you compared or were willing to compare your latest car with) in terms of the following:

- a. Income
- b. Occupation
- c. General Opinion
- d. Education
- e. Age

Question 23 examined the level of importance Jordanians attach to those factors when they chose a referent for car comparison. Five-point scales ranging from "very important" to "not at all" important, were used. The question being:

"How important do you consider the following factors when you choose a friend, relative, colleague or neighbour for either comparing or being willing to compare your car with?"

Characteristics of car opinion leaders:

The main three methods of measuring opinion leadership are: the self designated method, the sociometric method and the key informant method (King and Summers, 1970).

"The self designated method relies on the respondent to evaluate his own influence, depending on the report of the person who has presumably influenced another. The sociometric method involves asking respondents from whom they get advice and from whom they seek advice or information on a given topic. The key informant method requires the use of informed individuals in a social system to designate opinion leaders in a topic area. Even within each of these three basic methods, however, there is a wide range in the measurement of opinion leadership" (King and Summers, 1970).

The self designated method is in fact considered the widest one to be used for measuring opinion leaders, while the opposite is true for the key informant method.

There is a lack of research on the reliability and validity of these methods (Fletcher, 1986). However, to be on the safe side, this study used a combination of self-designated and the multidimensional approach. Other studies (e.g. Fletcher, 1986; Fieck and Price, 1987) followed similar approaches.

Moreover, the use of this combination was for the following reasons:

a. The researcher believed that, the sociometric method would be impractical for this study. This method involves asking respondents to identify the actual people (e.g. by their names) from whom they received information. Thus, as this

research was retrospective, it would be difficult for respondents to remember the names of their referents.

b. Because of the impossibility of identifying informed individuals to designate car opinion leaders the researcher believed that the key informant method could not be applied. For example, how to identify informed individuals in Jordan? What criteria to use and how to get hold of them etc.,?

In this study, however, the two self-designated questions used to identify the characteristics of car opinion leaders are:

Q24 "Has anyone (e.g. friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours) approached you for advice before buying their car?"

Yes.....No.....Don't know.....

This question is similar to that used by King and Summers (1970). Their question was:

"During the past six months, have you told anyone about some _____?"

Yes.....No.....

The second self-designated question used in this study was:

Q25 "How much information did you give them when they approached you for advice?"

This question is also similar to that used by Kings and Summers (1970). They examined the amount of information given by opinion leaders through the use of the following:

"Would you say you give very little information, an average amount of information, or a great deal of information about _____ to your friends?"

You give very little information..... 1
 You give an average amount of information.....2
 You give a great deal of information.....3

The multidimensional question used in this study to investigate the characteristics of car opinion leader was question 27. Previous research (e.g. King and Summers, 1970; Hassan, 1984; Fieck and Price, 1987) indicated that opinion leaders have certain social characteristics. These characteristics are:

- 1) Were more exposed to the mass media than information seekers.
- 2) Tended to have a higher level of social participation.
- 3) Adopted new products earlier.
- 4) Have a higher level of influence on other people's purchases.
- 5) Have more product experience.
- 6) Have a higher level of self-confidence.

7) Have a higher level of interest in the product area.

Thus question 27 examined whether car opinion leaders in Jordan have these seven social characteristics. Five-point scales ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" were used. The following shows how the question on car opinion leaders link to the antecedent questionnaire.

Exposure to the mass media:

Taking into account the mass media available in Jordan, the researcher used two statements (i.e. 27a and b) to examine this. The two statements were:

Q27a "I always listen to radio and watch TV programmes."

Q27b "I always read newspapers and magazines."

The above are similar to statements used by Feick and Price (1987), who measured mass media exposure for individuals who have product information. This being:

"I often read advertisements out of curiosity"

Strongly agree

Strongly disagree

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Social Participation:

When formulating the statement on social participation, the researcher took into consideration the possible social activities in Jordan. Simple statements were used, in three parts, as the concept of social participation was considered a complicated one. These are:

Q27c "I always attend social events (e.g. my friends'/colleagues'/relatives'/neighbours' engagements, weddings, birthdays etc.)"

Q27d "I always attend national ceremonies (e.g. Jordan's Independence Day)"

Q27e "I would like to belong to a social club (e.g. The Muslim Youth Club)"

These three statements included all possible social activities that Jordanians undertake. Moreover, these statements are similar to those used by Douglas and Urban (1977). Their measurements of women's involvement in social activities were shown earlier.

Innovativeness or early adoption of cars:

This concept was measured through the use of statements Q27f and g. The statements being:

Q27f "I like to buy the latest model of car when it comes out."

Q27g "I always plan to replace my old car with a new one."

These are similar to statements used by Feick and Price (1987) in their study on the "Market Maven" (those who have information on many products). They examined the Market Maven's innovativeness by the use of the following:

"When new food products and common household products first appear on the market, do you.."

Buy much later than most people				Among the first to buy
1	2	3	4	5

"Extent to which you make a conscious effort to try new products in the following categories: Coffee, frozen entrees, diet soft drinks, breakfast cereals."

Never			Very frequently			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Douglas and Urban (1977) measured women's innovativeness by the use of the following statements.

"I often buy a new brand just to see what it's like"

"I like to try new and different things"

"I follow carefully the latest changes in fashion"

Six-point scales ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" were used.

Level of influence on the purchase decision:

This concept was operationalised through the use of two statements (i.e. Q27h and i).

Q27h "I normally influence my friend's, relative's or neighbour's in their decision to buy a car."

Q27i "My friends, relatives or neighbours always take my advice into consideration when buying a car."

The first statement is similar to that of Kohli (1989) in his study on "Determinants of influence in organisational buying". Here he examined the informant's self-perceived influence on the buying decision through the use of the following questions:

"To what extent did you influence the criteria used in the making of the final decision?"

Very large					Very small
1	2	3	4	5	

"To what extent did your participation influence the decision eventually reached?"

Very large					Very small
1	2	3	4	5	

The second statement (27i) is similar to that used by Feick and Price (1987), this being:

"People ask me for information about products, places to shop or sales."

strongly
agree

strongly
disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Experience:

Two statements (27j and k) were used to operationalise this concept. These being:

Q27j "I have a great deal of experience in selling and purchasing cars."

Q27k "I have a great deal of experience in repairing cars."

Fletcher (1986) operationalised this concept in a similar way. His question was:

"How much experience have you had using this sort of product?"

A great deal

None at all

5 4 3 2 1

The reason for using two statements in this study was because, experience could mean two different things in Arabic. Thus two statements clarified the meaning and made it simple for respondents to answer accurately.

Self-confidence:

This concept was operationalised through the use of two statements (27l and m). These being:

Q27l "I am always confident about my ability in buying cars."

Q27m "I am always confident of my ability to judge cars."

These two statements are similar to that used by Punj (1987). In his study on "Decision making in consumer durable purchases", he measured self-confidence through the use of the following question.

"During the time you were thinking about buying a car and deciding which car to buy, how much confidence did you have in your ability to judge cars?"

No confidence					total confidence
1	2	3	4	5	

Level of interest in the product area:

The statements (27n and o) were used to operationalise this concept. The two statements were:

Q27n "I always like to join in discussions about cars."

Q27o "I always like to gather information and know about the latest car makes."

The above are similar to those used by Feick and Price (1987). In their study on market "Maven" individuals, they examined the market Maven's early awareness and interest in many products through use of the following:

"I like introducing brands and products to my friends."

Strongly agree						Strongly disagree
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

"How often do you find out about new products in each of the following before most other people: coffee, frozen entrees, diet soft drinks, breakfast cereals."

Very frequently						Never
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

The influence of word-of-mouth communication:

The importance of word-of-mouth communication in influencing a buyer's decision to adopt an innovation has been the interest of marketing firms for a good reason. Customers continue to purchase those products with which they are satisfied and in telling others about particularly pleasing products they may influence the brand perceptions of those with whom they communicate.

The information which the individual receives from the people around him and word-of-mouth influence can greatly affect a

person's beliefs and attitudes including those related to product consumption. Thus personal sources can serve the function of informing the buyer in addition to influencing them.

It is widely accepted in the literature, that non-marketing dominated sources of information are given substantial weight by consumers in informing opinion and making product decisions. (E.g. Newman and Werbel, 1973; Swan and Combs, 1976; Warland, Hermann and Willitts, 1975; Oliver, 1980; Richins, 1983).

To examine the influence of word-of-mouth communication on the purchase decision of cars in Jordan, the researcher used questions 10 and 26, to investigate the forms of communication used by Jordanians. Moreover, another question (Q30) was used to examine the level of influence these communications had on the purchase of cars in Jordan.

Forms of receiving and conveying car information:

To investigate the forms of communication used in Jordan and taking into account the available forms of communication, question 10 and 26 were developed. five-point scales ranging from "very frequently" to "no communication at all" was used. These being:

When receiving information:

Q10 "Please indicate below what form and frequency did your communication take?"

- a. Mail
- b. Telephone
- c. Face-to-face

When conveying information:

Q26 "What form and frequency did their communication take?"

- a. Mail
- b. Telephone
- c. Face-to-face

Level of word-of-mouth influence:

To examine the level of word-of-mouth influence, the researcher asked question 30. This being:

Q30 "To what extent would you say your communication (information exchange) with friends, relatives, neighbours influenced your decision of whether or not to buy your latest car?"

To a very great extent					No affect at all
5	4	3	2	1	

This question is similar to those used in previous studies (e.g. Kohli, 1989; McQuiston, 1989). Kohli examined the manifest influence of individuals in organisational buying

and he used many questions to conclude this. Five-point scales, ranging from "very small" to "very large" were used.

E.g.,:

"To what extent did he influence others into adopting certain positions about various options?"

"To what extent did he influence the criteria for making the final decision?"

"To what extent did his participation influence the decision eventually reached."

Demographic factors:

Education, age and sex were operationalised in the usual way with simple multiple choice selection. To measure respondents income, the researcher used income categories, e.g. JD* 100 or below, 100-150). The use of income categories was due to the fact that Jordanians would not reveal their exact monthly income for different reasons. E.g. Jordanians are afraid of the Inland Revenue. However, in order to ensure the monthly categories are correct, the researcher consulted the Ministry of Labour and the Department of Public Statistics. Income categories in the West would not suit Jordanian society for reason of differing income level. The categories used in this study are only applicable to Jordan.

* Jordanian dinar.

The occupation question asked respondents to state their present occupation. After the field work had been completed, respondents occupations were classified into six categories. These categories were based on those of the International Labour Office. This classification was obtained from the "Year Book of Labour Statistics, 1988." The classification of respondents' occupations has been shown earlier in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter is aimed at identifying the steps taken and the methods used by the researcher to collect the data for this study. It explains the methodology used rather than the analysis of the findings themselves, which will be dealt with in the following chapters. Methodology refers to "the principles that underlie and guide the full process of studying the obdurate character of the given empirical world." (Blumer, 1970, p.21).

The research methodology passed through seven equally important stages, comprising:

1. Identification of the research problems and objectives.
3. Product choice.
4. Research design.
 - A. Type of research used in this study.
 - B. Identification of the sample.
5. The translation and pilot test of questionnaire.
6. Response rate of the survey.
7. Data analysis.

The aspects pertaining to each of these stages, together with the methodological framework, are discussed in turn in this

chapter.

5.1. Identification of research problems and objective:

In the literature review an attempt was made to examine the importance which personal sources of information, word-of-mouth communication and opinion leaders may have on the purchase of durables. As a result of research on word-of-mouth, a concern for the impact of informal or word-of-mouth sources has emerged as an area of strong interest within the domain of consumer behaviour research , in general, and in developing countries in particular.

Therefore, the impetus for this study comes from the current dearth of consumer behaviour research and theory in the Jordanian context. This lack of knowledge about consumers extends even to basic demographic and statistical data and seems to be a characteristic of most Middle Eastern Markets- As Vassiliou (1980) stated:

"It is an unfortunate fact of life that for most Middle Eastern countries only a limited amount of background statistical data can be obtained. As a rule, little detailed and up-to-date information is available even on such basic factors as population structure and virtually none at all on consumer expenditures and behaviour, which is standard practice in Western countries."(p.122)

There are, of course, many different areas of consumer behaviour that it might be appropriate to investigate. The focus of this research is upon the processes and impact of word-of-mouth communication and influence among the Jordanian consumers; in particular that occurring between individuals in networks of social relationships usually involving face-to-face interaction, such as between family members, friends, colleagues and neighbours (although there may be an impact from "distant" reference groups).

The particular interest of this research in word-of-mouth communication and influence, comes from the researcher's understanding, as a Jordanian, of the nature of the Jordanian society. This research attempted to contribute to the area of consumer behaviour by investigating, within the Jordanian context, the way in which other members in the consumer's group of friends, relatives, colleagues, and neighbours can affect his purchase of durables.

5.1.1 Research objectives:

In the light of the above, this research is concerned with developing a picture and understanding of word-of-mouth communication and its influence on the Jordanian consumer's purchase of durable goods in a way which reflects the potential complexity of the process involved, and in a way that will assist those who wish to understand the Jordanian market for the purpose of marketing within it.

The researcher would hope that this research may offer marketers ideas on directions for their own marketing research activities in relation to the Jordanian market. For example, which questions to be asked for a better understanding of the role of word-of-mouth communication and influence on the purchase of a particular product.

For those involved in the Jordanian market, there is an important need for consumer theory. Local manufacturers need to gain a greater understanding, than currently exists, of their locally-made products, at present frequently regarded as inferior to their imported rivals. As a result of this negative image, some Jordanian consumers seem to avoid buying locally-made products and local manufacturers face problems in marketing their goods. Hence, most local factories utilize only part of their total capacity because of the low demand for their products.

A greater body of consumer studies will also, of course, be useful to international manufacturers who export their products for the Jordanian market. Those exporters need to have some knowledge about the Jordanian consumer in order to compete effectively in this market. Therefore, the research objectives are as follows:

A. Investigating the importance of personal sources in providing Jordanian car buyers with the required information, and in particular, the factors which have motivated them to

search for information from these sources, their reasons for using these sources, type of information required, and their reasons for conveying car information to others.

B. Examining the influence of personal sources on the purchase decision made by Jordanian consumers.

"We all have our "Joneses" whom we want to keep up with and to excel, if possible, in many phases of life. In every culture, people are sensitive and, within the bounds of tolerable variations, responsive to their particular "Joneses". The particular "Joneses" in different settings give the differences in direction and goals." (Sherif and Sherif, 1956).

As people compare and evaluate themselves with others, they may, also, become aware of norms of appropriate behaviour which they may then use to evaluate themselves and their consumption behaviour. This objective is examined by looking at:

- sources of influence faced by the Jordanian car buyers.
- the influence from car comparison processes and the factors taken into consideration when choosing a referent for this comparison.

C. Examining whether Jordanians give information to other car

buyers, and whether car opinion leadership exists in Jordan and what characteristics information givers and opinion leaders have.

D. Examining forms of communication used by Jordanian car buyers when giving or receiving information and the role of word-of-mouth communication and opinion leaders in influencing the purchase decision of cars in Jordan.

5.2. Product choice:

As mentioned before, the concern of this research is to develop a picture and understanding of word-of-mouth communication and its influence on the purchase of durables in Jordan. It is believed that information concerning the product, which the consumer seeks and/or receives prior to purchase plays a significant role in this kind of purchase. In order to answer this assertion, it was decided to study word-of-mouth communication and a situation was sought where the possibility of its occurrence would be maximized. As a result, the purchase was studied in the context of consumer durable goods. A durable good was chosen because arguably, consumers would take more care in this purchase than in the purchase of a non-durable, and for this reason it would facilitate recall of the purchase.

Furthermore, a number of writers (e.g., Katona and Mueller, 1955; Bucklin, 1966; Udell, 1966; Claxton, Fry and Portis,

1974; Capon and Burke, 1977; Schaninger and Sciglimpaglia, 1981) have reported results which suggest that durable products are likely to involve a more extended process of problem solving than routine purchases. Purchasing durable products seems to involve potentially high risks because they are often relatively expensive, involve a long period of commitment, have social significance due to their visibility and are often functionally complex. All these factors are likely to increase the personal relevance of the durable product purchasing decision to the consumer, and hence, make it a high-involvement decision (Engel and Blackwell, 1982).

Why cars?

It was believed that it would be preferable not to restrict the focus of this research to a particular durable product, but, any form of research, particularly that under the time and resource constraints of a Ph.D, requires the researcher to make a choice.

The motor car was chosen because it was thought sufficiently unfamiliar to prospective purchasers so that they would not be able to rely solely upon their past purchasing experience and, therefore, would be more inclined to engage in word-of-mouth communication.

Another consideration was the population used for the study. It was possible for the researcher to get hold of the people

who have car ownership through the files of the Jordanian License Authority. While it was difficult even impossible for the researcher to get hold of the people who have other durable products ownership because of the unavailability of data, a door-to-door approach to search for those who have other durables ownership was rejected on the grounds of cost and its impracticality.

Although the car has become important to the Jordanian people, there have been no published studies on patterns of car purchase. This study is limited to a single product, as are most such studies, this type is valuable because it may help the student of marketing gain insight into consumer behaviour, as well as into the decision making process. The increased insight that sometimes results from these studies may lead toward more efficient marketing practices.

5.3. Research design:

Once the research objectives have been determined, the hypotheses developed, and the variables defined, the researcher confronts the problem of constructing a research design that will enable the testing of the hypotheses. Research design is:

"the specification of procedures for collecting and analyzing the data necessary to help identify or react to a problem or opportunity, such that the

difference between the cost of obtaining various levels of accuracy and the expected value of the information associated with each level of accuracy is maximized." (Tull and Hawkins, 1987, p.26)

An overview on available research designs:

Four factors must be considered when selecting an appropriate research design (Buchanan, 1988). These are:

a. Comparison:

Some form of comparison is necessary to establish association or correlation between variables. Measures of dependent variables taken before and after an event can be compared with measures for a group not so exposed.

b. Manipulation:

The establishment of association is usually not enough, the researcher being more concerned with causality. To establish causality, the time sequence of the events studied must be clear. Where the researcher is able to manipulate the nature and timing of the independent variable (also referred to as the experimental stimulus), there is no problem. Whilst experimental settings permit this kind of manipulation, this can rarely be achieved outside the laboratory.

c. Control:

To establish unequivocal causal relationships between variables, factors that could provide alternative explanations must be identified and held constant, i.e, must be controlled.

d. Generalisation:

The researcher is rarely interested in the small sample being studied, usually hoping to be able to apply the research findings to the population that the sample represents.

The researcher's aim is to choose a research design that permits each form of the processes to be carried out effectively and to a degree appropriate to research being tackled.

However, it is common to classify research designs into two major groups as experimental and quasi-experimental designs (Hyman, 1955).

1. Experimental designs:

An experiment is taken to mean a scientific investigation in which an investigator manipulates and controls one or more independent variables and observes the dependent variable or

variables. An experimental design, therefore, is one in which the investigator manipulates at least one independent variable (Churchill, 1987).

In experimental designs, subjects are randomly assigned to the control and experimental groups, and the independent variable can be manipulated. Such designs allow for all the operations that make causal inference possible: comparison, manipulation, and control.

For example, let X refer to the exposure of an individual or group to an experimental treatment; an experimental treatment is the alternative, the effects of which are to be measured and compared. The experimental variables may be alternative prices, package designs, advertising themes, or any of a number of other variables. Certainly, the possible experimental treatment in marketing would include all the elements of the marketing mix.

Churchill (1987) suggested that, experimental designs are commonly distinguished as:

A. Pre-experimental designs:

A pre-experimental design is distinguished by the fact that the researcher having very little control over both 'the when' and 'to whom' of exposure to experimental stimuli and over 'the when' and 'to whom' of measurement (Churchill,

1987)

B. True experimental designs:

True experimental designs are most effective in eliminating doubt that can arise in interpreting research results, as they provide the most control over the various extraneous factors. Unfortunately, not all marketing problems allow the use of true experimental designs.

2. Quasi-experimental designs:

Quasi-experimental designs may include combinations of these elements but not all of them. However, whilst experimental designs are strong on control and weak on representation, quasi-experimental designs (especially surveys) are strong on representation and weak on control. Moreover, both experimental and quasi-experimental designs can be improved. Experimental designs can increase external validity by clearly defining the population following a scientific sample design. Quasi-experimental studies can clearly improve their internal validity by including auxiliary information as a control against rival hypotheses.

The quasi-experimental designs take the following forms:

A. The one-shot case study:

The one-shot case study involves an observation of a single group at one point in time, usually subsequent to some event that allegedly produced change. For example, the study might be an observation of the buying habits after an urban renewal programme. This design is an observation only of what exists at the time of the study. It has no control over extrinsic and intrinsic factors.

B. Surveys: Surveys are of two major types (Hyman, 1955):**1. Descriptive surveys:**

Descriptive research is focused on the accurate description of the variables in the problem model (Tull and Hawkins, 1987). When the purpose of a study is an accurate description of a situation or of an association, a design is needed to minimize bias and maximize the reliability of the evidence collected.

2. Exploratory surveys (also, called an analytic surveys):

Exploratory research explains relationships between variables. It takes the following forms:

a. Correlational design:

The correlational design, often referred to as the cross-sectional study, is perhaps the most predominant design employed in survey research. It is an attempt to approximate the post-test (only control) group decision by utilizing various data-analysis techniques.

b. The panel:

In the panel design, the same sample is examined at two or more time intervals. Panel studies offer a closer approximation to the before-after condition of experimental designs, by studying a group at two or more points in time before and after exposure to the independent variable. The main problem of panels, is obtaining an initial representative sample of respondents who are willing to be interviewed at set intervals over an extended period.

c. The trend study:

This design is similar to the panel but it uses different equivalent samples in testing the effect of a stimulus, an event, or a change which has been activated between the first and the second measurement. It is a research design, in which pretest and posttest measures are available on a number of occasions.

3. Causal research design:

A causal research design is concerned with determining cause-and-effect relationships. Causal studies typically take the form of experiments, since experiments are best suited to determine cause and effect (Churchill, 1987).

In causal research studies, an attempt is made to specify the nature of the functional relationship between two or more variables in the problem model.

Although causation cannot be proven in the behavioural sciences, if certain conditions are met we can have a high degree of confidence that our inference about causation is correct. We can use three types of evidence to make inference about causation. These are (1) concomitant variation (e.g., when high sales occur in area with large advertising expenditure and low sales occur in area with limited advertising expenditure, we may infer that advertising is a cause of sales) (2) sequence of occurrence (for one event to cause another, it must precede it) and (3) absence of other potential causal factors (i.e., to eliminate all possible causative factors except the one we are interested in) (Tull and Hawkins, 1987).

Having given an overview of different types of research designs, a good research design has the following criteria (Buchanan, 1988)

1. Identifying covariation of variables.
2. Eliminating spurious relationships.
3. Establishing the time order of events.
4. Defining the generalizability of results.

If one takes the previous discussion further by evaluating the available research designs against the preceding criteria, it could be concluded that, if the research is concerned with internal validity (control) the experimental design is the appropriate type, if the objective of the study is to generalize, a survey type of design is appropriate.

The research design of this study comprised, (A) type of research used in this study, (B) identification of the sample, (C) design of the research instrument.

A. Type of research used in this study:

Any researcher planning a survey has two concerns. The first is design, i.e., ensuring that the relevant problem of representation, measurement and control are solved in a way that results in the production of the data required for the research problem. The second relates to the organisation of the survey. There is much to be discussed with other people. For example, the final form of the questionnaire is often a matter of agreement with the respondents, and sometimes access to information has to be negotiated. There are also many practical arrangements to be made to ensure that the

required information is collected, processed and analysed within time and cost limits. Procedures for ensuring that the data collected are as unbiased and error-free as possible have to be devised and communicated to those involved in the various phases of the study, e.g., selecting the sample, coding and editing of the collected data.

Moreover, a survey type of design was thought to be appropriate for this study for the following reasons:

1. This study was concerned with investigating word-of-mouth communication and its influence on the Jordanian consumer's purchase of durable goods. Hence, there was a need to make generalizations of the research findings on the population of the study.

2. In order to make generalizations, a large sample of people who have car ownership was selected randomly for the study. Thus, a survey type of design was necessary.

3. As Young Pauline V. (1966) stated:

"Sample surveys afford a more consistent investigation of the fabric of group life, its attitudes, values, and opinions. Sample surveys are generally made by means of the personal interview, the questionnaire, or schedule."(p.79)

4. Daniel Katz (1953) stated:

"In the first place, the survey always attempts to be representative of some known universe and thus attempts, both in the number of cases included and in the manner of their selection, to be adequately and faithfully representative of a larger population."(p.74)

B. Identification of the sample:

The problem facing the researcher was first to identify the relevant population for the study, and then to select and contact suitable respondents.

The population of this study was defined as all people who own cars, regardless of whether a single individual or family and the survey population was defined as those living in Amman and surrounding districts. Thus, the survey took place after the consumer had exhibited his/her behaviour (the purchase of a car) and thus the answers obtained relied upon the respondent's recall of the situation. The reasons for limiting the study to this area were to save time and cost and in order to make administration of the survey more efficient. According to the latest population census in 1979, Amman had a population of (1,185,181) people and the total population of Jordan was (2,147,065) people. This means that, 55% of the total population of Jordan were living in the capital. Moreover, this area contains a cross-section of

people reflecting different social classes.

Taking into account the financial and time constraints and after a comprehensive discussion with my supervisor, a total sample size of 600 respondents was thought adequate for the nature and scope of the study. In order to reduce the sample selection bias and to create a representative sample of the population of the study a simple random procedure was employed. A random sample of 600 respondents was selected from files obtained from the Jordanian Licence Authority. The researcher was allowed access to these files which carried the names and the addresses of the car owners. This was possible for the researcher after an official letter, explaining the scope and the purpose of the study, from Mu'tah University was sent to the director of the Authority. Moreover, the sample was drawn by the researcher under close control imposed by Captain Faraj Al-rousan of the Licence Authority.

Each questionnaire, which was translated into Arabic and was hand delivered with two covering letters (one from the researcher and another from Mu'tah university), which introduced the purpose of the study, requested their cooperation and promised confidentiality. Approximately three days later a researcher returned and collected the completed questionnaire and helped with any problems the respondents faced. Assistance in distributing and collecting the questionnaires was provided by three skilled people who

worked in the "Department of Statistics", conducting surveys concerned with the Jordanian population (e.g., the Housing and population census survey, 1979; Land ownership survey, 1986; etc.). Moreover, the assistants were briefed on the sampling procedures and the purpose of the research.

5.4. The translation and the pilot test of questionnaire:

The questionnaire was first designed in English. The researcher translated this questionnaire into Arabic and the translation was completed in Glasgow before the researcher returned to Jordan to conduct his field work. For the accuracy of the language used, the researcher had a great deal of help from Mr. Farouq Azam, Arabic lecturer at Al-Tafilah college, in August 1989.

Later on, the questionnaire for this study was subject to a pilot test on a small random sample of 50 respondents taken from the main sample of the study. An 80% rate of response was obtained, and the answers and comments of those respondents allowed for the following observations to be drawn.

1. In general, the questionnaire was seen as lengthy, partly because it deals with a very complex area of research and secondly because it tends to cover many variables, which according to the nature of the study needed to be

investigated.

2. A benefit of this test was that respondents' reaction to the questionnaire in terms of layout, form, type of questions could be ascertained and the accuracy and relevance of the language used could be tested. Also, an insight into the ease or complexity of questionnaire comprehension could be obtained.

3. The pilot test gave the researcher the chance to speak and talk to some of the research respondents. From this the researcher realized that the pilot test sample was heterogeneous, in terms of level of education, the way of thinking, level of intelligence and respondent's perception of the questions. This result led the researcher to use a self-administered questionnaire and respondents were told that, a researcher would call within the following three days to collect the completed questionnaire and help with any problems they might have.

5.5. Response rate of the survey:

The questionnaire was self-distributed to respondents by the researcher and the assistants. The instructions given to the assistants were:

1. To brief the respondents on the sampling procedures used

by the researcher, the purpose of the study and to request their co-operation.

2. To inform the respondents that a researcher would call within the next three days to collect the completed questionnaires and help with any problems the respondents might have.

The following table shows the results and details obtained from the distributed questionnaires.

Table (5.1)

response rate of consumer survey

- Distributed questionnaires	600
- Completed questionnaires returned	411
- Incomplete questionnaires returned	20
- The total response	431 (71.8%)
- The total usable response rate	(68.5%)

It was decided that , 50% response rate and higher will be acceptable for the study.

The completed questionnaires were edited and coded for programming. After correcting the coding mistakes, 41 IBM card with maximum 80 columns, were punched to cover the coding of each of the 411 usable questionnaires. Because of the large number of options (i.e., 111 variables) contained in the questionnaire, all the 20 rows available in each of the 41 cards were used.

5.6. Data analysis:

Once the data was collected, the data cards (i.e., data list, variable labels, and value labels) were prepared and the punching mistakes were corrected. The data needed to be analysed in such a way as to achieve the objectives of the study and to test the hypotheses of the research.

In data analysis, however, a wide variety of measures and statistical techniques are available to the researcher. When selecting the analytical techniques for a particular topic, a researcher has to be very careful in order to choose the most appropriate one. A researcher has to take the following into consideration:

1. The objectives and the research hypotheses.
2. Research design and its type, including:
 - a. method of sampling.
 - b. method of data collection.
 - c. Questionnaire design.

Taking into consideration the nature of this study, the hypotheses, the objectives and the research design, the data analysis was carried out by computer, through the use of programs from the Statistical Package For Social Sciences (SPSSX), and the statistical techniques used in this study are:

5.6.1. The Mann-Whitney test:

Nominal and ordinal measurement are the most common types used in the behavioural sciences. Data measured by either nominal or ordinal scales should be analyzed by the non-parametric methods (Siegel S.,1956).

With large samples and weaker measurement (ordinal measurement), the suggested test is the Mann-Whitney, which is almost the most powerful (Siegel S.,1956).

Once the ordinal measurement has been achieved, the Mann-Whitney test may be used to test whether two independent groups have been drawn from the same population. This is one of the most powerful of the non-parametric tests, and it is a most useful alternative to the parametric T-test when the researcher wishes to avoid the T-test assumptions, or when the measurement in the research is weaker than interval scaling. Moreover, the Mann-Whitney test does not require assumptions concerning the shape of the underlying distribution. However, this test was used in order to examine if significant differences exist between two groups (e.g., respondents who approached personal sources for information and those who did not and their perception to financial risk when buying a car; opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers) and their influence on others purchase decision of a particular car).

5.6.2. T-test:

In situations where investigations of whether significant differences exist between the means of two groups (e.g., respondents who consulted personal sources and those who did not and their level of product knowledge and experience of cars). When many scales were combined¹ together, the raw data was converted from non-parametric to parametric, therefore, a T-test was employed in similar situations. Moreover, according to the central-limit theorem, if the sample is drawn at random with a sufficiently large size, then the sampling distribution of \bar{x} is approximately normal.

Siegel S., (1956) stated:

"If a variable is distributed with mean = μ and standard deviation = σ , and if random samples of size N are drawn, then the means of these samples, the \bar{x} 's, will be approximately normally distributed with mean μ and standard deviation σ/\sqrt{N} for N sufficiently large. In other words, if N is sufficiently large we know that the sampling distribution of \bar{x} (a) is approximately normal, (b) has a mean equal to the population mean μ , and (c) has a standard deviation divided by the square root of the sample size, that is $\sigma_{\bar{x}} = \sigma/\sqrt{N}$ ". (pp.12-13)

Siegel S., (1956) commented on the use of a T-test and stressed many conditions when he wrote:

¹Reliability analysis was carried out and the following chapters show the Alpha value.

"The observations must be independent. That is, the selection of any case from the population for inclusion in the sample must not bias the chances of any other case for inclusion, and the score which assigned to any case must not bias the score which assigned to any other case" (p.19)

Moreover, the sample of the study was randomly drawn from the files of the Jordanian Licence Authority, which contained the names and addresses of all the people who have car ownership in the capital of Jordan (Amman) and its surrounding areas, therefore, the conditions of employing a T-test were met.

5.6.3. Pearson Correlation Coefficient:

The output of the Pearson Correlation command summerises the strength of an association through the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, which is in the range of - 1.0 to + 1.0. One advantage of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient is that, it indicates whether the association is positive or negative. A negative coefficient means that, when one variable is higher in value, the other variable tends to be lower in value. A positive coefficient means that, when one variable is higher, the other variable also tends to be higher (Hedderson J., 1987).

In this study, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was carried out on one occasion. It was used to measure the strength of the association between the combined

multidimensional measure and the single measure of risk (using five point scale) to see if the use of both measures was necessary.

The results showed a correlation of 0.31 exists which is low for two measures, which are seen as interchangeable and therefore, both measures were used. Thus, the use of this statistical technique was imperative.

5.6.4. Crosstabulation:

This involves constructing a Table so, that one can see how respondents with a given value on one variable responded to one or more other variables (Tull and Hawkins, 1987).

This statistical technique was employed using the X^2 test of significance to investigate if there was significant relationships between, e.g, respondents' demographic differences (i.e, level of education, age groups, level of monthly income, sex, and occupation), and the social normative influence which Jordanian buyers had faced when making the purchase decision.

Another form of crosstabulation, using the Z value, was employed to investigate if significant differences exist between car opinion leaders and non leaders (followers) regarding their demographic factors. Moreover, the validity of the two-step flow model of communication was examined by the use of this statistical procedure.

This test is ,usually, considered to be valid and applicable especially when the measurement involved nominal scaling.

5.6.5. Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance:

This non-parametric statistical technique was used in order to investigate the most frequent form of communication used by Jordanian car buyers when they searched for car information from others or when they gave car information to others. The forms of communication which were given to the respondents are included in questions nos. 10 and 11, and these forms were: Mail, Telephone, and face-to-face.

The Kendall Coefficient of Concordance measures the extent of association among several (K) sets of rankings of N entities. It is useful in determining the agreement among several judges or the association between three or more variables. It has special applications in providing a standard method of ordering entities according to consensus when there is no available objective order of the entities (Siegel S., 1956).

The output produced consists of the number of cases, Kendall's W, and a Chi-square statistic with its degrees of freedom and observed significance level.

Using the mean rank, chi-square value, and level of

significance, this test was used to find whether significant differences existed between the three forms of communication given to respondents and the most frequent form of communication used by Jordanian car buyers.

CHAPTER SIX
IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR
JORDANIAN CAR BUYERS

6.1. Introduction:

The search behaviour of consumers for information is of major importance to marketing managers, legislators and consumer theories. The marketing manager has a keen interest in the methods by which consumers gather information and the sources from which such information is gathered. This information, plus data on the perceived importance of such sources, assists in the formulation of promotional strategy. The legislator is concerned with the communication of necessary and correct information from the seller to the buyer, on the premise that the availability of such information will assist the consumer in making a "rational choice".

For the consumer theorist, information search is one of the three major sets of observable consumer behaviour, the other two being, purchase behaviour and post purchase or consumption behaviour (Tauber, 1972). It is now conjectured that the consumer is not a passive receptor of information but will actively seek out information under certain conditions. Hence, a knowledge of the type and extent of

information search behaviour, the determinant of such behaviours and their influence on purchase and consumption outcomes, is an integral part of consumer theory.

The general view of information search behaviour in consumer literature shows that the concept of an intelligent consumer, a consumer seeking out information concerning products and brands, is not new to consumer theory (Eighmey J.B., 1973). However, in the research tradition of communication and information effectiveness, the concept of active audience has not been adequately covered. Cox (1967) raised this point when he noted:

"For many years communicators and communications researchers talked about how the audience responds to information or is persuaded or influenced by information. The communications process has often been viewed pretty much as a one-way street - with the communications doing the influencing and the audience being persuaded..... Consumers have considerably more initiative in the communications process. Rather than merely responding, they acquire, process and transmit (to one another) information in an attempt to satisfy their information needs." (p. 10)

The study of information search with emphasis on the extent and nature of such search and the determinants of various search behaviour is a complementary approach to the theories of communicator effects in communication strategy. However, such a theory is not intended to embrace all kinds of consumer behaviour. The theme of differing levels of problem

solving being required for different purchases, is also evident in the consumer behaviour literature. Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1982) refer to extended problem solving, limited problem solving and routinised response behaviour.

Many studies (e.g. Newman, 1977; Louden and Della Bitta, 1979; Engel and Blackwell, 1982; Sternthal and Craig, 1982), have argued that the level and nature of information search in a purchase situation is influenced by the following factors:

1. Level of perceived risk associated with the product to be bought.
2. The quantity of available information on the product.
3. The quality of available information on the product.
4. Cost of search for information (e.g. time, money, frustration and so on).
5. Confidence in making the purchase decision.

6.2. Jordanian Consumers and Information Search:

Respondents were asked in question number 1 to indicate

whether or not they searched for information from either personal or impersonal sources about their cars before the purchase decision was made. The study findings revealed these results as they appear in Table 6.1, in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.1)

General information search

Response	n	%
Yes	309	75.2
No	43	10.5
Do not know	59	14.4
411 cases		
0 missing values		

The findings indicated that the majority of respondents had searched for information about their cars before the purchase decision was made, 75.2% shown in Table 6.1. This meant that Jordanian buyers (like any buyers) had their own sources which they used to search for information. Sources such as magazines, newspapers and friends were used in order to make sure that the right product for the right money was obtained.

The above findings seem consistent with other researchers' findings. In a study conducted in 1971, Claxton found that, there will be more shopping around when the price or the amount at stake is sufficiently high to justify the consumer

going further out of his way and incurring a greater cost both monetarily and in time and effort expended. Other studies (see, e.g., Katona and Mueller, 1955; Bucklin, 1966; Udell, 1966; Claxton, Fry and Portis, 1974; Capon and Burke, 1977; Schaninger and Sciglimaglia, 1981) have reported similar findings.

Since the concern of this research is to investigate the importance of word-of-mouth communication in the purchase of durables in Jordan, respondents were asked questions number 8 and 9.

Question number 8, intended to find out whether the respondents have searched for information or opinions from personal sources (e.g., friends, relatives, colleagues,, etc.)

Question number 9, intended to investigate the amount of information sought by the Jordanian car buyers from these personal sources.

Table 6.2 shows the results of question number 8 in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.2)

Information search from personal sources

Response	n	%
Yes	305	74.2
No	70	17.0
Do not know	36	8.8
411 cases		
0 missing values		

It is clear from Table 6.2 that the majority, i.e., 74.2% of respondents approached friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours for advice, information or opinion about their cars before the purchase decision was made. The findings here seem to indicate that, Jordanians do not only rely on information received from advertising or marketer-dominated sources, but also, they make their own effort to seek information from whatever sources are available for them such as friends.

The study findings on question number 9 are shown in the following table in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.3)

Level of information sought by car
buyers from personal sources

Source of Information	Level of information search		A very large amount		a large amount		un- certain		quite small amount		Not at all		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Friends, relatives neighbours or colleagues	44	14.4	114	37.4	106	34.8	31	10.1	10	3.3	305	411		

n - number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

The findings indicated that the majority of respondents searched for what they considered to be a large amount of information from personal sources when they considered buying their cars. As Table 6.3 shows, 51.8% of respondents stated that they did this.

The following section, 6.3, explored the factors which motivated the Jordanian consumers to search for information from personal sources.

Measuring these factors gained insights into why do and when Jordanian car buyers search for information from personal sources. Moreover, exploring these factors is fundamental to understanding car buyers' behaviour, in particular, and durables buyers, in general, which in turn will help in

planning marketing communications and retail distributions within the Jordanian context.

6.3. Factors motivating Jordanian consumers to search for information from personal sources:

6.3.1. Risk Perception:

With regard to this point, two measures of risk (i.e., the multidimensional measure and the single measure) were used and therefore, respondents were asked questions nos. 4 and 5. Question number 4 was designed as a multidimensional measure of risk and asked respondents to indicate how important they considered the given statement when considering buying their latest car, five points being given to respondents ranging from "very important" to "not at all".

Question number 5 was designed as a single overall measure of risk and asked respondents to what extent would they agree or disagree with the statement given in the question, five points being given to respondents from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

The correlation between the combined multidimensional measure and the single measure of risk was considered to find out

whether the use of both measures was necessary. The results showed a correlation of 0.31 exists which is low for two measures which are seen as interchangeable and, therefore, both measures will be used.

The following table reveals the findings concerning question number 4 in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.4)
Jordanian car buyers and perception of different
types of risk

Facets of risk	Level of percep- tion		very impor- tant		impor- tant		un- certain		quite un im- portant		not at all		Mean value
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	N	
a. Financial	52	12.7	157	38.2	85	20.7	59	14.4	58	14.1	411	411	3.21
b. Social	46	11.2	104	25.3	94	22.9	76	18.5	91	22.1	411	411	2.85
c. Psycho- logical	49	11.9	108	26.3	87	20.2	70	17.0	97	13.6	411	411	2.86
d. Functional	93	22.6	124	30.2	88	21.4	51	12.4	55	13.4	411	411	3.36
e. Physical	102	24.8	131	31.9	87	21.2	51	12.4	40	9.7	411	411	3.50

(1) The higher the mean the more important the factor was considered by respondents

n= number of valid observations

N= number of cases included in the sample

Each of the above shown risk dimensions is considered in turn later on. In order to examine if respondents, who approached personal sources of information, have perceived a higher level of risk than those who did not approach these sources, a Mann-Whitney test was carried out and the results are shown in the following table.

Table (6.5)

Approaching personal sources of information by
different types of risk

Facets	Level	n	N	Level of significance
a. Financial risk	H	305	375	**
b. Social risk	L	305	375	—
c. Psychological risk	L	305	375	—
d. Functional risk	H	305	375	**
e. Physical risk	H	305	375	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test.

H = high, L = low

** significant difference at the 0.01 level

-- no significant difference was found.

6.3.1.1. Financial risk:

Financial risk relates to the risk of losing money on a product because of it needing repairs and high maintenance costs (Fletcher, K. 1986).

The data shown in Table 6.4 suggests that financial risk is an important dimension for car buyers in Jordan, as it gained the third highest mean value of 3.21 and a majority, i.e. 50.9%.

As Table 6.5 shows, a Mann-Whitney test found a significant difference between respondents who approached personal sources of information and those who did not, and level of financial risk perception at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0004$). Therefore, Jordanian car buyers using personal sources of information perceived a significantly higher level of financial risk than those who did not.

Hypothesis 1, which stated that, the extent of information search from personal sources is related to the financial risk associated with buying a car was, therefore, accepted.

This would suggest that Jordanian consumers tend to approach personal sources of information when they perceive the product to be bought as involving a high level of financial risk. This behaviour of Jordanian buyers may be related to their low level of per capita income (see, Table 2.1). If individual's financial situation is not sound, one might expect him/her to be rather worried about the financial consequences of buying unreliable product. If the product breaks down continuously, then the financial consequences of fixing and replacing parts will be high.

The above results are consistent with results of other studies. Engel and Blackwell (1982) reported that, personal

sources of information have an important role to play as the cost of the product increases. Other studies of information seeking from all sources have, also, supported the above relationship.

6.3.1.2. Social Risk:

Social risk relates to whether the respondent thought friends and colleagues would think a product was not right for him or was unsuitable (Fletcher, K. 1986).

As can be seen from Table 6.4, a low level of risk was perceived on this dimension, with a majority, i.e., 40.6% of respondents who did not consider this dimension to be important when they were considering buying their latest cars.

A Mann-Whitney test was carried out and, as can be seen from Table 6.5, no significant difference was found between those who approached personal sources of information and those who did not ($p = 0.3124$).

These results suggest that approaching personal sources of information does not relate to social risk and, therefore, others' opinion of whether the car is unsuitable for the Jordanian buyer is not important as far as reliability,

performance and safety are concerned.

Moreover, the above results seem to oppose results reported by other studies (see, e.g., Roselius, 1971; Evans, 1982; Engel and Blackwell, 1982).

6.3.1.3. Psychological risk:

Psychological risk relates to whether a product would fit in with a respondent's self image or the way he thought about himself (Fletcher, K., 1986).

Table 6.4 shows a low level of risk was perceived on this dimension, with a majority, i.e., 40.6% of respondents who did not consider this dimension to be important.

A Mann-Whitney test was employed and as can be seen from Table 6.5, no significant difference was found between those who approached personal sources of information and those who did not. ($p = 0.3337$)

These results suggest that approaching personal sources of information does not relate to psychological risk and therefore, reliability, performance and safety of the car seems to be more important than self image as far as the respondents are concerned.

These results seem to oppose results reported by other studies (e.g., Roselius, 1971; Evans, 1982; Engel and Blackwell, 1982).

6.3.1.4. Functional risk:

Functional/performance risk relates to whether the product would not perform as expected (Fletcher, K., 1986).

This dimension was found to be the second most important for car buyers in Jordan. As can be seen from Table 6.4, it gains the second highest mean value of 3.36 and a majority, i.e., 52.8% of respondents perceived high level of this sort of risk.

As can be seen from Table 6.5, a Mann-Whitney test was used and a significant difference was found between those, who approached personal sources and those, who did not at the 0.01 level ($p= 0.0033$). Therefore, respondents who approached personal source of information, perceived a higher level of functional risk than those who did not.

This significant difference could indicate that respondents were afraid of bad car performance, which would lead to high levels of maintenance costs and therefore, they tended to approach personal sources of information when they perceived the product to be purchased as involving a high level

of functional risk.

6.3.1.5. Physical risk:

Physical risk relates to the perception that the product might be unsafe or dangerous to use (Fletcher, K., 1986).

Also, Table 6.4 suggests that physical risk is the most important dimension of risk for car buyers within the Jordanian context, as it gains the highest mean value of 3.5 and a majority, i.e., 56.7%, of respondents perceived high level of this type of risk.

As can be seen from Table 6.5, a Mann-Whitney test was carried out and a significant difference was found between respondents who approached personal sources of information and respondents who did not at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0067$).

Therefore, respondents who approached personal sources of information perceived a significantly higher level of physical risk than respondents who did not.

These results seem to suggest that, physical risk (e.g., brakes failure, steering arm failure) are of a high concern to Jordanian car buyers.

From the above results one can conclude that Jordanian consumers would ask for information, advice or opinion from others when the product to be bought is seen as unsafe or a dangerous.

6.3.1.6. Overall perceived risk:

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a low correlation exists between the multidimensional measure and the single measure of risk. This result suggests that the facets of risk included in the multidimensional measure do not fully explain the risk perceived by Jordanian car buyers.

The single overall measure of risk perception was used in order to examine whether or not Jordanian consumers' view buying a car as a risky act and in order to make double check on the respondents' answers concerning the different dimensions of risk included in question number 4. Therefore, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement given in question number 5. The following table shows the respondents answers according to frequency of mention.

Table (6.6)

Perception of risk by car buyers
using the single measure of risk

Level of agreement	Strongly agree		Agree		Un-certain		Quite disagree		Strongly disagree		n	N
Statement	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Buying a car is a very risky business	134	32.6	157	38.2	80	19.5	24	5.8	16	3.9	411	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

Table 6.6 shows that buying a car was viewed as a risky business, as the majority, i.e., 70.8% of respondents agreed on the statement included in the question.

A Mann-Whitney test was carried out and as Table 6.7 shows, a significant difference was found between respondents who approached personal sources of information and respondents who did not at the 0.10 level ($p = 0.0573$).

Table (6.7)

Approaching personal sources of information by
the overall perceived risk

Case	Level of perceived risk	n	N	Level of Significance
Buying a car by Jordanian Consumers	H	305	375	*

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high

* = significant difference at the 0.10 level

The above table also shows that Jordanian car buyers, using personal sources of information, perceived a significantly higher level of overall risk than those who did not. These results suggest that Jordanian consumers would approach personal sources for advice, information or opinion when they perceive the product to be bought as involving high levels of risk.

The results of this research seem consistent with results of other studies (i.e. Bauer, 1960; Cunningham, 1967b; Arndt, 1967c; Cox and Rich, 1964). Bauer suggested that the consumer perceives risk because purchasing a product involves consequences, some of which are likely to be unpleasant, which the consumer cannot anticipate with certainty. Bauer also suggested that consumers 'develop decision strategies'

in order to reduce the risk associated with the purchasing decision. Brand loyalty and susceptibility to group influence are two of such strategies.

Arndt (1967c) reported that consumers perceiving high risk are more likely to seek information from personal sources, and the impact of word-of-mouth pressure was stronger for high risk perceivers than for low risk perceivers.

Cunningham (1967b) found that high risk perceivers in the purchase of unknown brands are more likely to seek information than are those low in perceived risk.

The following table, however, shows the significant difference between those who approached personal sources of information and those who did not in terms of their perception of their knowledge and experience in cars, car complexity and their self confidence in making the purchase decision.

Table (6.8)

Approaching personal sources of information by knowledge and experience of cars, complexity of the car, price of the car and self confidence in making the purchase decision

Factors	Level	n	N	T-value	dF	Level of significance
knowledge an experience of cars.	L	305	375	9.08	373	**
complexity of the car.	H	305	375	7.50	373	**
price of the car	H	305	375	8.01	373	**
self confidence in making the purchase decision.	H	305	375	6.62	373	**

n = number of valid observations.

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high, L = low

** - significant difference at the 0.01 level.

6.3.2. Product knowledge and experience:

Respondents were asked to what extent would they agree or disagree with the statements 3a, 3b, 3c and 3d which were intended to examine whether or not a lack of knowledge and experience of cars was one of the factors which motivated respondents to approach personal sources for advice, information or opinion.

The following table provides the responses for the four statements given in the question in order of frequency of

mention.

Table (6.9)

Lack of product knowledge and experience and
information search by car buyers

State- ments	Level of agreement		Strongly agree		Agree		Un- certain		Quite disagree		Strongly disagree		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%				
a. my general knowledge of cars and car models/makes was not enough.	55	17.8	79	25.6	96	31.0	34	11.0	45	14.6	309	411		
b. My mechanical/ technical know- ledge was not enough.	64	20.7	107	34.6	70	22.7	34	11.0	34	11.0	309	411		
c. My experience in purchasing and selling cars was not enough.	67	21.7	100	32.4	68	22.0	46	14.9	28	9.0	309	411		
d. My experience in repairing cars was not enough.	92	29.8	110	35.6	56	18.0	29	9.4	22	7.2	309	411		

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

The data shown in Table 6.9 suggest that lack of product knowledge and experience was an important factor for car buyers to search for information, as the majority of respondents agreed with the statements included in the question.

In order to decide whether to examine this factor using those statements individually or combined, a reliability analysis was carried out and the results suggested the use of a combined statement. This gave a Cronbach Alpha of 0.96 well within the limit of 0.5 suggested by Peter J. P., (1979).

As can be seen from Table 6.8, a T-test was carried out to find out if respondents who approached personal sources have had a lower level of product knowledge and experience than those who did not approach these sources. The results showed a significant difference at the 0.01 level.

Hypothesis 2 which stated that, the extent of information search from personal sources does not relate to the amount of product knowledge and experience of cars in Jordan was, therefore, rejected.

Jordanian consumers are likely to search for information from personal sources when they perceive their product knowledge, mechanical knowledge or experience as being inadequate for making the purchase decision.

The research results seem consistent with results of many studies (e.g. Kiel, G. C., 1978; Newman and Staelin, 1972). Newman and Staelin (1972) reported a similar result in their study of the sources of information used by durable goods

buyers. They found that greater than average consultation of personal sources was associated with a lack of knowledge in judging a product.

6.3.3. Product Complexity:

The statement 3e and 3f included in question number 3 were designed to examine whether a car's complexity was one of the factors concerned in Jordanian consumers approaching personal sources of information for advice or opinion. The following table provides the responses for the statements given in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.10)
Product Complexity and information
search by car buyers

Level of agreement	Strongly agree		Agree		Un- certain		Quite disagree		Strongly disagree		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
State- ment												
e.If my car breaks down, I won't know what has gone wrong with it.	41	13.3	117	37.9	89	28.8	38	12.2	24	7.8	309	411
f.Cars are com- plex and diffi- cult to evaluate.	54	17.5	90	29.1	72	23.3	61	19.7	32	10.4	309	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

Table 6.10 indicates that the car's complexity and difficulty to evaluate was considered by respondents as an important factor for them to search for information, as the majority agreed on the statements included in the question.

A reliability analysis between the scales 3e and 3f was carried out and the Cronbach Alpha of 0.93 suggests the use of the response to the scales combined together.

Table 6.8 shows that a T-test was used to examine if respondents who searched for information from personal sources viewed cars as more complex and difficult to evaluate than those who did not approach these sources. The results showed a significant difference at the 0.01 level.

Hypothesis 3 stated that, the extent of information search from personal sources is related to product complexity was, therefore, accepted.

Thus, the above results suggested that help from relatives, friends, colleagues or neighbours is of major importance for the Jordanian consumers to choose the right product when the purchase involves a complex product such as cars.

6.3.4. Price of the product:

The statements 3g and 3h were used to examine whether price of the car was one of the factors which motivated them to search for information from personal sources. The following Table provides the responses for the statements given in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.11)

Price of the car and information search

Level of agreement	Strongly agree		Agree		Un-certain		Quite disagree		Strongly disagree		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Statement												
g. In general, cars are usually expensive, and I had to be careful when I was thinking about my latest car.												
	103	33.3	106	34.3	64	20.7	28	9.1	8	2.6	309	411
h. The price I paid for my latest car was higher than that of other cars I had before, therefore, I had to be careful and search for more information.												
	82	26.5	94	30.4	70	22.7	39	12.6	24	7.8	309	411

n = number of valid observations
 N = Number of cases included in the sample

As can be seen from table 6.11, the majority of respondents have indicated that, price of the car was an important factor for them to search for information from personal sources.

A reliability analysis between the statements 3g and 3h was conducted and the results showed high Cronbach Alpha (i.e., 0.92), which suggested the use of the two statements combined together.

As Table 6.8 shows, a T-test was employed to find out whether those who searched for information from personal sources perceived cars as more expensive than those who did not. The results showed a significant difference between the two groups at the 0.01 level.

Price worries could be related to the low level of per capita income that Jordanians have. They employed the strategy of information search from these sources in order to learn a good deal about the car to be bought and/or obtain other people's evaluation of it. This may have helped them reduce the risk of losing the money they worked hard for and saved over the years.

Kiel and Layton (1981) found a positive relationship between the price of the car and search behaviour. Newman and Staelin (1973) found a similar relationship in buying appliances.

Moreover, the same relationship was found by other studies (e.g., Wicking, 1976 and Udell, 1966).

6.3.5. Self confidence in decision making:

Three statements, i.e, 3i, 3j and 3k included in question number 3 were used to examine whether lack of self confidence was one of the factors for the Jordanian consumers to seek help from others. The following table shows the distribution of respondents.

Table (6.12)
Self Confidence and information
search by car buyers

Level of Agreement	Strongly agree		Agree		Un-certain		Quite disagree		Strongly disagree		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
i.I feel I am not sure of myself among strangers.	15	4.9	27	8.7	54	17.5	72	23.3	141	45.6	309	411
j.In general, I feel I am not confident about my abilities.	11	3.5	36	11.7	64	20.7	85	27.5	113	36.6	309	411
k.My self confidence was not enough to judge cars.	22	7.2	57	18.5	61	19.7	78	25.2	91	29.4	309	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

Table 6.12 shows that the sample had a strong skew to the

right (high self confidence).

A reliability analysis was conducted and the results suggest the use of the response to the scales relating to self-confidence combined together (Chronbach Alpha = 0.91).

Table 6.8 shows that a T-test was used and the results showed a significant difference between respondents who asked for information from personal sources and those who did not, and the level of self confidence at the 0.01 level.

These results suggest that, car buyers who approached personal sources of information have had a significantly higher level of self confidence (in terms of judging cars or their general confidence about their abilities) than those who did not. Therefore, the researcher suggests that, this high self confidence could be because of a respondents' bias or because male car owners have dominated the sample (i.e, 345 out of 411), who would express themselves as confident because of cultural or social backgrounds which ,usually, indicate that the male should have a strong confident image all the time, while lack of self confidence is related to female characteristics in Jordanian society.

Based on the above results one can conclude that Jordanian consumers would seek product information from personal

sources even when their confidence in being able to judge or evaluate a product's attribute is high.

These results seem at odds to the results of other studies. A study conducted by Bettman and Park (1980), on the effects of very low confidence in decision making ability on information search, reported that the subjects who completely lacked product purchasing experience (it is reasonable to expect that their confidence in making the right decision was, also, low) did not use information search.

Bell (1967) commented on the use of a 'purchase pal' in automobile buying. He noticed that where the individual has low specific self confidence concerning automobile purchase, he is more likely to pay attention to or take along a purchase pal. This team tends to work as a unit in the purchase situation.

The relationship between risk styles and personality has been investigated by Schaninger (1976). He found that the dominant risk style affects the type of search undertaken by influencing the size of the evoked set and number of alternatives considered.

However, other studies (e.g., Newman and Staelin, 1971;

Arndt, 1967c; Fletcher, 1986) reported similar results to the findings of this study on self-confidence in decision making and information search.

6.3.6. Period of commitment:

Statement 3L included in question number 3 was designed to examine whether the period of commitment was one of the factors for the Jordanian consumers to search for information from friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours. The following table shows the respondents' answers according to the frequency of mention.

Table (6.13)
Period of commitment and information
search by car buyers

Level of Agreement	Strongly agree		Agree		Un-certain		Quite disagree		Strongly disagree		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Statement												
A car can last more than five years, therefore, I was concerned about buying a car which would keep running smoothly with minimum faults.	113	36.6	119	38.5	36	11.7	27	8.7	14	4.5	309	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

As Table (6.13) shows, the period of commitment to the car was considered by respondents as an important factor for them to search for information as 75.1% agreed on the statement.

A Mann-Whitney test was carried out to investigate if respondents who approached personal sources of information were more concerned about the long period of commitment associated with buying a car than those who did not search for information from these sources. The results in Table 6.14 showed a significant difference at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

Table (6.14)

Period of commitment by information search
from personal sources

Factor	Level of Concern	n	N	Level of Significance
The long period of commitment associated with buying a car	H	305	375	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high

** = significant difference at the 0.01 level

Table 6.14 shows that Jordanian car buyers using personal sources of information felt a significantly higher level of concern over the long period of commitment to the car than those who did not ask for information from these sources.

Therefore, help from friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours is seen by car buyers in Jordan as of major importance because this particular product is likely to last a long time.

Engel and Blackwell (1982) observed that, the period for which the consumer will be committed to a given product affects his perception of the risk associated with the purchase. Therefore, the longer the period of commitment to a product, the higher the Jordanian consumer's tendency for information seeking from personal sources before buying this product.

6.3.7. Level of information search from personal sources and demographic factors:

In order to examine if there was a relationship between the level of information search from personal sources and respondents' demographic factors, a cross-tabulation analysis was carried out between question number 9, which intended to measure the level of information sought by respondents from personal sources and questions 31, to 35.

The results showed that there was no significant relationship between the level of information search from personal sources and respondents' demographic differences.

This means that the researcher was unable to determine whether differences in demographic factors would affect the level of information search from personal sources.

Summary

From the previous analysis, it appeared that Jordanian consumers tended to rely heavily on personal sources of information when buying a durable product, such as a car. Different factors were found to have led them to search for advice, opinion or information from these sources. These factors are:

1. The level of perceived risk associated with buying cars, including the following dimensions of risk:
 - a. financial risk.
 - b. functional risk.
 - c. physical risk.
2. Lack of knowledge and experience of cars.
3. Cars were seen by respondents as complex and difficult to evaluate and, therefore, they tended to ask for help from others.

4. The long period of commitment associated with buying a car.

However, Jordanian car buyers were found to have had high self confidence when buying a car. Therefore, the researcher suggested that, this high self confidence could be as a result of a respondent bias or because male car owners have dominated the sample (i.e., 345 out of 411) who should have strong confident image all the time according to the Jordanian social and cultural norms and values, while lack of self confidence is related to female characteristics in this society.

The preceding section identified some of the factors which prompt Jordanian car buyers to seek information from personal sources. The following section takes this one step further by examining some of the reasons Jordanian buyers have for seeking information from personal sources when buying a car.

No significant relationship was found between the level of information search from personal sources and respondents' demographic factors.

6.4. Reasons for information search from personal sources when buying a car:

Respondents were asked the questions 6, 11 and 29. The following shows the statistical results of those questions.

6.4.1. Source credibility:

Respondents were asked to indicate how credible they found the different sources of information given in question 29 when they were buying their cars. The following table provides the responses in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.15) shows that relatives (e.g., brothers and sisters) were considered by Jordanian car buyers as the most capable personal source in providing trustworthy information as it gains the highest mean value of 3.411. Friends, colleagues and neighbours were regarded as the second most capable personal source in providing trustworthy information with a mean value of 3.236 followed by father and mother with a mean value of 3.212 and wife/husband and children with a mean value of 2.455.

Table (6.15)

Credibility of Sources of Information

Level of Credibility	Highly credible		Credible		Un- certain		Quite uncred- ible		Not at all		n	N	Mean*
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%			
<u>Sources of Information</u>													
<u>Personal Sources</u>													
a.wife/husband & children	24	5.8	80	19.5	102	24.8	58	14.1	147	35.8	411	411	2.455
b.father & Mother.	60	14.6	133	32.4	104	25.3	62	15.1	52	12.7	411	411	3.212
c.relatives (e.g.,brothers and sisters).	77	18.7	141	34.3	109	26.5	42	10.2	42	10.2	411	411	3.411
d.friends, colleagues or neighbours.	60	14.6	141	34.3	101	24.6	54	13.1	55	13.4	411	411	3.236
<u>Impersonal sources</u>													
a.advertising (TV & Radio).	14	3.4	36	8.8	106	25.8	119	29.0	136	33.1	411	411	2.204
b.car showrooms.	12	2.9	52	12.7	107	26.0	115	28.0	125	30.4	411	411	2.297
c.newspapers, brochures, Leaflets & magazines.	20	4.9	42	10.2	112	27.3	110	26.8	127	30.9	411	411	2.314

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

* The higher the mean, the more capable that source of providing trustworthy information.

On the other hand, newspapers, brochures, leaflets and magazines were considered by respondents as the most capable impersonal source in providing trustworthy information, with a mean value of 2.314, followed by car showrooms with a mean

value of 2.297 and advertising with a mean value of 2.204.

From the above findings, one may note that personal sources of information were regarded by Jordanian car buyers as more capable of providing trustworthy information than impersonal sources (as all personal sources have had higher mean values than impersonal sources). This high credibility of personal sources may be because people's advice, information or opinion, is often based on their own experience with cars. Thus, information seekers were able to ask those people through direct communication (face-to-face) in order to reduce risk, or anxiety inherent in buying a car. Moreover, impersonal sources of information, usually, suffer from the lack of direct communication with information seekers, and therefore, many unexplained issues related to cars remained with them.

A T-test was carried out to investigate if a significant difference existed between respondents who approached personal sources of information and those who did not, in terms of their perception of whether or not personal sources were capable of providing trustworthy information. The results showed a significant difference at the 0.01 level.

This was carried out after the reliability analysis had been conducted between the statements 29a, 29b, 29c and 29d

(Cronbach Alpha = 0.64); and 29f, 29g and 29h (Cronbach Alpha = 0.84), included in question 29. The following table shows the significant difference.

Table (6.16)

Approaching personal sources of information
by source credibility and flexibility

Reasons	Level	n	N	T value	df	Level of significance
Credibility of personal sources	H	305	375	3.96	373	**
Credibility of impersonal sources	L	305	375	-2.26	373	--
Flexibility of personal sources	H	305	375	69.00	304	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high, L = low

** Significant difference at the 0.01 level

-- No significant difference was found.

Table 6.16 indicates that, Jordanian car buyers using personal sources of information, perceived a significantly higher level of trustworthy car information from these sources than those who did not use them.

Also, the same table shows that car buyers using impersonal sources perceived a significantly lower level of trustworthy car information from these sources than those who did not use

them.

Therefore, this suggests that car buyers in Jordan tend to seek product information from other people because they see them as more trustworthy sources of information than impersonal sources.

Other studies (e.g. Arndt, 1967a; Kottman, 1969; Howard and Tinkham, 1971; Gardner, 1975; Wicking, 1976; Zanot, 1984), have reported similar results.

6.4.2. Source Flexibility:

Respondents were asked to what extent would they agree or disagree with statements 11a and 11b included in question number 11.

The following table shows the responses in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.17)

Flexibility of personal sources

Level of Agreement	Strongly agree		Agree		Un-certain		Quite disagree		Strongly disagree		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
a.I asked my friends, relatives or neighbours because I needed to know many things about cars. For example, car's engine and its economy of operation.	73	23.9	118	38.7	79	25.9	25	8.2	10	3.3	305	411
b.Approaching a friend, relative or neighbour, allowed me to take my time (e.g., they would not have to go to serve another waiting customer).	67	22.0	115	37.7	70	22.9	42	13.8	11	3.6	305	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample.

As can be seen from the above table, the majority of respondents agreed on the statements included in the question and, therefore, personal sources of information tend to allow car buyers to investigate different issues (e.g. durability of the car's engine, economy of operation, road handling, etc.) relating to such a product. Also, personal sources of information were considered by respondents as sources which allowed them to ask about, think about, and discuss cars,

whilst, e.g., Advertising or newspapers suffer, completely, from direct communication with information seekers and a salesman does not intend to spend much time talking to the same person, because he will have to go to serve another waiting customer. Therefore, personal sources of information were seen by car buyers as flexible in providing the necessary information.

However, the reliability analysis was conducted between statements 11a and 11b and the results suggest the use of responses to both scales combined together (Cronbach Alpha = 0.94).

Table 6.16 shows that Jordanian car buyers using personal sources of information, perceived a significantly higher level of flexibility in these sources than those who did not use them at the 0.01 level.

Therefore, the results indicated that flexibility of personal sources is considered one of the reasons for car buyers to search for information from friends, relatives or neighbours.

6.4.3. Social contacts:

Respondents were asked question number 6, which was intended to measure the frequency of visiting and participating in

social events (e.g, birthdays, weddings, etc.) with their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours. The following table shows the responses given in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.18)

Frequency of visiting friends and
participating in social events

Frequency	Very frequent		Frequent		Uncertain		Quite infrequent		Not at all		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Visiting/participating with friends, relatives or neighbours in social events, (e.g.weddings and birthdays).	88	21.4	141	34.3	131	31.9	31	7.5	20	4.9	411	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

As Table (6.18) shows, 55.7% of respondents indicated that they frequently visited and participated with their friends, relatives, colleagues and neighbours in social events such as weddings and birthdays.

A Mann-Whitney test was used to investigate if respondents who asked their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours for advice, information or opinions, have had higher social contacts than those who did not approach personal sources of

information. The results showed no significant difference between the two groups ($p = 0.2247$).

Therefore, hypothesis 5 which stated that, the extent of information search from personal sources is related to the amount of social contacts, was rejected.

The lack of significant difference between the two groups on this measure suggests that, approaching personal sources of information does not relate to social contacts. This is at variance with existing literature and therefore, the researcher's viewpoint suggests that consulting friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours could be related to Islamic religious background rather than social contacts. Jordan is a muslim society and the Holy Koran is the people's natural law which motivates them to ask and consult others when making decisions.

6.4.4. Experience:

Statement 11c, was intended to examine whether or not personal sources of information were perceived by car buyers as having high levels of experience in this particular product.

The following table shows the results in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.19)

Personal sources and cars' experience

Level of Agreement	Strongly agree		Agree		Un-certain		quite disagree		strongly disagree		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Statement												
My friend, relatives or neighbours has been buying and driving cars for many years and have a lot of experience.	84	27.5	117	38.3	63	20.7	27	8.9	14	4.6	305	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

From the above table, one can see that the majority, i.e., 65.8% of respondents considered their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours as having high levels of experience.

A Mann-Whitney test found a significant difference between respondents who consulted personal sources and those who did not at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

The following table explains the significant difference.

Table (6.20)

Approaching personal sources of information by
experience and cost of search.

Reasons	Level	n	N	Level of Significance
Experience of personal sources	H	305	375	**
Cost of search from personal sources	L	305	375	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high, L= low

** significant difference at the 0.01 level.

As can be seen from table 6.20, Jordanian car buyers using personal sources perceived a significantly higher level of experience in these sources than those who did not consult them. Thus one can suggest that experience was one of the reasons for car buyers to ask for help from other people.

6.4.5. Cost of search:

This was examined by the use of the statement lld, which asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement on the statements included in the question.

The following table shows the response in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.21)

Personal sources and Cost of Search

Level of Agreement	Strongly agree		Agree		Un-certain		quite disagree		strongly disagree		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Approaching my friend, relative or neighbour would cost me nothing. For example, this does not incur traveling expenses.	78	25.6	89	29.2	48	15.7	37	12.1	53	17.4	305	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

The above table indicates that the majority, i.e., 54.8% of respondents considered cost of search from personal sources to be low.

A Mann-Whitney test was used and a significant difference was found between respondents who consulted personal sources of information and respondents who did not, in terms of their perception to the cost of search from these sources. The significance was at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

Therefore, hypothesis 4 which stated that, the extent of information search from personal sources is related to the cost associated with it, was accepted.

Table 6.20 shows that, car buyers using personal sources of information perceived a lower cost regarding these sources than those who did not at the 0.01 level.

Thus, the low cost of search has motivated car buyers to search for information from personal sources, whilst, consulting impersonal courses would require potential car buyers to travel somewhere for the consultation which would, in turn, cost time or money and therefore this was one of the advantages for personal sources over impersonal ones.

The research results seem consistent with those reported by Engel and Blackwell (1982), who explained that cost of search involves decision delay, expenditure of time and money, information overload, and psychological cost, as possible costs of information seeking from all sources of information.

Summary

Based on previous analysis concerning the reasons for information search from personal sources, the following conclusions can be drawn.

Although many factors have been found to be motivating car buyers to approach personal sources of information, there

were many reasons why those buyers asked for help from these sources when buying cars. These reasons are:

1. Personal sources of information were perceived by car buyers as more credible than impersonal sources
2. Car buyers were concerned with asking about different issues relating to cars. They seemed to consider personal sources as more capable in providing this and therefore, this might suggest that these sources were more flexible than impersonal ones.
3. Personal sources were seen as very experienced and therefore, it was suggested that those who were approached by respondents were either car owners or experienced people.
4. Cost of search was another reason why car buyers in Jordan to search for information from personal sources, as it was found to have low levels of cost in terms of time and money.
5. Information search from personal sources was not found to be related to social contacts. Thus the researcher suggested Islamic religious reasons as an explanation.

The following section will deal with the types of information

sought by Jordanian car buyers from personal sources. This will allow for understanding of the important role played by these sources in providing different types of information regarding the required car.

6.5. Types of information sought by Jordanian consumers from personal sources:

This section was devoted to investigating the types of information sought by Jordanian consumers from personal sources.

Respondents were asked questions 12 and 13. Question 13 asked respondents whether or not personal sources provided them with different types of car information. The following table shows the response according to the frequency of mention.

Table (6.22)

The ability of personal sources in providing
different types of car information

Response	n	%
Yes	313	76.2
No	42	10.2
Do not know	56	13.6
411 cases		
0 missing values		

Table 6.22 reveals that the majority, i.e., 76.2% of respondents considered personal sources as capable of providing different types of car information.

Table 6.23 presents the respondents' responses to question number 12 according to the frequency of mention.

Table 6.24 presents the significant difference between respondents who consulted personal sources and those who did not, using a Mann-Whitney test.

Table (6.23)

Types of information provided by personal sources according to the frequency of mention

Types of information	Level		To a very great extent		To a great extent		Un-certain extent		To some extent		Not at all		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%				
a. Make of the car.	48	11.7	154	37.5	134	32.6	48	11.7	27	6.6			411	411
b. Car performance.	57	13.9	197	47.9	93	22.6	44	10.7	20	4.9			411	411
c. Availability of good service.	97	23.6	161	39.2	95	23.1	38	9.2	20	4.9			411	411
d. Availability of spare parts.	79	19.2	186	45.3	100	24.3	28	6.8	18	4.4			411	411
e. price/value for money.	107	26.0	140	34.1	108	26.3	45	10.9	11	2.7			411	411
f. checking the trustworthiness of the information received from advertising or read in a magazine or a newspaper.	51	12.4	119	29.0	101	24.6	81	19.7	59	14.4			411	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

Table (6.24)

Approaching personal sources by obtaining
different types of information

Types of Information	Level of providing this type	n	N	Level of Significance
a. Make of the car.	H	305	375	**
b. Car performance.	H	305	375	**
c. Availability of good services.	H	305	375	**
d. Availability of spare parts.	H	305	375	**
e. Price/value for money.	H	305	375	**
f. Checking the trustworthiness of the information received from advertising or read in a magazine or a newspaper.	H	305	375	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high

** = significant difference at the 0.01 level.

Because of the experience of personal sources (see section 6.4.4), Jordanian buyers perceived these sources as useful in providing the different types of information included in Table 6.24. They are discussed, in turn, in this section.

6.5.1. Make of the car:

Table 6.23 shows that personal sources were seen as useful in providing information on the make of car to be purchased, as the majority, i.e., 49.2% of respondents indicated that their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours provided them with this particular type of information.

As shown in Table 6.24, a Mann-Whitney test was carried out and a significant difference was found between respondents who consulted personal sources and those who did not at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

Therefore car buyers who consulted personal sources have perceived them as capable of providing information on the brand or the make of the car to be bought.

These results suggest that car buyers in Jordan tend to ask other people about the make of the car to be bought before the purchase decision is made. This could be because of the lack of knowledge and experience of cars, a car's mechanical complexity, price and so on.

6.5.2. Car performance:

Table 6.23 reveals that the majority, i.e., 61.8% of

respondents indicated that their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours provided them with information on their car's performance before they made purchase.

Table 6.24 shows that a Mann-Whitney test resulted in a significant difference between respondents who asked for information and those who did not at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

Thus, respondents using personal sources of information perceived them as capable in providing information on the performance of the car to be purchased.

These results seem consistent with results of other studies (e.g., Le Grand and Udell, 1964; Wicking, 1976). Le Grand and Udell, reported that, respondents were more concerned with searching for information on quality and performance before purchasing a television and furniture.

6.5.3. Availability of good services:

Table 6.23 shows that the majority, i.e., 62.8% of respondents considered personal sources as of use in providing information on whether or not good services (e.g. maintenance) were available for their cars.

As Table 6.24 shows, a Mann-Whitney test found a significant difference between car buyers using personal sources of information and those who did not at the 0.01 level. ($p = 0.0000$).

Therefore, respondents who used personal sources, found them helpful in providing information on whether or not good services were available for the chosen car.

Similar results were reported by Le Grand and Udell (1964) and Wicking (1976). Wicking found 50% of respondents tend to consider service centres as an important factor in information search before buying a dishwasher.

6.5.4. Availability of spare parts:

Also, Table 6.23 shows that 64.5% of respondents considered personal sources as useful in providing them with information on whether or not spare parts were available for the chosen car.

A Mann-Whitney test was carried out and as can be seen from Table 6.24, a significant difference was found between car buyers who consulted personal sources of information and those who did not at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

This finding showed that personal sources of information were perceived as capable of providing this type of information.

6.5.5. Price/value of the car:

From Table 6.23, one can see that 61.1% of respondents considered friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours as capable of providing information on whether or not the car was worth the asking price.

Again, a Mann-Whitney test was used and as Table 6.24 shows a significant difference was found between respondents who consulted their personal sources of information and those who did not at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

The results suggest that respondents who consulted personal sources, viewed these as capable of providing information on whether or not the car is worth the asking price. This supports the research results reported earlier which suggested that Jordanian consumers tend to consult personal sources of information when they perceive the product to be bought involving high level of financial risk.

6.5.6. Checking advertising trustworthiness:

Table 6.23 shows that the majority, i.e., 41.4% of

respondents considered personal sources as useful in providing information on whether or not the information received through advertising messages or read in magazines or newspapers is trustworthy.

Table 6.24 shows a significant difference was found between respondents who consulted personal sources of information and those who did not at the 0.01 level, using a Mann-Whitney test. ($p= 0.0000$).

These results suggest that car buyers who consulted personal sources have perceived them as capable in providing help on whether or not the information received through impersonal sources is trustworthy.

Therefore, one can conclude that Jordanian consumers tend to approach personal sources if they think that the advertising of a particular product (e.g. cars) is dubious.

Summary

From the analysis shown and discussed in this section, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Car buyers in Jordan tend to approach personal sources of

information in order to ask about the make of a car.

2. Car performance is of major concern for car buyers and, therefore, they ask their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours for help.

3. Another kind of information sought by car buyers from personal sources is whether or not good services are available.

4. Availability of spare parts is of a major concern to the Jordanian car buyer and personal sources were seen as useful in providing this information.

5. Friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours were seen as useful in providing information on whether or not the car is worth the price.

6. Checking advertising trustworthy was another kind of information sought from personal sources.

The following section will investigate whether or not Jordanian consumers convey product information to others and if they do, their reasons for doing so.

6.6. Reasons for conveying product information to other car buyers:

To investigate the reasons for conveying car information, respondents were asked questions 14, 16 and 17. Question 14 was intended to examine the consumer's willingness to talk about cars to friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours.

The study findings are shown in the following table in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.25)

Consumer's willingness to talk about cars

Response	n	%
Yes	268	65.2
No	117	28.5
Do not know	26	6.3

411 cases

0 Missing values

It is clear from Table 6.25 that the majority, i.e., 65.2% of respondents were willing to tell or talk about their cars. This indicated the level of importance that Jordanians place

on their cars. As an expensive product, cars might have exhausted buyers'savings and, therefore, it is important to know how to keep them in a good working condition. Thus, regular talks with friends might have provided them with the answer.

Question number 16 asked respondents to what extent they would agree or disagree with statements given in the question. The study findings of this question are shown in the following table.

Table (6.26)

Dissatisfaction and satisfaction and telling or
talking about cars to others

Level of Agreement	Strongly agree		Agree		Un- certain		Quite disagree		Strongly disagree		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Statement												
1. I would talk to my friends, relatives or neighbours if:												
a. the performance of the car was not good.	72	17.5	135	32.8	91	22.1	50	12.2	63	15.3	411	411
b. the servicing (e.g.maintenance) was not good.	94	22.9	139	33.8	94	22.9	46	11.2	38	9.2	411	411
c. the spare parts were not avail- able.	95	23.1	131	31.9	94	22.9	50	12.2	41	10.0	411	411
2. Also, I would talk to my friends, relatives or neighbours if:												
d. the performance of the car was good.	162	39.4	135	32.8	65	15.8	30	7.3	19	4.6	411	411
e. the servicing (e.g., maintenance) was good.	127	30.9	152	37.0	70	17.0	48	11.7	14	3.4	411	411
f. the spare parts were available.	148	36.0	135	32.8	70	17.0	42	10.2	16	3.9	411	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

Table (6.27)

Talking about cars and respondents'
dissatisfaction and satisfaction with their cars

Reasons	Level of talking	n	N	T value	dF	Level of significance
Dissatisfaction						
with the car.	H	268	385	5.27	383	**
Satisfaction						
with the car.	H	268	385	2.97	383	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high

** significant difference at the 0.01 level

6.6.1. Dissatisfaction:

The statements 16a, 16b and 16c were intended to measure whether or not dissatisfied car buyers would express this to others.

Table 6.26 shows that the majority of respondents agreed on the above and, therefore, this would suggest that Jordanian car buyers would express their dissatisfaction with their cars by talking to their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours.

The reliability analysis between the three statements (i.e., 16a, 16b, and 16c) was carried out and the results suggested the use of the responses to the scales combined together (Cronbach Alpha = 0.82).

As can be seen from Table 6.27, a T-test was used and the results showed that respondents who talked to their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours about their cars had a significantly higher level of dissatisfaction than those who did not at the 0.01 level.

Other studies (e.g. Richins, M.L., 1983; Day and Landon, 1976; Ward and Robertson, 1973) reported similar results.

6.6.2. Satisfaction:

In order to examine whether or not satisfaction was one of the reasons for conveying car information to others, three statements, i.e., 16d, 16e and 16f were used.

Table 6.26 indicates that the majority of respondents agreed on the above and, therefore, this suggests that Jordanian car buyers would talk to their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours when they are satisfied with their cars.

Again, the reliability analysis was carried out and the

results suggested the use of the responses to the scales (i.e., 16d, 16e and 16f) combined together (Cronbach Alpha = 0.87)

Also, Table 6.27 shows that a T-test was employed and the results showed that car buyers who talked to other people about their cars had a significantly higher level of satisfaction than those who did not at the 0.01 level.

Hypothesis 6 stated that, Jordanians do not convey satisfaction with a product to other car buyers was , therefore, rejected.

Those results seem consistent with results reported by other studies (e.g., Andreasen, 1977; Westbrook and Fornell, 1979; Oliver, 1980; Swan and Combs, 1976).

When considering the analysis concerning respondents' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their cars, one could conclude that car buyers would talk to other people about their cars to express either their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their cars.

However, question 17 asked respondents to indicate how true they thought the statements in the question. The following

table shows the results in order of frequency of mention.

Table (6.28)
Experience, knowledgeability, social status
and credibility of advertising message and
conveying car information

Level of truthfulness Statements	Very true		True		Un- certain		Quite untrue		Not true at all		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
a. I would tell and advise my friends, relatives or neigh- bours about cars because they see me as an experienced car buyer.	51	12.4	128	31.1	104	25.3	52	12.7	76	18.5	411	411
b. I like telling my friends, relatives or neighbours about cars and I encourage them to approach me for advice or opinion because I have a lot of information about cars.	62	15.1	143	34.8	88	21.4	62	15.1	56	13.6	411	411
c. I talk to my friends, relatives or neighbours about my car because they know I always buy a high standard quality car.	66	16.1	108	26.3	88	21.4	76	18.5	73	17.8	411	411

Table (6.28) continued

d.I would like to talk and advice my friends, relatives or neighbours about cars if I realized that the credibility of the content of the advertising message was not true.	84	20.4	139	33.8	107	26.0	50	12.2	31	7.5	411	411
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n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

Table (6.29)

Talking about cars to other people by perception of experience and knowledge on cars, social status and perception of credibility of advertising message

Reasons	Level of talking	n	N	Level of Significance
a. experience	H	268	385	**
b. knowledgeability	H	268	385	**
c. social status	H	268	385	**
d. credibility of advertising message	H	268	385	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high

** Significant difference at the 0.01 level

The above reasons are discussed in turn.

6.6.3. Experience:

Statement 17a examined whether or not people's experience of buying cars would lead them to convey car information to others.

Table 6.28 shows that the majority, i.e., 43.5% of respondents have considered the statement as true and therefore, this would suggest that car buyers would convey car information to their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours when they perceive themselves as experienced in buying cars. The motivation for doing so, may be to offer help and to gain higher self-esteem.

A Mann-Whitney test was carried out and as Table 6.29 shows, that car buyers who talked about their cars perceived a significantly higher level of experience than those who did not at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

6.6.4. Knowledgeability:

Statement 17b examined whether or not people's knowledge of cars, (e.g., knowledge of car make) would lead them to talk about cars to others.

As can be seen from Table 6.28 the majority, i.e., 49.9% of

respondents, considered the statement as true and, therefore, this would lead us to suggest that general knowledge on cars lead Jordanian car owners to convey information to other people.

Table 6.29 shows that a Mann-Whitney was carried out and the results showed that Jordanian car buyers who talked to other people about their cars perceived a significantly higher level of knowledge of buying cars than those who did not talk at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

Thus, knowledge of buying cars is a reason why Jordanian car buyers convey car information to others, which would lead to some kind of respect for them, as they would be perceived by others to be, e.g., educated, intelligent, and so on.

6.6.5. Social Status:

The statement 17c examined whether or not social status was one of the reasons for conveying car information to other people.

The findings shown in Table 6.28 revealed that the majority, i.e., 42.4% of respondents, considered the statement to be true.

As can be seen from Table 6.29, car buyers who talked to other people about their cars perceived a significantly higher level of social status than those who did not talk at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

Therefore, these results tended to suggest that Jordanian car buyers would talk about their cars as status symbols, whereby their prestige would be enhanced in the eyes of their peers. This, usually, leads others to respect them as being perceived as "high flyers".

6.6.6. Credibility of advertising:

Statement 17d examined whether or not respondents would talk to others if they realized car advertising was not true (e.g., the content of the advertising message does not give accurate information on the economy of operation of the car).

The findings shown in Table 6.28 indicate that the majority, i.e., 54.2% of respondents, considered the statement as true.

Again, a Mann-Whitney test was carried out and as Table 6.29 shows, Jordanian car buyers tend to convey information to other people if they realize that the content of the advertising message (e.g., economy of operation, road handling or durability of the car's engine) was presented in

an inaccurate way at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0012$)

The researcher suggests social and cultural reasons for conveying information to others when the advertising message is being perceived as inaccurate. For example, the social structure involves strong kinship patterns. The clan is the basis of Jordan tribal society and the extended family is the foundation of the rural and urban society, therefore, this type of close relationship could be the motivator for Jordanians conveying information to each other.

6.6.7. Conveying car information to other buyers and demographic factors:

The cross-tabulation analysis showed that, no significant relationship exists between conveying car information and respondents' demographic factors (i.e., education, age group, income, sex and occupation).

Hence, the researcher was unable to determine whether differences in demographic factors would affect conveying car information to other buyers.

Summary

The previous analysis regarding the reasons for conveying car

information to others has resulted in the following conclusions:

1. Car buyers tend to talk about their dissatisfaction to their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours, and therefore, the researcher suggests that this would affect the number of potential car buyers.

2. Satisfaction was also found to be a reason for car buyers talking to others about their cars and, therefore, this would, as a result, increase the number of potential car buyers.

3. People's experience in buying cars was found to be another reason for talking about them to other people.

4. People's general knowledge (e.g., on makes, or origin of make) was also found to be a motivator in talking about cars to others.

5. Social status was also found to be motivating buyers to talk about their cars to others and it was suggested by the researcher that those who talked about their cars, viewed them as status symbols, whereby their prestige would be enhanced in the eyes of their peers.

6. Car buyers were also found to talk and advise their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours if they realize inaccurate advertising is being broadcasted or published in a newspaper or magazine.

No significant relationship was found between respondents' demographic factors and conveying car information to other buyers.

6.7. Conclusion to Chapter:

This chapter presented new empirical evidence of the use of personal sources of information by car buyers, in particular, and durables in general, in Jordan. The results reported in this chapter add to the limited literature on the use of personal sources of consumer information when making a purchase decision of durables in developing countries. These results helped answer questions such as, do Jordanian car buyers search for information from personal sources? When they do so? and why?.

Jordanian car buyers were found to rely heavily on personal sources of information when buying cars, and therefore, significant differences were found between respondents who consulted friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours and those who did not.

Car buyers using personal sources of information were found to have little knowledge and experience of cars, viewed cars as complex and difficult to evaluate. Moreover, they were very concerned about the long period of commitment associated with buying cars and perceived high risk. However, no significant relationship was found between the level of information search from personal sources and respondents' demographic factors.

Many reasons were found to have motivated Jordanian car buyers to use these sources. Reasons such as, capability of providing trustworthy information, flexibility in providing the required information, experience, the low cost of search from these sources and also these sources, were perceived by car buyers in Jordan as useful in providing different types of information on cars.

It was suggested by other studies (e.g., Wallach, Kagan and Bem, 1964; Brow, 1965; Cunningham, 1966; Kiel, G.C. 1978) that social contacts would affect the nature and type of information search from others.

The study findings revealed in this chapter, found that consulting personal sources of information does not relate to social contacts and, therefore, the researcher suggested Islamic religious background rather than social contacts for consulting these sources.

Jordanian car buyers were also found to be willing to convey information about their cars to their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours. Many issues were considered by them as reasons for so doing. Reasons such as dissatisfaction or satisfaction with their cars, knowledge and experience of cars, level of social status and also they would convey

information to others if they realised that the content of advertising was inaccurate.

The researcher was unable to conclude whether differences in demographic factors would affect the conveying of car information to other buyers, as the results of the cross-tabulation showed no significant relationship.

CHAPTER SEVEN**THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL SOURCES ON THE PURCHASE
OF CARS IN JORDAN****7.1. Introduction:**

The influence of an individual's social environment on his behaviour has long been a subject of interest to sociologists and social psychologists. Much evidence has been amassed about the influence of groups on member behaviour (see e.g., Cartwright and Zander, 1968; Shaw, 1976) and it is not surprising that students of marketing would focus on this phenomenon in an attempt to understand better how and why consumer behaviour develops (Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell, 1973). Accordingly, numerous researchers have examined the impact of social groups on consumer behaviour (Hansen, 1969; Harvey, 1960; Moschis, 1976; Stafford, 1966; Witt, 1969; Witt and Bruce, 1970; Venkatesan, 1966) and have demonstrated that products ranging from bread (Stafford, 1966) to suits (Venkatesan, 1966) are susceptible to group influence.

Although the results of these studies seem to indicate that informal social groups influence consumer behaviour, questions have been raised on the influence process. Robertson (1971), for example, suggests that not all products are susceptible to personal (group or individual) influence. In particular, he maintains that products low in visibility, complexity, and perceived risk and high in testability are

less susceptible to personal influences than products high in visibility, complexity and perceived risk and low in testability. It is surprising, therefore, that Stafford (1966) found group influences with bread, a product low in visibility, high in testability, and low in both complexity and perceived risk (Robertson, 1971, p.191).

The weight of influence a small, informal social group has over its members, or those aspiring to be members, is a function of several interrelated variables. These variables include, the cohesiveness of the group, the sanctions (positive and negative) attributed to the group by the individual, the interaction between the individual and the group, the nature of the behaviour in question, the knowledge of group members (or those who aspire to be members) of the behaviour of other members, and the individual's perception of the group's expertise relative to his own with respect to the behaviour in question (Witt R. E., 1969).

As is typical in the Behavioural Sciences, there is no one accepted definition of "groups". The most common definition revolves around the term "reference groups" which can include groups to which a person actually belongs, to which he aspires to belong, or dissociative groups to which he aspires not to belong. Thus, for one member, a group may be a membership group while for another it is a reference group. Most social psychologists consider reference groups as a person's major source of values, norms, and perspectives

(Stafford J. E., 1966).

Stafford also argued that reference groups influence behaviour in two major ways. Firstly, they influence aspiration levels and thus play a part in producing satisfaction or frustration. If the other members of a particular reference group (for example, neighbours) are wealthier, more famous, better gardeners, etc., one may be dissatisfied with his own achievements and may strive to do as well as the others.

Secondly, reference groups influence kinds of behaviour. They establish approved patterns of using one's wealth, of wearing one's prestige, of designing one's garden. They thus produce conformity as well as contentment (or discontentment). These two kinds of influence have, in general, a great deal in common. Both imply certain perceptions on the part of the individual, who attributes characteristics to the reference group which it may or may not actually have. Both involve psychological rewards and punishment.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to investigate the social normative influence that informal social groups might have had on the purchase of cars within the Jordanian context

Two issues are investigated in this chapter: (1) sources of influence faced by car buyers and (2) the influence of personal sources created by buyers through comparisons of

their cars with others cars.

7.2. Sources of Social Normative influence faced by Jordanian car buyers:

The aim here was to find out whether or not Jordanian car buyers were influenced by other people to buy a particular car. Therefore, respondents were asked questions 18, 19 and 20.

Question number 18 asked respondents to indicate whether or not others have asked them to buy a particular car.

The following Table provides the responses in order of frequency of mention.

TABLE (7.1)

Others influence faced by car buyers in Jordan

Response	n	%
Yes	265	64.5
No	109	26.5
Do not know	37	9.0
411 cases		
0 missing values		

Table 7.1 shows that the majority, i.e. 64.5% of respondents mentioned that they were influenced by other people who were advising them to buy a particular car. This meant that,

personal sources do not only provide Jordanian car buyers with information, but also, influence the purchase itself. The behaviour of an individual is, in part, a function of this self-image. How he/she wishes others to see him/her is important to Jordanians. The strong bond between Jordanian car buyers and their social groups might lead them to interfere and influence matters, such as, the car to be bought.

Question 19 asked respondents to indicate the extent of others influence on their purchase decision of whether or not to buy their latest cars.

The following Table provides the responses in order of frequency mention.

Table (7.2)
Level of personal sources influence faced by
Jordanian car buyers

Level	To a very great extent		To a great extent		Un- certain		To some extent		Not at all		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Other's influence on Jordanian car buyers	26	10.0	117	44.0	75	28.3	21	7.9	26	9.8	265	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample.

Table 7.2 shows that the majority, i.e. 54% of respondents have considered other people to have had great influence on

them of whether or not to buy their latest cars.

Stafford J.E. (1966) conducted an exploratory study to examine the effects of group influence on consumer brand preference. The results suggest, firstly, that consumers are influenced by such groups and secondly, that the extent and degree of brand loyalty behaviour within a group is more closely related to the behaviour of the informal leader than to the cohesiveness of the group.

Witt R.E. (1969) studied the influence of small, informal social groups on member brand choice. Two determinants of group influence, cohesiveness and group knowledge of member behaviour, were found to be significantly related to similarity of brand choice within groups.

Filiatrault and Ritchie (1980) conducted a comparative study on the influence structure in family and couple decision-making units. They suggested that, comparisons of perceived influence structure within household decision-making units of differing composition revealed substantial variations in patterns of role dominance and response consensus. Their results also indicated that although children had relatively little perceived influence on the vacation and accommodation selection decisions studied, they may still affect the outcome of particular choices.

In order to investigate if there was a significant difference

between respondents, whose decisions of whether or not to buy their latest cars were influenced by other people and respondents, whose decisions were not influenced, a Mann Whitney test was carried out and the results showed a significant difference at the 0.01 level. ($p = 0.0000$), as the following table shows the significant difference.

Table (7.3)

The significant difference between respondents whose decisions were influenced by other people and those whose decisions were not influenced

Case	Level	n	N	Level of Significance
The influence of personal sources on Jordanian car buyers	H	265	374	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high

** Significant difference at the 0.01 level.

Table 7.3 shows that Jordanian car buyers, whose decisions were influenced by other people, perceived a significantly higher level of personal influence than those whose decisions were not influenced at the 0.01 level.

These results tend to suggest that, personal sources of information are not only important to the Jordanian car buyers, but also they tend to have a great influence on the purchase of a particular car.

Stafford J. E. (1966) concluded the following:

1. Informal groups had a definite influence on their members toward conformity behaviour with respect to brands of bread preferred.
2. Leaders were found to influence fellow group members in two ways. Firstly, the higher the degree of brand loyalty exhibited by a group leader, the more likely were the other members to prefer the same brand. Secondly, the greater the degree of leader brand loyalty, the higher was the percentage of his group also becoming brand loyal. In other words, the extent and degree of brand loyalty within a group was closely related to the behaviour of the informal leader.

Other studies (e.g. Cartwright and Zander, 1968; Shaw, 1976; Witt, 1969; Robertson, 1971; Ellis and Ford, 1980) reported similar results.

However, in order to investigate the sources of social normative influence faced by car buyers in Jordan, respondents were asked question number 20 to indicate who were the sources of influence and, also, how important they were they in influencing the purchase decision of whether or not to buy their latest cars.

The following table shows the responses in order of frequency of mention.

Table (7.4)

Jordanian car buyers and sources of the social normative influence

Sources	Very Important		Important		Un-certain		Quite un-important		Not at all		n	N	Mean
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%			
a. Wife/husband and children	39	14.7	56	21.1	75	28.3	28	10.6	67	25.3	265	411	2.894
b. Parents	34	12.8	77	29.1	73	27.5	35	13.2	46	17.4	265	411	3.068
c. Relatives (e.g. brothers and sisters)	20	7.5	76	28.7	88	33.2	35	13.2	46	17.4	265	411	2.958
d. Close friends	36	13.6	106	40.0	47	17.7	30	11.3	46	17.4	265	411	3.211
e. Colleagues	34	12.8	95	35.8	48	18.2	36	13.6	52	19.6	265	411	3.087
f. Neighbours	19	7.2	52	19.6	60	22.6	58	21.9	76	28.7	265	411	2.547

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

(1) The higher the mean the more important the source of information considered by respondents

Table 7.5 shows the results of a Mann-Whitney test, which was carried out to investigate if respondents, who considered other people to have influenced their purchase decision, have perceived a significantly higher level of social normative influence from different sources than respondents who did not consider other people to have influenced their purchase decision. The results showed a significant difference at the 0.01 level.

Table (7.5)
The influence of personal sources
and Jordanian car buyers

Sources of influence	Level	n	N	Level of significance
a. Wife/husband and children	H	265	374	**
b. Parents	H	265	374	**
c. Relatives (e.g. brothers and sisters)	H	265	374	**
d. Close friends	H	265	374	**
e. Colleagues	H	265	374	**
f. Neighbours	H	265	374	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high

** Significant difference at the 0.01 level

The following will discuss, in turn, the sources of influence faced by Jordanian car buyers.

7.2.1. Wife/husband and children:

As can be seen from Table 6.4, wife/husband and children were considered by respondents to be relatively important in influencing their purchase decision of whether or not to buy their latest cars, as it gains a mean value of 2.894.

Table 7.5 indicates that a Mann-Whitney test was carried out

and the results showed that respondents, who considered other people to have influenced their purchase decision have perceived a significantly higher level of influence from wife/husband and children than those who did not consider other people to have influenced their purchase decision at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

These results tend to suggest that wife/husband and children in Jordan would play a relatively important influence on the purchase of a particular car when the decision is being made. This important influence could be as a result of the close working relationship between the husband, the wife and the children. The influence of the wife on the purchase decision might have come from the fact that the Holy Koran views married life as a holy one and therefore, a wife's opinion must be appreciated. Children's influence on the purchase decision might have come as a result of their lengthy stay with their parents. Jordanian children (particularly sons) still stay with their parents even after getting married and sometimes, they stay until their parents die.

Previous studies (e.g. Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Feber, 1971; Sprey, 1972; Turner, 1970; Filiatrault and Ritchie, 1980) reported similar results.

Filiatrault and Ritchie (1980) wrote:

"The fact that many decisions within the family are joint choice processes has been recognised for some time. This fact is reflected in a continued interest in the

literature on family power structure over the past 20 years." (p131).

7.2.2. Parents:

Parents are considered by respondents as the third most important source of influence faced by Jordanian car buyers. As shown in Table 7.4, parents gained the third highest mean value of 3.068.

Jordanian car buyers who considered other people to have influenced their purchase decision, perceived a significantly higher level of influence from parents than those who did not consider other people to have influenced their purchase decisions at the 0.01 level (see Tabel 7.5) ($p = 0.0000$).

This suggests that parents have a major influence on the purchase of cars in Jordan.

The researcher suggests two reasons for this influence.

1. The Holy Koran forces children even as adults to respect their parents thoughts and wishes. They, therefore tend to appreciate parental advice and opinions and thus, this could have an influence on the purchase of a car.
2. Because of social and cultural backgrounds, sons tend to stay with their parents for a lengthy period of time even after getting married. This close relationship would lead to

a high level of interaction between the parents and children which, as a result, might influence the purchase of a car.

7.2.3. Relatives:

Relatives (e.g. brothers and sisters) are regarded by respondents as the fourth most important source of influence faced by car buyers. As shown in Table 7.4, they had the fourth highest mean value of 2.958.

As Table 7.5 indicates, respondents, who considered other people to have influenced their purchase decision have perceived a significantly higher level of influence from relatives, and a Mann-Whitney test found this difference significant at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

From the researcher's viewpoint, Jordanians tend to prefer living in the same area as their relatives and moreover, endogamous (e.g., cousin marrying a cousin) is very common, therefore, this unique type of relationship could be the explanation for a relative's influence on purchase decisions.

7.2.4. Close friends:

Close friends are regarded by Jordanian car buyers as the first most important source of influence faced by them when they made the purchase decision.

One can see from Table 7.4 that this source of influence has gained the first highest mean value of 3.211.

Respondents who considered other people to have influenced their purchase decision have perceived a significantly higher level of influence from close friends, and a Mann-Whitney test found this difference significant at the 0.01 level (see Table 7.5) ($p = 0.0000$).

The research results indicate that, respondents such as those with whom the respondent is closely associated and wants to keep up with seem to be the most important source of influence. The strong bond between Jordanians and their friends and their awareness of each other's product choices could be the explanation for this source of influence.

7.2.5. Colleagues:

Colleagues are considered by Jordanian car buyers as the second most important source of influence. This source of influence had the second highest mean value of 3.087 (see Table 7.4).

Table 7.5 indicates that a Mann-Whitney test was carried out and the results showed that respondents who considered other people to have influenced their purchase decision have perceived a significantly higher level of influence from colleagues at the 0.01 level (see Table 7.5) ($p = 0.0000$).

The researcher suggests that, this source tends to influence car buyers in Jordan because of the natural mutual desire of work colleagues to keep up with each other.

7.2.6. Neighbours:

Jordanian car buyers regarded neighbours as the least important source of influence, as it gains the lowest mean value of 2.547 (see Table 7.4).

Table 7.5 shows that respondents who considered other people to have influenced their purchase decision have perceived a significantly higher level of influence from neighbours at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

As it was found in Chapter 6, there is a high social participation in (e.g. weddings, birthdays, engagements, etc.) between friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours. This type of participation could explain neighbours' influence on other's purchase decisions.

7.3. The social normative influence and demographic factors:

Respondents were asked questions 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35. These questions were intended to measure the demographic differences between respondents.

In order to gain further understanding of the social normative influence faced by Jordanian car buyers regarding their demographic differences, a cross-tabulation analysis was carried out between question number 18, which intended to measure whether car buyers in Jordan were influenced (social normative influence) by their personal sources of information and the questions 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35.

The results of the cross-tabulation analysis showed that there was no significant relationship between the influence of personal sources (social normative influence) and respondents' demographic differences.

This means that the researcher was unable to determine whether differences in demographic factors affect the importance a person attaches to personal sources of influence.

Summary

From the previous analysis, it can be concluded that Jordanian car buyers are faced with an enormous social normative influence when making their purchase decisions.

Many sources were found to have influenced the purchase decision of the Jordanian car buyers. These sources were: wife/husband and children, parents, relatives (e.g. brothers and sisters), close friends, colleagues, and neighbours.

This influence could be related to, as it was suggested in Chapter 5, Islamic religious backgrounds, because Islam motivates its members to consult each other when making decisions.

No significant relationship was found between the influence of personal sources (social normative influence) and respondents demographic factors.

7.4. Factors taken into consideration by Jordanian car buyers in the social comparison processes:

The aim was to investigate whether or not Jordanian car buyers compare their cars with those of their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours and if they do, what factors are taken into consideration in this comparison.

Stafford J. E. (1966) wrote:

"Reference behaviour itself is a cognitive process in which individuals evaluate their statuses, behaviour, norms, and values by means of referents. The four objects of evaluation - norms, values, statuses, and behaviour - may be grouped into objective (status and behaviour) and subjective (norms and values) categories." (p.69).

Also, he wrote:

"For a phenomenon to be used, the individual must be aware (have knowledge) of its existence, and the degree and kind of knowledge serve as guides to his use of the referent. Through direct and indirect communication, members learn the norms and values of their informal groups and see how

normative structure is expressed in the status arrangements and corresponding behaviour patterns." (p.69)

Witt, R. E. (1969) wrote:

"The observed relationship between group brand choice knowledge and similarity of brand choice is consistent with the logic and literature of the referent-individual influence process. If a group member's brand choice is to be influenced by the brand choices of his fellow group members, the individual must be aware of their brand choices. Also, if the individual is to attribute sanction influence to his group with respect to his brand choice behaviour, he must believe that his brand choice behaviour will be known by the group." (p.475).

However, respondents were asked question number 21, which was intended to investigate whether or not respondents have compared or were willing to compare their cars with other's cars.

The following Table shows the responses in order of frequency of mention.

TABLE (7.6)

Consumers willingness to compare their cars with others cars

Response	n	%
Yes	271	65.9
No	109	26.5
Do not know	31	7.5

411 cases
0 missing values

As Table 7.6 shows the majority (i.e. 65.9%) of respondents compared or were willing to compare their cars with those of their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours.

Jealousy is a strong motivating force in Jordan. For example, it is very usual to see a father or a mother physically punishing their son if they realise that their friend's son, who is in the same class, had higher results in an exam. Therefore, the researcher believes strongly that, car comparison in Jordan is a matter of jealousy. Jordanians would like to have a similar, if not better, car than those owned by their friends and this is why they compare their cars with others' cars.

In order to investigate the similarities, in terms of income, occupation, general opinion, education, and age, between respondents and those whom the respondents compare or were willing to compare their cars with, respondents were asked question number 22.

The following Table shows the responses in order of frequency of mention.

Table (7.7)

Respondents' similarities with others whom
they compared or were willing to
compare their cars with

Level of Similarity Factors	Very similar		Similar		Un- certain		Quite dis- similar		Very dis- similar		n	N	(1) Mean value
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%			
	a.Income	58	21.4	76	28.0	82	30.3	26	9.6	29			
b.Occupation	51	18.8	84	31.0	76	28.0	33	12.2	27	10.0	271	411	3.37
c.General opinion	24	8.9	66	24.3	94	34.7	56	20.7	31	11.4	271	411	2.99
d.Education	46	17.0	78	28.8	70	25.8	53	19.6	24	8.8	271	411	3.25
e.Age	45	16.6	84	31.0	61	22.5	52	19.2	29	10.7	271	411	3.24

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

(1) The higher the mean value, the more the similarity between respondents and others whom they compared their cars with.

Income and occupation were considered by respondents as the most similar factors between them and their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours whom the respondents have compared or were willing to compare their cars with (with a mean value of 3.40 and 3.37 consequently) followed by education and age, with a mean value of (3.25 and 3.24 consequently), and then general opinion with a mean value of 2.99 (see Table 7.7).

Question number 23 asked respondents about the importance of the above mentioned factors when they compared or when they were willing to compare their cars with those of others.

The following Table shows the responses in order of frequency of mention.

Table (7.8)

Importance of respondents similarities with others whom they compared or were willing to compare their cars with

Level of Importance	Very important		Important		Un-certain		Quite un-important		Not at all		n	N	(1) mean value
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%			
a.Income	72	26.6	93	34.3	60	22.1	24	8.9	22	8.1	271	411	3.62
b.Occupation	55	20.3	94	34.7	67	24.7	33	12.2	22	8.1	271	411	3.41
c.General opinion	22	8.1	65	24.0	94	34.7	58	21.4	32	11.8	271	411	2.95
d.Education	37	13.7	81	29.9	72	26.6	49	18.0	32	11.8	271	411	3.15
e.Age	37	13.7	91	33.6	50	18.5	55	20.2	38	14.0	271	411	3.13

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

(1) The higher the mean value, the more important the factor considered by respondents

Each of the factors shown in Table 7.8 is considered in turn later on in this chapter. In order to examine if respondents who compared or were willing to compare their cars with those of others regarded these five factors as having a significantly higher level of importance, than respondents who did not, or were unwilling compare, a Mann-Whitney test was carried out and the results are shown in the following Table.

Table (7.9)

Importance of respondents similarities with others whom the respondents compared their cars with by respondents willingness for this type of comparison

Factors	Level of Importance	n	N	Level of significance
a.Income	H	271	380	**
b.Occupation	H	271	380	**
c.General opinion	H	271	380	**
d.Education	H	271	380	**
e.Age	H	271	380	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high

** Significant difference at the 0.01 level

Before discussing the factors included in table 7.9, the researcher wishes to make the following comment. The way Jordanians choose their friends is rather interesting. For example, the friends of an engineer are engineers, the friends of a pilot are pilots, the friends of a teacher are teachers and the friends of a soldier are soldiers. It is impossible and unusual for anyone to see a Jordanian pilot having a teacher as a friend or an engineer having a soldier as a friend. This type of behaviour might be the reason for the significant differences between those who compared their cars with others' cars and those who did not regarding the factors shown in the above Table.

7.4.1. Income:

Income is considered by Jordanian car buyers as the first most important factor considered by them when they compared their cars with others cars.

As can be seen from Table 7.8, income had the highest mean value of 3.62 and a majority, i.e. 60.9%.

A Mann-Whitney test was carried out and the results showed that Jordanian car buyers, who compared or who were willing to compare their cars with others' cars, regarded income as having a significantly higher level of importance, than those who did not or were unwilling, at the 0.01 level (see Table 7.9) ($p = 0.0000$). Therefore, one can suggest that Jordanian car buyers tend to get engaged in social comparison with friends, relatives, or colleagues and, in particular, those in the same income bracket.

Bott (1968) concluded that individuals tend to compare themselves with friends, relatives, colleagues and neighbours, particularly, those whom they regarded as similar to them in one or more of the following factors: income, occupation, education and opinions or values. Findings reported by (e.g. Moschis, 1976; Gruder, 1977; Goethals and Zanna, 1979; Ellis and Ford, 1980) showed similar results.

7.4.2. Occupation:

As shown in Table 7.8, occupation is considered by Jordanian car buyers as the second most important factor taken into consideration when they compared or when they were willing to compare their cars with others cars, gained the second highest mean value of 3.41 and a majority, i.e. 55%.

A Mann-Whitney test showed that, respondents who compared or were willing to compare their cars with others' cars regarded occupation as having a significantly higher level of importance, than respondents who did not or were unwilling to compare their cars with others cars, at the 0.01 level (see Table 7.9) ($p = 0.0000$).

This has led the researcher to suggest that the purchase decision of the Jordanian car buyers could be influenced by friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours who have the same or similar types of occupation.

Sherif and Sherif (1956) wrote:

"Formally or informally organized groups of any kind are necessarily hierarchical in some respect with their peculiar status and prestige scales. This hierarchical property of group structure is reflected in the particular kind of 'Joneses' to whom people in different group settings are responsive." (p.622).

7.4.3. General opinion:

Table 7.8 shows a low level of importance regarding this factor, as 32.1% considered this factor to be important, while 33.2% did not and 34.7% were uncertain. The mean value for this factor was 2.95.

However, when a Mann-Whitney test was used, the results showed that Jordanian car buyers who compared or who were willing to compare their cars with others' cars regarded general opinion as having a significantly higher level of importance than those who did not or who were unwilling to compare their cars with others cars at the 0.01 level (see Table 7.9) ($p = 0.0000$).

Based on those results, one might suggest that other people's general opinion would be taken into consideration by Jordanian car buyers.

Stafford, J. E. (1966) reported:

"The concept of referents indicates the existence of myriads of potential referents and, yet, the actual number of referents utilized by any one person is necessarily limited. When an individual perceives a potential referent, such as an informal social group, to be the source of positive sanctions (rewards) or negative sanctions (punishment or the withholding of anticipated rewards) which relate to himself, at that moment the informal group becomes an actual referent and is used in the evaluation of norms, values, statuses and behaviour." (p.69).

Thus, hypothesis 7 which indicated that, Jordanian consumers engage in social comparison with those whom they perceive as similar in income, opinions and values was, therefore, accepted.

7.4.4. Education:

From Table 7.8, it could be inferred that education is considered by respondents as the third most important factor when comparing or being willing to compare their cars with others cars, as it gains the third highest mean value of 3.15, and a majority, i.e. 43.5%.

Table 7.9 indicates that a Mann-Whitney test was carried out and the results showed that, respondents who compared or who were willing to compare their cars with other cars regarded education as having a significantly higher level of importance, than those who did not or who were unwilling to compare their cars with others, at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

Based on these results one might conclude that Jordanian car buyers tend to compare their cars with others cars whom they perceive as similar to them in the level of education.

These results seems consistent with results reported by other studies (see, e.g. Stafford J., 1966; Bott, 1968; Gruder, 1977; Ellis and Ford, 1980).

7.4.5. Age:

Also Table 7.8 shows that similarity in age, is considered by Jordanian car buyers as the fourth, most important factor, to be taken into consideration when choosing a referent for a car comparison process, as it gains a mean value of 3.13 and a majority, i.e. 47.3%.

A Mann-Whitney test showed that Jordanian car buyers, who compared or who were willing to compare their cars with others cars regarded age as having a significantly higher level of importance, than those who did not or who were unwilling to compare their cars with others, at the 0.01 level (see Table 7.9) ($p = 0.0000$).

Therefore, similarity in age seems to be an important factor when choosing a person (a referent) for car comparison.

Becker and Carper (1956) suggested that a person is more likely to accept, as a reference group, one group whose values are similar to his.

Jones and Gerard (1967) used the term "co-oriented peer" to denote the person who has norms and values that are similar to the individuals values.

Summary:

Based on the previous analysis, regarding the factors taken into consideration by Jordanian car buyers for the social comparison processes, one could see that the choice of a person (a referent) by car buyers could affect the type of car to be bought. The analysis, also, showed the existence of the influence of small, informal social groups on a member's choice of make of car.

Many factors were found to have been taken into consideration by Jordanian car buyers when selecting a friend, relative, colleague or neighbour whom the car buyer is willing to compare his/her car with. These factors were: income, occupation, general opinion, education and age.

7.5. Conclusion to chapter:

From both a theoretical and empirical point of view, the literature of the behavioural sciences fully supports the idea that certain groups, and particularly certain individuals within the group, influence member behaviour (Stafford J., 1966).

While a great deal of marketing research has been conducted on the various aspects of consumer behaviour in developed countries, there have been only a few studies to determine if such interpersonal interactions do, in fact, influence consumer behaviour in developing countries.

Therefore, Buera, Hassan and Shalaby (1986) wrote:

"The effect of word-of-mouth advertising as a subject area is widely neglected in developing countries and a lot of research is needed to explore it further." (p.131)

This lack of empirical research, led to investigating this matter in this study. Three main issues were looked at, firstly, finding whether this influence exists in Jordan. Secondly, investigating the sources of influence faced by Jordanian car buyers. Thirdly, whether car buyers in Jordan compare their cars with others' cars, and if they do so, what factors are taken into consideration when selecting a person for this comparison.

The research results reported in this chapter showed that Jordanian car buyers were subject to a great deal of social normative influence from their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours.

Jordanian car buyers were found to have received this influence from different sources, such as wife/husband and children, parents, relatives (e.g. brothers and sisters), close friends, colleagues and neighbours.

In order to examine if this social normative influence varies from one respondent to another in accordance with their demographic differences, the cross-tabulation analysis was carried out and the results showed that there was no significant relationship between respondents' demographic differences and the social normative influence. The analysis, also, showed that Jordanian car buyers tend to compare their cars with others cars. Income, occupation, general opinion, education, and age are factors which were taken into consideration by Jordanian car buyers when selecting the person whom he/she compares his/her car with.

The findings reported in Chapter Six and this chapter have important implications for consumer behaviour researchers. They have revealed a number of variables both within and outside management control which can affect consumers' willingness to buy a particular car.

The results, also, seem to confirm existing consumer behaviour theory. For example, Engel Kollat and Blackwell (1982) produced their model of the consumer decision process as a problem solving process, where the consumer feels the need to purchase a product (problem recognition), search for information about the different alternative products that he can buy (search), evaluate these alternatives (alternative evaluation), and then makes his decision (choice).

When the research findings appear to confirm ideas and concepts already existing in the literature, for example, the way Jordanian consumers search for information, when, how and why; their willingness to convey product information to others; the social normative influence on the purchasing decisions; and product comparison with others. Those ideas and concepts in Jordan seem to be similar to those of the developed world.

CHAPTER EIGHT**CAR OPINION LEADERSHIP IN JORDAN****8.1. Introduction:**

Opinion leaders are still, probably, the market place influencers most described in the literature. Current thinking on opinion leadership varies about the key features distinguishing these individuals (Feick L. and Price L., 1987). Some writers emphasise influence as the crucial determinant (e.g. Engel and Blackwell, 1982; Rogers, 1983), others emphasise knowledge (Assael, 1984, p.413), and still others emphasise information transmission (Hawkins, Best and Coney, 1983, p.129). Most authors, however, see a combination of knowledge or expertise and influence as characterising the opinion leader (e.g. Midgley, 1976; Robertson, Zeilinski and Ward, 1984). At least in some product categories, opinion leaders appear to be more knowledgeable about and involved with the product class (Jacoby and Hoyer, 1981).

The implicit assumption, when examining the personal influence of opinion leaders is that they are motivated to talk about the product because of their involvement with it. For example, Bloch and Richins (1983) view opinion leadership as a manifestation of enduring involvement in a product class. Though some writers have criticized this orientation, as undervaluing the communications component and overvaluing the product interest component of opinion leadership (e.g.

Midgley, 1976), product involvement remains the predominant explanation for opinion leaders conversations about products. Consequently, opinion leadership has been viewed as being product class specific. There is evidence to support that interest in a number of products can lead to opinion leadership in more than one product category (Montgomery and Silk, 1971), but research suggests there is no general (i.e. multiple product category) opinion leader (Summers and King, 1969; Langeard, Crousillat and Weisz, 1978; Myers and Robertson, 1972; Silk, 1966).

To investigate the characteristics of information givers and information seekers* when buying cars in Jordan, respondents were asked the questions nos. 8, 9, 24, 25 and 27.

Question number 8, was intended to investigate whether the respondents searched for information or opinions from personal sources (e.g. friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours). The results showed that 74.2% of respondents searched for information from personal sources (see Table 6.2, Chapter 6).

Question number 9, was aimed at measuring the amount of information sought by car buyers from others when they were

*In this study, information givers are those respondents who give information to others, while information seekers are those respondents who ask for information from others.

considering buying their latest cars (see Table 6.3, chapter 6).

Question number 24, was aimed at investigating whether the respondents gave information to their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours when they were considering buying their latest cars.

The following Table summarises the responses.

Table (8.1)

Respondents giving information to others

Response	n	%
Yes	285	69.3
No	84	20.4
Do not know	42	10.2
411 cases		
0 missing values		

Table 8.1 indicates that the majority, i.e. 69.3% of respondents gave information to their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours about their cars before buying. These findings show the intensity of word-of-mouth communication used by Jordanian car buyers and the importance that they place on the purchase of such a product.

Table 8.2 summarises the responses to question number 25, which intended to measure the level of information given by respondents to other people when they were considering buying

their latest cars.

Table (8.2)

Level of information given by respondents to others

Level of giving information	A very large amount		A large amount		Uncertain		A small amount		Not at all		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
People who gave information												
Friends, relatives colleagues or neighbours.	44	15.4	115	40.3	98	34.4	17	6.0	11	3.9	285	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample.

It is clear from Table 8.2 that the majority of respondents have given what they consider to be a great deal of information to their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours when they were considering buying their latest cars. As the same Table shows 55.7% stated that they did this.

8.2. Characteristics of information givers and seekers in Jordan:

Before proceeding to identify the characteristics of information givers (among respondents), it should be noted that in order to identify information givers, a comparison between information givers and seekers must be made with respect to the validity of opinion leaders' characteristics.

For such comparison "between respondents in the two categories", information givers and seekers must be defined* and determined distinctly.

To identify information givers (among respondents) according to special characteristics, it was mentioned earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 3, that a search of the relevant literature suggested that, in general, opinion leaders have special characteristics. Compared to non-leaders or "followers", opinion leaders are seen to have greater exposure to mass media and greater social participation. They are also regarded as more innovative or early adopters or buyers of new products, more influential, more experienced, having higher self-confidence, and take more interest or tend to know more about the area of interest than non-leaders.

However, it has been suggested that no differences exist between opinion leaders and non-leaders with respect to certain demographic traits (see, e.g., Midgley, 1977; Foxall, 1981; Engel and Blackwell, 1982).

*See the definition of information givers and seekers on page 331.

Table (8.3)

Q27 "To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements"*

Level of agreement	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Quite disagree		Strongly disagree		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
a. I always listen to radio and watch TV programmes.	85	20.7	128	31.1	114	27.7	44	10.7	40	9.7	411	411
b. I always read newspapers and magazines.	88	21.4	108	26.3	108	26.3	71	17.3	36	8.8	411	411
c. I always attend or participate in social events (e.g. engagements, weddings, and birthdays) my friends, relatives or neighbours had.	70	17.0	140	34.1	116	28.2	55	13.4	30	7.3	411	411
d. I always attend/participate in national ceremonies (e.g. Jordan's Independence Day).	69	16.8	106	25.8	120	29.2	70	17.0	46	11.2	411	411
e. I would like to belong to a social club (e.g. The Muslim youth club).	41	10.0	65	15.8	93	22.6	80	19.5	132	32.1	411	411
f. I like to buy the latest model of my car it comes out.	50	12.2	77	18.7	79	19.2	85	20.7	120	29.2	411	411
g. I always plan to replace my car with a new one.	48	11.7	95	23.1	103	25.1	81	19.7	84	20.4	411	411

Table (8.3) continued:

h. I normally influence my friend's, relative's or neighbour's decision when they buy a car.	31	7.5	109	26.5	123	29.9	76	18.5	72	17.5	411	411
i. My friends, relatives or neighbours always take my advice into consideration when buying their cars.	35	8.5	110	26.8	137	33.3	71	17.3	58	14.1	411	411
j. I have a great deal of experience in selling and purchasing cars.	41	10.0	74	18.0	113	27.5	93	22.6	90	21.9	411	411
k. I have a great deal of experience in repairing cars.	46	11.2	66	16.1	105	25.5	88	21.4	106	25.8	411	411
l. I am always confident about my abilities when buying cars.	97	23.6	145	35.3	107	26.0	44	10.7	18	4.4	411	411
m. I am always confident about myself in terms of judging cars.	61	14.8	126	30.7	130	31.6	67	16.3	27	6.6	411	411
n. I always like to join in discussions about cars.	73	17.8	133	32.4	117	28.5	63	15.3	25	6.1	411	411
o. I always like to gather information and know about the latest car models/makes.	113	27.5	117	28.5	77	18.7	64	15.6	40	9.7	411	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

*The statements will be discussed in turn later on in this chapter.

Thus, the aim in this chapter is:

1. To test to what extent information givers have opinion leaders' characteristics.
2. To examine whether the concept of car opinion leadership exists in Jordan, and if car opinion leaders differ from non-leaders (followers) regarding certain characteristics (mentioned earlier).
3. To test the validity of the Two-step flow model of communication.
4. Identifying the demographic differences between opinion leaders and followers (opinion seekers).

Question 27 asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements included in the question. Five points being given to respondents from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Table 8.3 reveals the findings in order of frequency of mention. These findings will be used, in turn, when investigating if there are any differences between information givers and seekers regarding opinion leaders' characteristics.

To examine whether information givers have the characteristics of opinion leaders (i.e. have greater exposure to mass media, greater social participation, more innovative or early adopters or buyers of new products, more influential, more experienced, having higher self-confidence, and take more interest or tend to know more about the area of

interest) than information seekers, a cross-tabulation analysis was carried out between question number 8 and question number 24. This was done to identify information givers and seekers.

The following Table shows the results:

Table (8.4)

Q8 (respondents who searched for information from others
by
Q24 (respondents who gave information to others)

Give information?		Yes	No	Do not know	Total
Search for information?					
Yes	No. %	247 81.0	52 17.0	6 2.0	305 74.2
No	No. %	32 45.7	22 31.4	16 22.9	70 17.0
Do not know	No. %	6 16.7	10 72.8	20 55.6	36 8.8
Total	No. %	285 69.3	84 20.4	42 10.2	411 100.0

411 cases
0 missing cases

As can be seen from Table 8.4, respondents fall into the following categories.

1. Respondents who give and seek information from others (247 respondents).
2. Respondents who only seek information from others (52 respondents).
3. Respondents who only give information to others (32 respondents).
4. Respondents who neither give nor seek information from others (22 respondents).

A T-test was carried out between information givers and seekers to see if there are significant differences exist between them against opinion leaders' characteristics.*

Table 8.5 shows the results.

*These characteristics are mentioned earlier.

Table (8.5)

Information givers by opinion leaders' characteristics

Characteristics	Level	n	N	T-value	df	Level of Significance
1. Exposure to mass media	L	32	84	1.21	82	--
2. Social participation	L	32	84	.24	82	--
3. Early adopters or buyers of new products	H	32	84	2.54	82	*
4. Level of influence on others	H	32	84	5.00	82	**
5. Experience	H	32	84	3.21	82	**
6. Self confidence	H	32	84	2.26	82	*
7. Interest in the product	L	32	84	.72	82	--

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high, L = low

-- no significant difference was found

* significant difference at the 0.05 level

** significant difference at the 0.01 level.

8.2.1. Exposure to mass media:

The statements, i.e. 27a and 27b were designed to investigate respondents' exposure to mass media within the Jordanian context.

As can be seen from Table 8.3 the majority (i.e. 51.8% and

47.7%) of respondents agreed on the statements 27a and 27b consequently.

In order to decide whether to examine exposure to mass media using those scales individually or combined together, a reliability analysis between them was carried out and the results suggested the use of the response to the scales (i.e. Q27a and Q27b) combined together. This gave a Cronbach Alpha of 0.74, well within the limit of 0.5 suggested by Peter J. (1979).

Table 8.5 shows that a T-test was used to examine if there is a significant difference between information givers and seekers regarding their exposure to mass media. The results showed no significant difference was found.

Hypothesis 8 stated that information givers are more exposed than seekers to the mass media in Jordan was, therefore, rejected.

The insignificant difference between car information givers and seekers might be related to the general lack of car information in Jordan. This lack of information might have prevented information givers to make greater use of it than information seekers. In the West, for example, product information is available at a large scale and, therefore, information givers in this part of the World, have a better chance to read and hear about any product than Jordanian car

information givers.

This finding differs with the results of (e.g. Summers, 1970; Martilla, 1971; Baumgarten, 1975; Corey, 1971) which suggested that the extent to which opinion leaders read in the media related to their topic, will be significantly greater than among non-leaders.

Midgley (1977) stated:

"It is safe to suggest that a standardized set of characteristics for an opinion leader does not exist across different product categories, any more than it exists across major and minor innovations."
(p.100)

8.2.2. Social participation:

Three statements (i.e. 27c, 27d and 27e) were used to examine respondents' social participation.

As Table 8.3 shows, the majority (i.e. 51.1% and 42.6%) of respondents agreed with the statements 27c and 27d, while there is skew to the left (disagreement) on the 27e statement with 51.6% of respondents being below the mid point.

Reliability analysis between the statements (27c, 27d and 27e) gave a Cronbach Alpha of 0.56 which suggested the use of the response to the scales combined together.

A T-test was carried out to examine if there is a significant difference exists between information givers and seekers regarding their social participation. The results revealed in Table 8.5 indicates that no significant difference was found.

The lack of significant difference between car information givers and seekers could be related to the fact that, almost all Jordanians tend to have high social participation. For example, regular visits to friends and relatives and participation in weddings and birthdays are very common in Jordan. Probably, this is why this study could not detect any difference between the two groups.

This finding seem to oppose results of other studies. For example, Rogers (1962) stressed that, in order for opinion leaders to spread messages about an innovation, they must have interpersonal networks with their followers. Opinion leaders must be accessible. One indication of such accessibility is social participation as face-to-face communication about new ideas occurs at meetings of formal organisations and through informal discussions.

8.2.3. Early adopters or buying new products:

Two statements (i.e. 27f and 27g) were designed to examine if respondents are early adopters or tend to buy the product when it is new to the Jordanian market.

Table 8.3 shows that respondents' responses had skewed distribution to the left (disagreement) for the two statements with 49.9% and 40.1% of respondents being below the mid point for the statements 27f and 27g consequently.

The reliability analysis between them was carried out and the results suggest the use of the response to the scales combined together (Cronbach Alpha = 0.66).

Table 8.5 shows that a T-test was used to examine if information givers have perceived themselves to have a significantly higher level of adopting or buying new cars than information seekers at the 0.05 level. Therefore, information givers in Jordan tend to be early purchasers of cars than information seekers.

The early adoption of new cars might be related to their willingness to enhance their self-image and reputation. For example, Jordanians, usually, perceive those who buy new products as rich, confident and have high social class.

These results are consistent with those in the literature. For example, Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) suggested that innovativeness is related to the degree to which an individual is relatively earlier in adopting an innovation than other members of the system. They added that, the relatively earlier, means earlier in terms of actual time of adoption, rather than whether the individual perceived he

adopted the innovation relatively earlier than others in his system.

Feick L. and Price L. (1987) reported similar results, they introduced the concept of the market "Maven" to describe the diffuser of marketplace information and they defined the market Mavens as:

"Individuals who have information about many kinds of products, places to shop, and other facets of markets, and initiate discussions with consumers and respond to requests from consumers for market information." (p.85).

They, also, added:

"Research has demonstrated an overlap of early adoption and opinion leadership (Baumgarten, 1975; Feldman and Armstrong, 1975; Summers, 1970, 1971). Similarly, market Mavens also can be opinion leaders or early purchasers of particular products. Market Mavens' general market place expertise should lead them to earlier awareness of new products (hence, an increased likelihood of early adoption)." (p.85)

8.2.4. Information givers influence on others purchase decision of cars:

Two statements (i.e. 27h and 27i) were used to investigate respondents' influence on others purchase decision of cars in Jordan.

The distribution of the five point scale used to test this

characteristic is shown in Table 8.3 and it can be seen that the response to the two statements had a flattened distribution slightly skewed to the left (disagreement) for statement 27h, with 36.0% of respondents being below the mid point, and slightly skewed to the right (agreement) for statement 27i, with 35.3% of respondents being above the mid point.

The reliability analysis between the two scales (27h and 27i) was made and the results gave a Cronbach Alpha of 0.81.

A T-test was used and as can be seen from Table 8.5, the results show a significant difference between information givers and information seekers regarding their level of influence on others purchase decision of cars at the 0.01 level. Hence, information givers in Jordan tend to have greater influence on others' purchase decision of cars than information seekers. This influence might have come as a result of the experience that those information givers have. Moreover, information seekers, usually, want to learn a good deal about the concerned car and obtain other people's education.

These results are in agreement with those reported by other researchers (see, e.g. Engel and Blackwell, 1982; Rogers, 1983; Feick and Price, 1987).

Feick L. and Price L. (1987) stated:

"Early purchasers can exert either a passive or active influence on later purchasers. For visible products such as automobiles, much information can be transmitted simply by product use. ...In summary, research suggests opinion leaders and early adopters influence other consumers because of their product-specific knowledge or expertise." (p.84).

8.2.5. Experience:

The statements (i.e. 27j and 27k) were designed to examine respondents' experience of selling, buying, and repairing cars.

From Table 8.3 one can see that the respondents responses had a distribution slightly skewed to the left (disagreement) with 44.5% and 47.2% of respondents being below the mid point for the statements 27j and 27k consequently.

The reliability analysis between the two statements resulted in a Cronbach Alpha of 0.84, which suggests the use of the response to the two scales combined together.

As Table 8.5 indicates, a T-test was carried out and the results showed that information givers have had a significantly higher level of experience on cars than information seekers at the 0.01 level. Thus, information givers in Jordan are more likely to have higher level of experience in selling, buying and repairing cars than information seekers.

Other researchers (e.g. Jacoby and Hoyer, 1981; Assael, 1984; Feick and Price, 1987) have reported similar results.

For example, Feick and Price (1987) wrote:

"In the case of the opinion leaders, knowledge or expertise has been viewed as arising from involvement with a product or product class. In the case of the early adopter, this expertise arises from product usage or purchase experience. Hence, in explaining the informational superiority of opinion leaders and early adopters, researchers have emphasized their involvement and experiences with specific products." (p.84)

8.2.6. Self confidence:

Two statements (i.e. 27l and 27m), were designed to examine respondents' confidence when buying cars.

The results revealed in Table 8.3 showed that the majority (i.e. 58.9% and 45.5%) of respondents agreed with statements 27l and 27m consequently. When the reliability analysis was conducted between the two statements (27l and 27m), the results gave a Cronbach Alpha of 0.69.

Again, a T-test was used and the results showed that information givers have had a significantly higher level of self confidence when buying cars than information seekers at the 0.05 level (see Table 8.5).

Hence, the results suggested that information givers in

Jordan tend to have a greater self confidence than information seekers. This high self-confidence among car information givers might have come as a result of the high level of the experience they had and their regular adoption of new cars.

These findings are consistent with existing literature. For example Tigert (mentioned in Robertson D.T., 1971) drawn an overall opinion leader profile as follows: "...she tends to be a self confident, information seeker, with a strong interest in the community and in new brands" (pp.165-168).

Fletcher (1986) stated:

"As opinion leaders have a greater interest in the product class they should also have higher knowledge and possibly experience, and this should result in opinion leaders having higher specific self confidence also." (p.215)

8.2.7. Level of interest in the product area:

The statements (i.e. 27n and 27o) were used to examine respondents' interest in cars.

Table 8.3 shows that the majority (i.e. 50.2% and 56.0%) of respondents agreed on the statements 27n and 27o consequently.

Again, the reliability analysis between the two statements 27n and 27o was carried out and the results gave a Cronbach

Alpha of 0.74, which suggested the use of the response to the two sales combined.

As can be seen from Table 8.5, a T-test was used to examine if a significant difference exists between information givers and seekers regarding their level of interest in cars. The results showed no significant difference was found.

The lack of a significant difference between information givers and seekers could be referred to the fact that, all Jordanian car buyers (whether information givers or seekers) have similar interest and pay similar attention to their cars. Probably, this is why this study could not detect any difference between them.

These findings seem to oppose results of other studies (e.g. Baumgarten, 1975; Feldman and Armstrong, 1975; Summers, 1970, 1971; Engel, Blackwell and Miniard, 1986).

For example, Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1986) stated:

"Opinion leaders are innovative and positive toward new products, tend to be more socially active, fashion conscious, independent and they are more interested in the topic under discussion than others are." (p.316).

Summary

The above analysis was concerned with examining if car

information givers, in Jordan, differ from information seekers regarding certain characteristics of opinion leaders.

These characteristics are: exposure to mass media, social participation, adopting or buying new products (innovativeness), influence on others' purchase decision, experience on cars, self confidence when buying cars, and level of interest in the product area (cars).

The results showed that information givers were more innovative or early adopters (or buyers of new cars), more influential, more experienced on cars, and have higher level of self confidence when buying cars than information seekers. However, no significant difference was found between information givers and seekers in terms of their level of exposure to mass media, level of social participation, and their level of interest in the product area (cars).

Therefore, one could conclude that information givers in Jordan tend to have some characteristics of opinion leaders such as innovativeness, influence on others' purchase decision, experience in the product area, and high self confidence when buying such a product.

8.3. Opinion leadership:

Having discussed the characteristics of information givers and seekers, it was necessary to investigate if opinion

leadership, regarding cars, exists in the Jordanian context. Before doing so, it should be noted that the following new variables were computed after the reliability analysis was carried out.*

$$\begin{aligned} Q27_{x1} &= Q27a + Q27b / 2 \\ Q27_{x2} &= Q27c + Q27d + Q27e / 3 \\ Q27_{x3} &= Q27f + Q27g / 2 \\ Q27_{x4} &= Q27h + Q27i / 2 \\ Q27_{x5} &= Q27j + Q27k / 2 \\ Q27_{x6} &= Q27l + Q27m / 2 \\ Q27_{x7} &= Q27n + Q27o / 2 \end{aligned}$$

These new variables are as follows:

$Q27_{x1}$ = Respondents' exposure to mass media.

$Q27_{x2}$ = Respondents' social participation.

$Q27_{x3}$ = Respondents' purchase of a new car when it is new to the Jordanian market (innovativeness).

$Q27_{x4}$ = Respondents' influence on others purchase decision of cars.

$Q27_{x5}$ = Respondents' experience on cars.

$Q27_{x6}$ = Respondents' confidence when buying cars.

$Q27_{x7}$ = Respondents' interest in cars.

The existing literature on opinion leadership indicates that opinion leaders tend to have greater exposure to mass media,

*See previous section.

greater social participation, tend to be early adopters or purchasers of new products (more innovative), more influential, more experienced in the product area, have higher level of self confidence when buying such a product, and have greater interest in the product area than non-leaders (followers).

Therefore, it could be argued that respondents who score very highly on these seven social characteristics (i.e. $Q27_{x1}, \dots, Q27_{x7}$) are more likely to be opinion leaders than followers and vice-versa.

In order to isolate from the sample those who scored highly on these seven social characteristics and those who did not, the aggregate score was taken by a simple mathematical process (i.e. $Q27_{x1} + Q27_{x2} + \dots + Q27_{x7}$). If the distribution of the sample on the aggregate score is normally distributed, then opinion leaders could be classified as respondents scoring \geq the mean value + standard deviation, and followers as respondents scoring \leq the mean value - standard deviation.

However, the following results describe the distribution of the sample on the aggregation of ($Q27_{x1} + Q27_{x2} + \dots + Q27_{x7}$).

Mean = 21.70

Standard deviation = 5.21

Kurtosis = $-.74$

Skewness = $-.07$

Valid observations = 411

As can be seen from the above results, the sample skewness and the kurtosis are small ($-.07$) and $-.74$, consequently), which means that the sample approximates well to a normal distribution.

Thus, opinion leaders and followers were classified on the basis of two logical conditions. These conditions are:

a. if the score for some respondents on the aggregate of $(Q_{27x1} + Q_{27x2} + \dots + Q_{27x7}) \geq m + \sigma$, then those respondents could be classified as opinion leaders.

b. if the score for other respondents on the aggregate of $(Q_{27x1} + Q_{27x2} + \dots + Q_{27x7}) \leq m - \sigma$, then those respondents could be classified as non-leaders (followers).

Based on the analysis, the following Table shows the number of respondents who were classified as opinion leaders and those who were classified as non-leaders (followers).

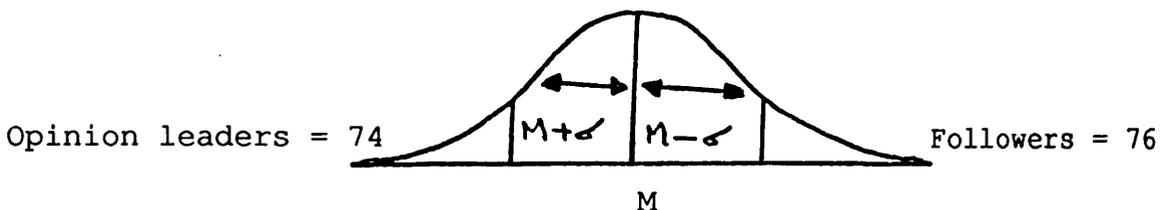
Table (8.6)

Number of respondents who classified as opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers)

Cases	n	%
- Respondents who classified as opinion leaders	74	18.0
- Respondents who classified as followers	76	18.0

n = number of valid observations
411 cases included in the sample

Also, the following figure explains the distribution of the sample on the aggregate score of $(Q27_{x1} + Q27_{x2} + \dots + Q27_{x7})$ and shows those who were classified as opinion leaders and those who were classified as non-leaders (followers).

Figure 8.1

These transformations created a new variable which distinguished between those who are and are not likely to be opinion leaders. It should be noted that this variable is based upon the assumptions that car opinion leaders in Jordan tend to have greater exposure to mass media, greater social participation, are adopters or buyers of new cars, more

influential, more experienced in cars, have higher self confidence, and take more interest or tend to know more about cars than non-leaders (followers).

8.3.1. Opinion leaders and the two-step flow model:

The concept of opinion leadership has emerged, based on the idea that a group of individuals termed "opinion leaders" or "influentials", in a community, form an additional stage in the communication process, whereby information flows from the formal media through these opinion leaders to the general public (Cunningham, 1965). This concept is part of a model known as the Two-Step Flow of Communication was originally identified by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955). This model hypothesised that mass media does not influence an audience directly, but works through a network of interpersonal communication.

Turnbull and Meenaghan (1981) studied the two-step flow model and stated that this model suggests, that information is fed by change agents to opinion leaders, who act on the more passive audience segments to influence their behaviour. This model was criticised by many writers and researchers*. For example, Summers (1970) and Reynolds and Darden (1971) reported that opinion leaders tend to be information seekers.

*See previous section.

The aim in this section is to investigate the accuracy of the two-step flow model of communication within the Jordanian context. This will be done by examining whether opinion leaders in Jordan only give car information to others or whether they give and seek information from others and not from impersonal sources. In order to do this, opinion leaders and followers were cross-tabulated with respondents' categories (i.e. seekers-givers, givers, seekers, and those who neither give nor seek information from others) shown in Table 8.4. The following Table shows the results.

Table (8.7)

Opinion leaders and followers by respondents' categories

Category	Op. Leaders		Z Value	Followers		Z Value	Level of Significance
	Observed Cases	Expected		Observed Cases	Expected		
1-Givers-seekers	56	43	2.0	29	42	-2.0	*
2-Seekers only	1	9	-2.7	17	9	2.7	**
3-Givers only	4	7	-1.0	9	6	1.0	—
4-Neither givers nor seekers	3	5	-.9	7	5	.9	—
Total	64	64		62	62		

*significant difference at the 0.05 level ($p = 0.0456$)

**significant difference at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.007$)

--No significant difference was found

126 valid observations

411 cases included in the sample.

The Z value is an expression of the magnitude of the difference between the observed and expected values. The larger the absolute Z value, the greater the difference. For Z value $\geq + 1.7$, we can be 90% confident a genuine difference occurs.

From Table 8.7, one can draw the following important conclusions:

1. Seekers-givers:

The first category (seekers-givers) shows that the expected cases for opinion leaders are 43 and the observed cases are 56. This means that there are more opinion leaders classified as information seekers and givers than expected.

The expected cases for followers are 42 and the observed cases are 29, which means that there are less followers who

classified as information seekers and givers than expected.

Since the Z value for opinion leaders = 2.0 and $p = 0.0456$, it could be said that opinion leaders are more likely to be information seekers and givers than followers at the 95% level of confidence.

Thus, the null hypothesis, which says that the chances for opinion leaders or followers being a seeker-giver are the same, is rejected.

2. Seekers:

From the second category (seekers), it can be seen that the expected cases for opinion leaders as information seekers are 9 while the observed cases are only 1. Thus, there are less opinion leaders classified as information seekers than expected. The expected cases for followers are 9 and the observed cases are 17. Therefore, there are more followers classified as seekers than expected.

Since the z value for followers is 2.7 and $p = 0.007$, it can be said that followers are more likely to be information seekers than opinion leaders at the 99% level of confidence. The null hypothesis which says that the chances for opinion leaders or followers being information seekers are the same, is rejected.

Based on the cross-tabulation analysis, it could be concluded that car opinion leaders in Jordan tend to be information givers as well as information seekers, while followers tend to be information seekers. This is interesting because it shows opinion leaders value the acquisition of information from personal sources, just as much as they like to give information.

The research finding which suggested that car opinion leaders in Jordan tend to be information seekers as well as information givers was strengthened, when a Mann-Whitney test was carried out between opinion leaders and followers to examine the amount of information sought (1) by them from others and the amount of information given (2) by them to others.

Table 8.8 shows the results.

(1) Question number 9 asked respondents to indicate the amount of information sought by them from others, using five point scale.

(2) Question number 25 asked respondents to indicate the amount of information given by them to others, using five point scale.

Table (8.8)
Opinion leaders and two way of communication
(receiving and giving information to others)

Cases	Level	n	N	Level of Significance
Amount of information sought by opinion leaders from friends, relatives, colleagues, or neighbours	H	74	150	**
Amount of information given by opinion leaders to friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours	H	74	150	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high

** Significant difference at the 0.01 level

As can be seen from Table 8.8, there was a significant difference between opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers), regarding the amount of information sought by them from friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0009$). Opinion leaders, as the above Table shows, searched for a significantly larger amount of information, from others, than non-leaders (followers). Table 8.8, also shows that a significant difference exists between opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers) regarding the amount of information given by them to friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$). As shown, opinion leaders were found to have given a significantly larger amount of information to others than non-leaders (followers) at the 99% level of significance.

The research resulted suggest that car opinion leaders in Jordan will not only seek and give information to others, but will also search for a larger amount of information than non-leaders (followers). These result also show the inaccuracy of the two-step flow model, which suggests that information flows in two steps from mass media to opinion leaders and from them to the general public.

The simplicity of the two-step flow model is inappropriate for consumers in Jordan. People with the social characteristics of opinion leaders do not only receive information from the media and then pass on this information to others. In the Jordanian context, the concept of opinion leader applies to people who are engaged in the process of seeking and giving information from and to personal sources to a greater degree than others who do not have the same social characteristics. The Jordanian car opinion leader is, therefore, someone who communicates to a greater degree with other members of society. He is not just a provider of respected information as the two-step model suggests.

Other studies (e.g. Reynolds and Darden, 1971; Engel, Blackwell and Kegerreis, 1970; Wicking, 1976; Hamilton, 1976; Engel and Blackwell, 1982) reported similar results.

Engel and Blackwell (1982) concluded:

"Although the two-step flow was a historic breakthrough in understanding communi-

cations, it is no longer an accurate and complete model of the process. For one thing it views the audience as passive receivers of information." (p.365)

8.3.2. Opinion leaders and demographic characteristics:

Authors and researchers could not agree on the demographic characteristics of opinion leaders. Some views described opinion leaders as being younger, better educated, have higher incomes and better occupations. Others reported that there is no significant differences between opinion leaders and non-leaders regarding demographic characteristics except for higher incomes and occupational levels.

Summers (1970) found significant demographic differences existed between opinion leaders and non-leaders. Opinion leaders were found to be younger, better educated, had a higher level of income and higher occupational levels.

Faulkenberry and Masson (1978) found that opinion leader groups had higher knowledge, better educated, and they were aware of the possibility of using wind power as a source of electricity compared to non-opinion leaders groups.

Fenton and Leggett (1971) reported that opinion leaders had a higher level of aspiration, and belonged to a higher socio-economic group, better educated, and they were more oriented towards achievements than non-leaders.

Chisnall (1975) took the opposite view when he reported that opinion leaders seem to be demographically undistinguished from their associates, except for higher levels of income and better occupational levels.

Corey (1971) found no significant differences between opinion leaders and non-leaders regarding age, education and marital status, but Corey found significant differences existed between them regarding social status, income and occupation.

Therefore, the aim here is to find out if significant differences regarding demographic characteristics exist between those with the social characteristics of opinion leaders and those without the social characteristics of opinion leaders in Jordan.

8.3.3. Education and opinion leadership:

In order to investigate whether opinion leadership in Jordan is related to education, a cross-tabulation analysis was carried out between opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers), and question number 31 which was intended to find out the level of education for respondents.

The following Table shows the results.

Table (8.9)

Opinion leaders and followers by levels of education

Levels of Education	Op. Leaders			Followers			Level of Significance
	Observed Cases	Expected	Z Value	Observed Cases	Expected	Z Value	
1. Below secondary school.	22	17	1.3	12	17	-1.3	—
2. Secondary school and any other training courses.	7	11	-1.2	15	11	1.2	—
3. Diploma (college degree).	20	19	0.3	18	19	-0.3	—
4. University degree (BSc or BA).	11	18	-1.7	25	18	1.7	+
5. Post graduate degree.	14	10	1.3	6	10	-1.3	—
Total	74	75		76	75		

+ Significant difference at the 0.10 level ($p=0.0892$)

-- No significant difference was found

150 valid observations

411 cases included in the sample

The Z value is an expression of the magnitude of the difference between the observed and expected values. The larger the absolute Z value, the greater the difference. For Z value $\geq + 1.7$, we can be 90% confident a genuine difference occurs.

As Table 8.9 shows, the number of expected cases for opinion leaders who had a University degree (BSc or BA) are 18 and the observed cases are 11, which means that there are less opinion leaders who had a University degree than expected. The Table also shows, that the expected cases for followers who had a University degree (BSc or BA) are 18 and the observed cases are 25.

The z value for followers = 1.7 and $p = 0.0892$, therefore, one can conclude that followers are more likely to have higher education (BSc or BA) than opinion leaders in Jordan at the 90% level.

Hypothesis number 10 which stated that car opinion leadership is related to the level of education in Jordan was, therefore, rejected.

These results tend to support the earlier findings in this chapter, which suggested that information givers in Jordan are more likely to have higher level of experience on cars than information seekers.

8.3.4. Age groups and opinion leadership:

In order to examine if significant differences exist between car opinion leaders and non-leaders with regard to age groups, the cross tabulation analysis was carried out between them, and question number 32.

The analysis showed no significant differences exist between car opinion leaders and non-leaders with regard to age groups. Therefore, the researcher was unable to conclude whether car opinion leaders in Jordan would be younger or older than non-leaders.

The following Table shows the results.

Table (8.10)

Opinion leaders and non-leaders by age groups

Age groups	Op. Leaders		Z Value	Followers		Z Value	Level of Significance
	Observed Cases	Expected		Observed Cases	Expected		
1. 20-29	22	23	-.2	25	24	.2	—
2. 30-39	23	24	-.1	25	24	.1	—
3. 40-49	15	15	.1	15	15	-.1	—
4. 50-59	8	8	-.1	9	9	.1	—
5. 60+	6	4	1.0	2	4	-1.0	—
Total	74	74		76	76		

-- No significant difference was found

150 valid observations

411 cases included in the sample

The Z value is an expression of the magnitude of the difference between the observed and expected values. The larger the absolute Z value, the greater the difference. For Z value $\geq + 1.7$, we can be 90% confident a genuine difference occurs.

8.3.5. Levels of monthly income and opinion leadership:

When opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers) were cross-tabulated with question number 33 which intended to measure respondents' levels of monthly income, the results showed a significant difference exist between them, as Table 8.11 shows significant difference.

Table (8.11)

Opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers) by
levels of monthly income

Age groups	Op. Leaders			Followers			Level of Significance
	Observed Cases	Expected	Z Value	Observed Cases	Expected	Z Value	
1. JD ⁽¹⁾ 100 or below	10	13	-.9	17	14	.9	—
2. 101-150	14	20	-1.3	26	20	1.3	—
3. 151-200	11	12	-.2	13	11	.2	—
4. 201-250	13	10	.8	8	12	-.8	—
5. 251+	26	19	1.7	12	19	-1.7	+
Total	74	74		76	76		

+ Significant difference at the 0.05 level ($p = 0.0892$)

-- No significant difference was found

(1) JD = Jordanian dinar = 3 US dollars in 1987.

150 valid observations

411 cases included in the sample

The Z value is an expression of the magnitude of the difference between the observed and expected values. The larger the absolute Z value, the greater the difference. For Z value $\geq + 1.7$, we can be 90% confident a genuine difference occurs.

Table 8.11 that the expected cases for opinion leaders, who had levels of monthly income of JD 251 and over, are 19 and the observed cases are 26.

Also, the same Table shows that the expected cases for non-leaders (followers) who had levels of monthly income of JD 251 and over, are 19 and the observed cases are 12.

The z value for opinion leaders = 1.7 and $p = 0.0892$, therefore, it could be said that car opinion leaders in

Jordan are more likely to have higher levels of monthly income than non-leaders (followers) at the 90% level. This could be related to the fact that, people with high levels of income are more likely to have cars and, therefore, have more experience of them to pass on.

8.3.6. Sex and opinion leadership:

When opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers) were cross-tabulated with question 34 which was intended to find out the respondents' sex, the results showed no significant differences existed between them regarding this matter.

The following Table shows the results.

Table (8.12)
Opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers) by sex

Sex	<u>Op. Leaders</u>			<u>Followers</u>			Level of Significance
	Observed Cases	Expected	Z Value	Observed Cases	Expected	Z Value	
1. Male	64	60	.5	58	62	-.5	--
2. Female	10	14	-1.0	18	14	1.0	--
Total	74	74		76	76		

--No significant difference was found

150 valid observations

411 cases included in the sample

The Z value is an expression of the magnitude of the difference between the observed and expected values. The larger the absolute Z value, the greater the difference. For Z value $\geq + 1.7$, we can be 90% confident a genuine difference occurs.

Therefore, it could be concluded that car opinion leadership

in Jordan does not relate to sex. Moreover, the number of male opinion leaders was larger than female opinion leaders because male car owners have dominated the sample (i.e. 345 male respondents out of 411). This could be the reason for the lack of a significant difference between both sexes regarding this matter.

Thus, hypothesis number 9 which indicated that car opinion leadership is related to sex in Jordan was, therefore, rejected.

8.3.7. Occupation categories and opinion leadership:

As explained in Chapter Four, respondents' occupations were classified into six categories, and when a cross-tabulation was carried out between opinion leaders and non-leaders, and the six categories, the analysis gave the following results as shown in Table 8.13.

Table (8.13)

Opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers) by
occupation categories

Occupation categories	<u>Op. Leaders</u>		Z Value	<u>Followers</u>		Z Value	Level of Significance
	Observed Cases	Expected		Observed Cases	Expected		
1. Professional, technical and related jobs.	20	19	0.2	19	20	-0.2	--
2. Administrative, managerial and related jobs.	11	8	1.1	5	8	-1.1	--
3. Clerical and related jobs.	4	10	-2.0	17	11	1.9	*
4. Trading, business and related jobs.	15	10	1.7	5	10	-1.7	+
5. Services, teaching and related jobs.	13	13	0.0	13	13	-0.0	--
6. Transport, labour and related jobs.	11	14	-0.8	17	14	0.7	--
Total	74	74		76	76		

* Significant difference at the 0.05 level ($p = 0.0574$)

+ Significant difference at the 0.10 level ($p = 0.0892$)

-- No significant difference was found

150 valid observations

411 cases included in the sample

The Z value is an expression of the magnitude of the difference between the observed and expected values. The larger the absolute Z value, the greater the difference. For Z value $\geq + 1.7$, we can be 90% confident a genuine difference occurs.

From Table 8.13, the following conclusion could be drawn:

1. Clerical and related jobs:

From the third category (clerical and related jobs), one can see that the expected cases for opinion leaders are 10 and the observed cases are 4, which means that there are less opinion leaders who had clerical jobs than expected. The expected cases for followers are 11 and the observed cases are 17, which means that there are more followers who had clerical jobs than expected.

The z value for followers = 1.9 and $p = 0.0574$, therefore, it could be concluded that followers are more likely to have clerical and related jobs than opinion leaders at the 95% level.

2. Trading, business and related jobs:

From the fourth category (trading, business and related jobs), it can be seen that the expected cases for opinion leaders are 10 and the observed cases are 15, which means that there are more opinion leaders who had trading, business and related jobs than expected. The same category shows that the expected cases for followers are 10 and the observed cases are 5, this means that there were less followers who had trading, business and related jobs than expected.

Since the z value for opinion leaders = 1.7 and $p = 0.0892$, it could be said that opinion leaders are more likely to have

trading, business and related jobs than followers at the 95% level.

These findings shows that followers have had clerical and related jobs and car opinion leaders have had trading, business and related jobs. Therefore, car opinion leaders in Jordan tend to have different jobs from non-leaders (followers). Moreover, one might suggest that, those trading and business jobs which have been performed by information givers were related to buying and selling cars or other durables.

Summary

The above analysis of car opinion leadership showed that, when the aggregate score for the seven social characteristics (i.e. exposure to mass media, social participation, innovativeness, influence on others purchase decision, experience in cars, self confidence when making the purchase decision, and level of interest in cars) was taken, opinion leaders were found more likely to have these characteristics than non-leaders (followers).

Car opinion leaders in Jordan were, also, found to have given and sought information from others. Therefore, the research results supported the existing literature on the inaccuracy of the two-step flow model of communication and suggested a more active role for the opinion leader than suggested in

that model.

Also, the results showed that significant differences existed between opinion leaders and non-leaders with regard to certain demographic factors (i.e. education, levels of monthly income, and occupation categories), while no significant differences were found between them regarding age groups and sex.

8.4. Conclusion to chapter:

This chapter was intended to find out if Jordanians give information to other car buyers and whether information givers differ from information seekers in certain characteristics (i.e. exposure to mass media, social participation, innovativeness or adoption or buying new cars, influence on others purchase decision, experience on cars, self-confidence when buying cars, and level of interest in cars).

Also, an attempt was made to find out if opinion leaders differ from non-leaders (followers) regarding the above mentioned characteristics and their demographic factors.

The results showed that Jordanians give information to other car buyers, and those information givers were found to be more innovative or early adopters or buyers of new cars, more influential, had greater experience of cars, and had higher self confidence when buying cars than information seekers. Therefore, it could be concluded that information givers tend to have some of the characteristics of opinion leaders. The results, also, showed that there was no significant difference between information givers and seekers regarding the level of exposure to mass media, level of social participation, and level of interest in cars.

Moreover, the findings indicated that car opinion leadership

exists in Jordan. When the aggregate score of the seven social characteristics (mentioned earlier) was taken, the results showed that opinion leaders were more likely to have these characteristics than non-leaders (followers).

The results also indicated that car opinion leaders in Jordan were both information givers and seekers, which, in turn, suggest the inaccuracy of the two-step flow model of communication. Thus, a multi-step model of communication would have been more accurate.

There were significant differences between opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers) regarding some demographic factors. For example, opinion leaders were found to have had higher level of monthly income and they had trading, business and related jobs, while followers were found to have a better education (BSc or BA) and they had clerical and related jobs.

No significant differences were found between opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers) regarding age groups and sex.

The existence of car opinion leaders in Jordan could be taken a step further to suggest, what was reported by others (e.g. Turnbull and Meenagham, 1981; Katz, 1957) on the important role opinion leaders may play in creating awareness about new products and the impact they may play at all stages of the purchase decision processes as personal sources of information.

Thus, using opinion leaders by marketers, producers or manufacturers in their promotional strategies may create, for example, more convincing advertising for the Jordanian consumer and therefore, better sales volume.

CHAPTER NINE
WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATION AND THE PURCHASE
OF CARS IN JORDAN

9.1. Introduction:

The results reported in the previous chapters indicated the important role that personal sources have in providing Jordanians with the required information when buying cars. These personal sources (i.e. friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours) were found to have exerted a great deal of social normative influence on Jordanians when they were making their purchase decision of cars. The research findings, also, showed that car opinion leadership exists in Jordan. Those opinion leaders were found to be information givers as well as information seekers. Car opinion leaders in Jordan were found more likely to be exposed to the mass media, to have greater social participation, to be more innovative or early adopters or buyers of new cars, to be more influential, to have greater experience on cars, to have higher self confidence when buying cars, and to be more interested in cars than non-leaders (followers).

To investigate the effect of word-of-mouth communication on the purchase of cars in Jordan, the following section will explore the different sources of information used by Jordanian car buyers and in particular personal sources. Also, methods of sending and receiving information used by

them when making the purchase decision of cars will be examined. The level of effect exerted by personal sources will be identified.

9.2. Word-of-mouth communications and the purchase decision of cars in Jordan:

Buera, Hassan and Shalaby (1986) stated:

"Word-of-mouth communication is often a more important source of information for the consumer in developing countries than the mass media. In those countries consumers depend mainly on informal ways of communication" (p.131).

However, four questions (i.e. 10, 26, 28 and 30) were used to assess the effect that word-of-mouth communication might have on the purchase of cars in Jordan.

Question number 28 aimed at identifying the relative importance of both personal and impersonal sources of information in providing respondents with the required information of whether or not to buy their latest cars.

Table 9.1 provides the responses in order of frequency of mention.

Table (9.1)

Importance of personal and impersonal sources of information for Jordanian car buyers when making the purchase decision

Sources of information	Very important		important		Un-certain		Quite Un-important		Not at all		n	N	Mean*
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%			
<u>Personal sources</u>													
a. Wife/husband and children	28	6.8	72	17.5	94	22.9	78	19.0	139	33.8	411	411	2.445
b. Father and mother	33	8.0	86	20.9	114	27.7	95	23.1	83	20.2	411	411	2.735
c. Relatives (e.g. brothers and sisters)	22	5.4	108	26.3	145	35.3	69	16.8	67	16.3	411	411	2.876
d. Friends, colleagues or neighbours	82	20.0	122	29.7	96	23.4	52	12.7	59	14.4	411	411	3.282
<u>Impersonal sources:</u>													
a. advertising (TV & Radio)	14	3.4	67	16.3	103	25.1	115	28.0	112	27.3	411	411	2.406
b. car showrooms	29	7.1	59	14.4	91	22.1	133	32.4	99	24.1	411	411	2.479
c. newspapers	20	4.9	64	15.6	89	21.7	120	29.2	118	28.7	411	411	2.387

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

*the higher the mean, the more important that source in providing the required information.

Table 9.1 shows that, friends, colleagues or neighbours were considered by Jordanian car buyers as the most important personal source in providing the required information, as it gains the highest mean value of 3.282. Relatives were

regarded as the second most important personal source in providing car information with a mean value of 2.876 followed by father and mother with a mean value of 2.735 and wife/husband and children with a mean value of 2.445.

On the other hand car showrooms were considered by respondents as the most important impersonal source in providing the required information, with a mean value of 2.479, followed by advertising with a mean value of 2.406 and newspapers, brochures, leaflets and magazines with a mean value of 2.3877.

Therefore, one could conclude that personal sources of information were regarded by Jordanian car buyers as more important in providing the required information than impersonal sources (as most of personal sources have had higher mean values than impersonal sources).

Moreover, these results confirm the research findings reported in Chapter 6 which suggested the important role that personal sources would play in providing the required information for Jordanian car buyers.

9.3. Forms of communication when receiving and sending car information in Jordan:

Investigating forms of communication when sending and receiving car information will help in exploring the most

popular and frequent form used by Jordanians when buying cars. Also, it would help in investigating whether word-of-mouth communications (i.e., face-to-face interactions) were the most important way of exchanging information when buying cars in Jordan.

9.3.1. Form of receiving information when buying cars in Jordan:

Question number 10 asked respondents to indicate the form and frequency of communication used by them when they approached their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours for advice, information or opinion when they were considering buying their latest cars.

Table 9.2 shows the responses in order of frequency of mention.

Table (9.2)

Form and frequency of communication used by Jordanian car buyers when approaching personal sources of information

Frequency Form of Communication	Very Frequently		Frequently		Un- certain		Quite In- frequently		Not at all		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
a. Mail	7	2.2	9	3.0	20	6.6	23	7.5	246	80.7	305	411
b. Telephone	8	2.6	26	8.5	52	17.1	68	22.3	151	49.5	305	411
c. Face-to-face	69	22.6	106	34.8	89	29.2	18	5.9	23	7.5	305	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

Table 9.2, shows that respondents considered approaching personal sources of information using face-to-face interaction to be the most frequent form of communication used by them when they were considering buying their latest cars. 57.4% of them indicated this.

In order to examine if there was a significant difference in terms of using these forms of communication by Jordanian car buyers, Kendall Coefficient of Concordance test was carried out and Table 9.3 shows the results.

Table (9.3)

Form of communication used by Jordanian car buyers when approaching personal sources of information

Form of Communication	Mean rank	Chi-square	df	n	N	Level of Significance
a. Mail	1.43	368.5	2	305	411	
b. Telephone	1.81			305	411	
c. Face-to-face	2.76			305	411	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

** Significant difference at the 0.01 level

Table 9.3 shows that respondents who searched for car information from personal sources scored significantly higher value for the form of "Face-to-face" communication than the other forms (i.e., Mail or Telephone) at the 0.01 level, with a mean rank of 2.76.

Hence, it could be concluded that, Jordanian car buyers tend to search for information from their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours using face-to-face interaction as a form of communication. This finding, also, suggests that, word-of-mouth communication tends to play an important role in providing Jordanian car buyers with the required information which, in turn, would influence the purchase decision of cars.

Belk (1971) observed that conversations in informal social meetings among individuals are more likely to occur when there is a facilitating context which induces a conversation about a given product. For example, the existence of food cues might stimulate a discussion on different brands of ice cream. But a facilitating context for product-related conversations might also exist when no such cues are present. It happens, for example, when a participant in an informal meeting or a social gathering asks another person, or the whole group, for advice on what brand of a given product (which he is planning to buy) they recommend. This question might trigger a discussion about the quality of different brands of this product or other products.

9.3.2. Form of sending car information to Jordanian car buyers:

Question number 26 asked respondents to indicate the form and frequency of communication used by them when they gave car

information to their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours when they were considering buying their latest cars.

The following Table shows the responses in order of frequency of mention.

Table (9.4)

Form and frequency of communication used by Jordanians when they gave information to other car buyers

Form of Communication	Very Frequently		Frequently		Un-certain		Quite Infrequently		Not at all		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
a. Mail	9	3.2	7	2.5	18	6.3	29	10.1	222	77.9	285	411
b. Telephone	14	4.9	45	15.8	39	13.7	49	17.2	138	48.4	285	411
c. Face-to-face	90	31.6	92	32.3	71	24.9	16	5.6	16	5.6	285	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

Table 9.4 shows that respondents considered giving information to other Jordanian car buyers using "face-to-face" interaction to be the most frequent form of communication used by them, as the majority (i.e. 63.9%) of respondents used this form of communication when they gave car information to others.

In order to examine if there was a significant difference in terms of giving information to other car buyers using these forms of communication, Kendall Coefficient of Concordance

test was used and the following Table shows the results.

Table (9.5)

Form of communication used by Jordanians when giving information to other car buyers

Form of Communication	Mean rank	Chi-square	df	n	N	Level of Significance
		316.8	2			
a. Mail	1.42			285	411	
b. Telephone	1.83			285	411	
c. Face-to-face	2.74			285	411	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

**Significant difference at the 0.01 level

The results shown in Table 9.5 suggest that Jordanians who give information to other car buyers have scored a significantly higher value for the form of "Face-to-face" communication than the other forms (Mail or Telephone) at the 0.01 level, with a mean rank of 2.74.

Thus, one could conclude that Jordanians tend to give car information to their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours using "face-to-face" interaction as a form of communication.

Taking these findings into consideration, it could be suggested that sending car information to others or receiving car information from others, in Jordan, is done through word-of-mouth communication. The use of "face-to-face" method

might have come as a result of the frequent visits that Jordanians make to their friends and relatives. An other reason for using this method might be related to the low level of telephone ownership in Jordan. Moreover, the cost involved in using a telephone to make car inquiries might have not been tolerated by them. Mail might have not been used because of the time and cost required to make the different inquiries.

Therefore, word-of-mouth communication, in Jordan, was found to have played an important role in providing the required types of information for car buyers.

In a study conducted by Le Grand and Udell (1964) on the purchase of television sets or furniture, they found that consulting friends and acquaintances before buying these products was an important source of information with 51.7% indicated that they did this consultation.

Udell (1966) reported that discussions with friends, relatives and neighbours came second, after past experience with the product, as a helpful, and most helpful source of out-of-store information in purchasing small electrical appliances.

A study by Mendez (1968) of the diffusion of analgesics, laxatives and soft drinks in five Guatemalan communities, seems to suggest that interpersonal communications played a

major role in innovation diffusion in other developing countries as well. Mendez (1968) proposed that since these countries lack a well developed mass media, innovation diffusion in such societies depended to a very great extent on interpersonal relations. Mendez also suggested, in the same study, that the shape of the adoption curve, in a given community or society, depends on the level of interpersonal communication in that particular social system. The greater the degree of interpersonal communication, the greater the diversion of the diffusion curve from a straight line. Midgley (1977) seems to support this proposition. After reviewing Mendez's study, he demonstrated mathematically that this is the case and then concluded that:

"Interpersonal communication, not the mass media, is responsible for the observed patterns of adoption. Were there no such 'word-of-mouth' communication, then while adoption would still occur it would exhibit a linear pattern, and increase at a far slower rate than actually arises." (p.41)

Engel, Blackwell and Kegerreis (1969) reported that word-of-mouth was the most important source of information used by the adopters of a new automotive diagnostic centre.

9.3.3. The influence of Word-of-mouth communications on the purchase decision of cars in Jordan:

Question number 30 asked respondents to indicate the level of influence that word-of-mouth communication had on their

purchase decisions of cars.

The following Table shows the responses in order of frequency of mention.

Table (9.6)

Level of influence that word-of-mouth communication had on the purchase decision of cars in Jordan

Word-of-mouth influence	To a very great extent		To a great extent		Un-certain		To some extent		Not at all		n	N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Case												
-Respondents' purchase decision of buying cars in Jordan	35	8.5	148	36.0	150	36.5	48	11.7	30	7.3	411	411

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the sample

The results revealed in Table 9.6 show that the majority (i.e., 44.5%) of respondents indicated that their communications with their friends, relatives, colleagues of neighbours had influenced their purchase decisions of whether or not to buy their latest cars. Therefore, it could be concluded that word-of-mouth communications were not only considered by respondents as an important source of information, but also these communications were found to have had great influence on the purchase decision of whether or not Jordanian car buyers should buy their latest cars.

Hamilton (1976) in his study of the influence of informal

groups on the consumer's choice of a washing machine, found that personal sources of information have more impact on this choice than advertisements, so he stated "At the least we can say that if advertisements can act as sources of information in purchasing washing machines, neighbours, friends, and relatives can act as sources of information even more." (p.155).

Engel, Blackwell and Kegerreis (1969) reported that friends, relatives, and neighbours were most frequently mentioned (42.9%) by their respondents, as the most influential in their decision to try the new automotive diagnostic centre.

Wicking (1976) found that the majority of his respondents, indicated that personal sources had the greatest influence on their decision to adopt dishwashers.

Day (1974) reported that word-of-mouth was nine times as effective as media advertising in changing unfavourable or neutral attitudes towards a new product, to favourable ones.

Midgley (1977) stated:

"Interpersonal communication is the key to the diffusion of innovations, and such a conclusion should cause little surprise. Man after all has evolved speech as a way of communicating with, and affecting the behaviour of, other members of his species" (p.81)

Therefore, the research results shown in Table 9.6, which

suggested that word-of-mouth communication in Jordan tended to influence the purchase decision of cars, are consistent with the existing literature and the following Table confirms this finding.

Table (9.7)

The social normative influence received through word-of-mouth communication and the purchase decision of cars in Jordan

Case	Level	n	N	Level of Significance
Word-of-mouth communication and the social normative influence on the purchase of cars in Jordan	H	265	374	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high

**Significant difference at the 0.01 level

As Table 9.7 shows, a Mann-Whitney test was carried out and the results showed that respondents, who received social normative influence through word-of-mouth communication, were subject to a significantly higher level of influence regarding their purchase decision of whether or not to buy their latest cars than those who did not receive this sort of social normative influence at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0000$).

Hence, these results show the important role that the social normative influence and word-of-mouth communication have on

the purchase decision of cars in Jordan.

9.3.4. The influence of Car Opinion leaders on the purchase decision of cars in Jordan:

In order to investigate the role of opinion leaders in influencing the purchase decision of cars in Jordan, a Mann-Whitney test was carried out and the following Table shows the results.

Table (9.8)

The role of car opinion leaders in influencing the purchase decision of cars in Jordan

Case	Level	n	N	Level of Significance
The role of car opinion leaders in influencing the purchase decision of cars	H	74	150	**

n = number of valid observations

N = number of cases included in the test

H = high

**Significant difference at the 0.01 level

The results shown in Table 9.8 indicate that car opinion leaders in Jordan have had a significantly higher level of influence on others' purchase decision of cars than followers at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.0004$).

Therefore, car opinion leaders in Jordan tend to play a major role in influencing others' purchase decision of cars.

These results seem consistent with results reported by other writers. Sheth (1971) carried out a survey to investigate word-of-mouth communication's impact on the introduction of new stainless steel blades. These blades were introduced to the market in 1964, without any mass media advertising for a considerable period of time. The results showed that 48% of respondents said that they were influenced to adopt the new blades by a personal source (friends, co-workers and neighbours).

Feick L. and Price L. (1987) argued that opinion leaders can create awareness for other people about an innovation, as well as motivate them to act.

Also, Katz (1957) reported that personal sources tend to inform the public as well as influencing and encouraging them to purchase a new product.

Other studies (e.g., Armstrong and Feldman, 1976; Mate, 1981; Robertson, Zielinski and Ward, 1984) suggested similar results.

9.4. Conclusion to chapter:

This chapter aimed at investigating the important role that word-of-mouth communication might have on the purchase decision of cars in Jordan.

Jordanian car buyers were found to have given car information to others as well as received car information from others through "Face-to-face interaction" which was found to be the most important form of communication for car buyers within the Jordanian context. Word-of-mouth communications (through face-to-face interaction) between car buyers and their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours were found to have played an important role in providing the required information for those buyers, as well as influencing their purchase decision to buy a car.

These findings should be taken into consideration by marketers, manufacturers and producers who deal with durables, in general, and cars, in particular, in the Jordanian market in order to promote positive word-of-mouth communication about their products.

For example, when a dissatisfaction with a particular car is experienced, Jordanians were found to have the willingness to tell others about their dissatisfaction. Therefore, marketers, manufacturers and producers should encourage

customers complaints.

Encouraging these complaints might help diverting consumer's complaints from friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours, to the marketer or the manufacturer. This encouragement should, at least, show customers that the marketer or the manufacturer is responsive to their complaints. Such a response may avert negative word-of-mouth and may even create positive word-of-mouth.

These findings add new evidence to the existing literature on the importance of word-of-mouth communication in the purchase of durables. This new evidence is important for the literature as this study was carried out in a developing country (Jordan). It indicated that, a considerable amount of research is needed to investigate the subject in these countries.

The results reported in this chapter confirm the existing literature on the important role that word-of-mouth communication has on the purchase of durables.

CHAPTER TEN**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS****10.1. Introduction:**

In 30 years of research, remarkably consistent results have documented the significance of interpersonal sources, particularly in influencing market place choices (Katona and Mueller, 1955; Kiel and Layton 1981; Feik and Price 1984; Udell, 1966) and in diffusing information on new products (Arndt, 1967; Engel, Kegerreis, and Blackwell, 1970; Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955; Sheth, 1968, 1971).

Previous research has, also, demonstrated that interpersonal information exchange is widespread (King and Summers, 1967), interpersonal communication affect preferences and choices (Arndt, 1967), interpersonal sources are often the most important sources of information (Katona and Mueller, 1955; Kiel and Layton, 1981; Feick and Price, 1984; Robertson, 1971) and interpersonal sources are seen as more credible than nonpersonal sources (Assael, Etgar and Henry, 1983).

In the developed world, therefore, research has long recognized word-of-mouth communication as an important medium for idea exchange.

In spite of this, research is not as advanced in developing

countries and, therefore, the importance of personal sources of information or word-of-mouth communication as a subject area is widely neglected in these countries and a lot of research is needed to explore it further (Buera, Hassan and Shalaby, 1986).

This study is an attempt to fill, at least to some extent, this gap in Jordan with reference to consumer durables and in particular to cars.

The central focus of this research had the following objectives:

a. Investigating the importance of personal sources in providing Jordanian car buyers with the required information, and in particular, the factors that motivated them to search for information from these sources, reasons for using these sources, types of information required and reasons for conveying car information to others.

b. Examining the influence of Personal sources on Jordanian consumers' purchase of cars. More precisely, identifying personal sources of influence faced by Jordanian car buyers, examining the influence of car comparison processes and the factors taken into consideration when choosing a referent for this comparison.

c. Examining whether Jordanians give information to other car

buyers, and whether car opinion leadership exists in Jordan and the characteristics of information givers and car opinion leaders.

d. Examining forms of communication used by Jordanian car buyers when giving or receiving information from others and the role of word-of-mouth communication and opinion leaders in influencing the purchase decision of cars.

The purpose of this chapter is to draw the main conclusions of the present study, to provide the implications, and the limitations, as well as, to provide some suggestions for further research. Also, this chapter includes a model which describes the use of personal sources of information and word-of-mouth communication in Jordan.

10.2. Main conclusions of the study:

As mentioned in Chapter Four, a number of hypotheses were derived from the literature to be tested in this study. The following table shows the accepted and the rejected ones.

Table (10.1)

List of hypotheses which were tested in this study.

Hypotheses	Accepted	Rejected
<p>Hypothesis 1: In Jordan, the extent of information search from personal sources is related to the financial risk associated with buying a car.</p>	✓	
<p>Hypothesis 2: The extent of information search from personal sources does not relate to the amount of product-knowledge and experience of cars in Jordan.</p>		✓
<p>Hypothesis 3: The extent of information search from personal sources is related to product complexity in Jordan.</p>	✓	
<p>Hypothesis 4: In Jordan, the extent of information search from personal sources is related to the cost associated with it.</p>	✓	

Table (10.1) continued:

Accepted

Rejected

Hypothesis 5:

The extent of information search from personal sources is related to the amount of social contacts in Jordan.

**Hypothesis 6:**

Jordanians do not convey satisfaction with a product to other car buyers.

**Hypothesis 7:**

Jordanian consumers engage in social comparison with those whom they perceive as similar in income, occupation, opinion and values.

**Hypothesis 8:**

Information givers are more exposed than seekers to mass media in Jordan.

**Hypothesis 9:**

Car opinion leadership is related to sex in Jordan.

**Hypothesis 10:**

Car opinion leadership is related to the level of education in Jordan.



The following main conclusions cover the different issues included in the hypotheses.

The main conclusions of this study can be presented in four groups. The first examines the importance of personal sources in providing the required information for Jordanian car buyers. The second examines the influence which personal sources have on Jordanian car buyers. The third investigates whether car opinion leadership exists in Jordan, and what characteristics these opinion leaders have. The fourth examines the role of word-of-mouth communication and opinion leaders in influencing the purchase decision of cars.

10.2.1. Importance of personal sources of information:

The use of personal sources of information was found to be very important for Jordanian car buyers. The majority (i.e. 74.2%) of respondents indicated that they searched for information from personal sources (e.g. friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours) when they were considering buying their latest cars (see Table 6.2).

Jordanian car buyers not only consulted their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours, but actively sought car information from these sources. As Table 6.3 shows 51.8% of respondents who approached personal sources, considered themselves to have searched for either a large or a very large amount of information regarding cars.

Given the fact that Jordanian car buyers tend to rely heavily on personal sources to obtain the required car information, many factors were found to have motivated them to do so.

10.2.1.1. Factors motivated Jordanian car buyers to search for information from personal sources:

Jordanian car buyers were found to have approached their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours for advice, information or opinion on account of the following factors:

1. Perceived risk:

A major factor related to information search from personal sources, in Jordan, is risk perception. Jordanians perceived car buying as high risk.

In a high risk product one would expect search to take place to obtain product information, as information seeking is a recognised risk reduction strategy and therefore, Jordanian car buyers considered this risk as a factor for their information search from their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours.

A low correlation of 0.31 was found between the two measures of risk (i.e. the multidimensional measure and the single measure) employed in this study, which are seen as

interchangeable and, therefore, the results of both measures are used.

However, the study further investigated the nature of risk faced by Jordanian car buyers by studying the five dimensions measured in the composite question.

The most important dimensions for Jordanian car buyers were the physical, functional and financial risks, followed by psychological risk and social risk. The only dimensions which discriminated between Jordanian car buyers who approached personal sources for advice, information, or opinion and those who did not, were the physical, functional, and financial risks.

2. Product knowledge and experience:

Lack of product knowledge and experience was considered by Jordanian car buyers as a factor motivating them to search for information from personal sources. However, it should be remembered that these are post purchase measures for car owners in Jordan and relate to their perception of knowledge and experience rather than an objective measure of actual knowledge and experience.

The results of this study showed that significant differences exist between Jordanian car buyers who approached personal sources and those who did not. Those who approached personal

sources of information had a lower level of product knowledge and experience than those who did not.

3. Product complexity:

Another major factor related to information search from personal sources is car's complexity or difficulty to evaluate. Given the lack of car knowledge and experience, it is not surprising to see Jordanian buyers perceiving cars as complex and difficult to evaluate. The findings showed that respondents, who searched for information from personal sources, perceived cars as more complex and difficult to evaluate than those who did not.

4. Period of commitment:

The long period of commitment associated with buying a car was considered by Jordanian car buyers as an important factor for them to search for information from personal sources. The analysis showed that those car buyers who consulted their personal sources of information were more concerned about the period which they will be committed to, than those who did not. Hence, buying a car, which would keep going smoothly with very rare faults, is of major concern to Jordanians.

However, as Jordanian car buyers lack car knowledge and experience and perceived cars as complex and difficult to evaluate, the logic suggests that they should have low self

confidence when making the purchase decision of this particular product which, in turn, would lead to information search. Contrary to expectations, those buyers who consulted personal sources of information perceived themselves to have had a significantly higher level of self-confidence (in terms of judging cars or their general confidence about their abilities) than those who did not.

In the view of the researcher, this high self confidence could be because of respondents' bias or because male car owners have dominated the sample (i.e. 345 out of 411) who would express themselves as confident because of social and cultural factors. These social and cultural factors, in Jordan, indicate that males should have a strong confident image all the time, while lack of self confidence is related to female characteristics.

10.2.1.2. Reasons for information search from personal sources:

Personal sources of information were regarded by Jordanian car buyers of major importance for the following reasons.

1. Source credibility:

Personal sources of information were seen by Jordanian car buyers as more capable of providing trustworthy information

than impersonal sources (see Table 6.15). This may be because the information received from these sources is often based on people's experience of their cars. Moreover, information seekers were able to ask their personal sources of information through direct communication (face-to-face), while impersonal sources of information, usually, suffer from lack of direct communication with information seekers which, in turn, leave many issues related to cars unexplained.

2. Source flexibility:

Personal sources of information were regarded by Jordanian car buyers as sources, which allowed them to ask about, think about and discuss whatever they had in mind. While impersonal sources did not have this advantage.

Therefore, flexibility of personal sources of information was considered by Jordanian car buyers as an important reason for consulting them.

3. Experience:

The experience that personal sources had in buying and driving cars was considered by Jordanian car buyers as a reason for consulting these sources. The findings indicated that, respondents who consulted personal sources perceived a significantly higher level of experience regarding these sources than those who did not.

Because of their lack of knowledge and experience of cars and the car's complexity, Jordanian car buyers were very keen to consult someone who was familiar with specific car, thus reducing buyer's anxiety of selecting the wrong product.

4. Cost of search:

Another important reason considered by Jordanian car buyers is the low cost of search from personal sources. Jordanian car buyers could consult friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours, in the course of a visit. Consulting impersonal sources would require information seekers to travel somewhere for the consultation which would cost either time or money. Therefore, cost of search from personal sources is seen as relatively, low.

However, information search from personal sources, in Jordan, was not found to be related to social contacts. Hence, the researcher suggested Islamic religious reasons as an explanation for this consultation. For example, the Holy Koran motivates people to consult each other when making decisions.

10.2.1.3. Types of information sought by Jordanian car buyers from personal sources:

The results of this research suggested that Jordanian car buyers perceived their personal sources as capable of

providing different types of information on cars.

These sources were seen by respondents as capable of providing information on makes of the car, the performance of the car, whether or not good services (e.g. maintenance) were available, availability of spare parts, whether or not the car was worth the asking price. Moreover, these sources were, also, seen as capable of providing information on whether or not the information received through advertising or read in a newspaper was trustworthy.

10.2.1.4. Reasons for conveying car information to other buyers:

Jordanians were found to have conveyed car information to others for the following reasons.

1. Dissatisfaction:

An important reason for Jordanians conveying car information to other car buyers is their dissatisfaction with their cars.

A significant difference was found between respondents who conveyed car information to others and those who did not and the level of dissatisfaction they had in their cars.

Therefore, dissatisfied Jordanians are very likely to

complain or spread negative reports about the product.

2. Satisfaction:

Satisfaction with cars was, also, considered by respondents as a reason for conveying car information to others.

As the results showed, respondents who conveyed car information to others have had a significantly higher level of satisfaction with their cars than those who did not.

Festinger (1968) stated that the existence of joy, anger, hostility and the like, seems to produce forces of communication.

3. Knowledge and experience:

Knowledge and experience were seen as motives for Jordanians to convey car information to other car buyers.

Again, the results showed that car owners who conveyed information to others perceived themselves as having a significantly higher level of knowledge and experience on cars than those who did not.

The researcher suggested that Jordanians tend to do this to gain some kind of respect, as they would be perceived by others as, e.g., well educated, intelligent.

4. Social status:

Social status was also seen as a motive. Jordanians could have conveyed car information to others in order to, for example, attract attention to himself as a good car purchaser or to show others his level of social status. This, usually, would lead other Jordanians to respect them and to being perceived as "high fliholders".

5. Credibility of advertising:

Another interesting reason for conveying car information, in Jordan, was found to be the tendency of Jordanian car buyers to inform others if they realized that the content of advertising (e.g. economy of operation, road handling or durability of the car) had been presented in an inaccurate way.

The researcher suggested social and cultural reasons as explanations. For example, the social structure in Jordan involves strong kinship patterns. The clan is the basis of Jordan tribal society and the extended family is the foundation of the rural and urban society, therefore, this type of close relationship could be the motivator for conveying information to each other.

10.2.2. The influence of personal sources on Jordanian car buyers:

The influence of small, informal, social groups on the purchasing behaviour of their members is found to exist in Jordan. 64.5% of respondents indicated that their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours had asked them to buy a particular car, and 54% of those respondents considered personal sources to have had a great influence on them of whether or not to buy their latest cars.

The most important source of influence faced by Jordanian car buyers was close friends, colleagues and parents, followed by relatives (e.g. brothers and sisters), then wife/husband and children, and neighbours.

Moreover, this influence was found to have occurred through car comparison processes with others' cars. 65.9% of respondents indicated that they either compared or were willing to compare their cars with those owned by their friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours.

Factors such as income, occupation, general opinion, education, and age were taken into consideration when selecting a person (a referent) for this social comparison.

10.2.3. Opinion leadership in Jordan:

As the results reported in Chapter 6 indicated, Jordanian car buyers searched for information from personal sources, the results reported in Chapter 8 showed that Jordanians, also, have given information to other car buyers.

In this research, a set of characteristics, associated with opinion leaders and identified in earlier studies, was used as a criterion to distinguish information givers from information seekers.

Given that, the findings of this study suggested that those information givers tend to be more innovative or early adopters or buyers of new cars, are more influential, had greater experience on cars and had higher self-confidence when buying cars than information seekers. Hence, information givers, in Jordan, seemed to have had some characteristics of opinion leaders.

The results, also, showed that no significant differences exist between information givers and seekers regarding the level of exposure to the mass media, level of social participation, and level of interest in cars.

The concept of car opinion leadership was found to have existed in Jordan and the aggregate score of the above mentioned characteristics showed that those opinion leaders

were more likely to have these seven social characteristics than non-leaders.

With regard to demographic differences, car opinion leaders were found to have had a higher level of monthly income, and they had trading, business and related jobs, while non-leaders (followers) had better education (BSc or BA) and they had clerical and related jobs. No significant difference was found between those opinion leaders and non-leaders (followers) regarding age groups and sex.

Moreover, the results showed that those opinion leaders were both information givers and seekers. Therefore, this finding suggests the inaccuracy of the two-step flow model of communication.

10.2.4. The role of word-of-mouth communications and opinion leaders in influencing the purchase of cars:

The findings of this research showed that, face-to-face communications appeared to be the most important and effective form used by Jordanian car buyers when, either, giving information to other car buyers or seeking information from other car owners.

This could be true because buyer's close interactions with others would help him overcome his lack of knowledge and

experience in cars and, also, it would help reducing the buyer's overall level of risk perception.

Therefore, word-of-mouth communications and opinion leaders are often more important sources of information for Jordanian car buyers than impersonal sources, and these communications have had great influence on the purchase of cars.

10.3. Implications of the study:

It is believed that the present study has implications for car dealers in Jordan and the existing literature on word-of-mouth communication.

It shows important empirical evidence regarding the role personal sources play in providing the required information for other car buyers as well as influencing their purchase decision.

Jordanian car buyers made little use of marketer controlled information sources (e.g., advertising, car showrooms, leaflets), suggesting that conceptions about the importance of the media may be false. Awareness and interest in a particular car might have been stimulated by talking to friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours since the findings of this research showed that these sources were more important and credible than impersonal sources.

The unwillingness of Jordanian car buyers to spend time or money when gathering information means that specialised print media, or high information advertisements, are unlikely to be read.

Awareness and interest could be best stimulated by creating an information environment where positive word-of-mouth on a particular car is promoted which, in turn, would stimulate conversation.

Thus, car dealers in Jordan should use some kind of personal communication (e.g. dividing the capital of Jordan, Amman, into certain areas and then employ well known person[s] to promote a particular car or to act as intermediaries in these areas) to help ensuring car awareness and creating the desirability of the purchase.

This personal communication is vital since personal sources of information exert a great deal of influence upon the purchase decision of cars, as well as creating a state of confidence in the purchasers' mind.

Television would be worth considering, in that it has the capability of showing the benefits (e.g. comfort, road handling) of the car, its durability and, also, providing some mechanical information which would help potential car buyers to answer their questions.

Television advertising messages should be presented to Jordanian people using some well known and popular people whom a customer can appreciate or trust. In their television advertising, Jordanian car dealers must concentrate on the criteria relevant to the consumer such as make, durability, price, availability of services (e.g., maintenance), availability of spare parts, and comfort. Therefore, televised high information campaigns are required to bring these elements to the attention of the consumer.

Previous research suggested that the best prospects for targeting marketing communications on new products is the consumer who buys early and who also influences others to purchase (Kotler and Zaltman, 1976).

This research suggests the need for targeting new car buyers or car opinion leaders in order to motivate them to spread positive word-of-mouth which, in turn, would improve sales volume and obtain more rapid positive information diffusion about a particular car.

Bloch (1986) indicated that targeting opinion leaders may be very effective in diffusing information about products such as automobiles or personal computers, but ineffective for products such as refrigerators or dehumidifiers.

The clear benefits of focusing attention on information givers or car opinion leaders, in Jordan, indicates the

importance of using them in diffusing and influencing others to buy a particular car.

A general conclusion of the study which of interest to car dealers is that they could sponsor national events such as soccer and basketball. Sponsored advertisements could generate an emotional and nationalist feeling. Such sponsorship would have a tremendous appeal to the people which, in turn, would help shifting car buyers' preference from a particular car to another.

These findings have several implications for car dealer management. When Jordanian car buyers are dissatisfied with the product (e.g., because of lack of spare parts, bad car performance, bad car maintenance), they tend to convey this to others.

If complaints are encouraged, the retailer can remedy legitimate complaints and win back a consumer who may also make positive reports to others, enhancing goodwill. By doing so, management could show their customers that they are responsive to legitimate complaints and, therefore, may avert negative word-of-mouth and may even create positive word-of-mouth. If complaints are discouraged, fewer consumers may indeed complain; instead, they may tell other car buyers of their unsatisfactory experience and may not repurchase the product. Some level of dissatisfaction is inevitable in the

marketplace, but the way management deals with this can have an important impact on brand and store image. Thus, management should do its utmost to avoid any kind of dissatisfaction.

Also this study has theoretical implications. It adds new weight to the importance of word-of-mouth communication and opinion leaders in influencing the purchase decision of a particular product.

Investigating this type of study in Jordan gives a unique implication for the literature. As this subject is highly neglected in developing countries, this study is considered as a serious attempt to narrow the gap existing in the literature.

The research findings confirm some ideas and concepts of information search existing in consumer theory. For example, Jordanian consumers were found to have searched for information about cars. This confirmation of ideas and concepts about information search from personal sources, is also a contribution, which shows the way Jordanian consumers search for information, their willingness to convey car information, the social normative influence on the purchasing decisions, and so on.

A multi-step model of communication was recommended, as the findings of this study showed, that car opinion leaders in

Jordan were found to be information givers and seekers. This supports existing literature on the inaccuracy of the two-step flow model of communication.

Another significant theoretical contribution is that, this study should provide Jordanian marketing lecturers with better information and a more accurate picture on the different sources of information which Jordanians might use when making a purchase decision. Making this study available to those lecturers, should encourage them to revise their thinking on teaching marketing subjects to Jordanian students. For example, instead of relying, only, on pure theoretical text books mostly written by western writers to describe consumer behaviour and advertising in the developed world, those lecturers could use this study to give their students better and more accurate information on the behaviour of Jordanian consumers and the way advertising messages must be designed to make them more convincing. Also, this study should be of great use for those lecturers in the developed world who lecture in marketing on developing countries.

The availability of this study in the libraries of Jordanian Universities should help students of marketing in Jordan. Those students, mostly, rely on text books or research conducted in the developed world. Therefore, the present study should provide them with the idea that, some modifications and adjustments should be made to western

marketing ideas before applying them to other societies such as Jordan. Moreover, it is hoped that this study should, also, help western students of marketing to realise this as well. This is of major importance for any marketing student who hopes to have a successful job in international businesses.

The following Table provides some examples on western marketing concepts that need modifications and adjustments before applying them to other societies such as Jordan.

Table (10.2)

Some examples on western marketing concepts that need modification and adjustment before applying them to Jordan.

Examples	Western countries (e.g., UK & USA)	Jordan
-Information search in the decision situation is related to social contacts.	proved by previous research.	No significant difference was found
- Information givers are more exposed to mass media than information seekers.	Proved by previous research	No significant difference was found
- Business firms and organisations.	Consumer oriented	Production oriented
- Price of products and services.	Left to be determined by market forces	Government intervention is very high
- Existing marketing systems (e.g., market data and information concerning demand, consumption, opportunities and competition).	Available at all times	Very scarce

The current study should, also, encourage Jordanian writers

who write on marketing in general and consumer theory in particular, to produce more literature on the reality of marketing in Jordan. For example, how advertising messages have been developed and broadcast to their targeted audience, and how consumer theory works in Jordan. This could be more exciting and interesting for Jordanian marketing readers than, for example, reading marketing book translated from a foreign language into Arabic.

It is hoped that this study would, also, help international marketers who are interested in marketing their cars in Jordan. For example, this study could help international marketers introduce their cars to Jordanians? how to promote them?, and the services that need to be provided.

10.4. A model describing the use of personal sources of information and word-of-mouth communications in jordan:

Moutinho L. (1987) defines a model as:

"A replica of the phenomenon that it is intended to designate, that is, to specify the elements and to represent the nature of the relationships between them" (p.39)

Zaltam and Burger (In: Moutinho L., 1987) defines a model as "a simplified but organised and meaningful representation of an actual system or process" (p.39)

Based on the findings of the present study, the following model, which is presented in figure 10.1, shows the way Jordanian buyers obtain and receive information when buying a car. This model consists of three stages: (1) Pre-search for car information (2) Sources of information and the choice criteria (3) The influence of personal sources on the purchase decision of cars.

Stage one: Pre-search for car information:

In this stage, Jordanian buyers are faced with the need for buying a car. Because of personal factors such as, lack of knowledge and experience of cars and because of product-related factors such as, the complexity of the car, risk perception (i.e., physical, functional and financial risks) and the long period of commitment associated with buying a car, those buyers are uncertain of what make of car to be bought. Hence, looking for sources of car information become very important. Moreover, this stage of the model shows that factors such as social and psychological risks, demographic and self-confidence were not of any significance for Jordanian car buyers to search for information.

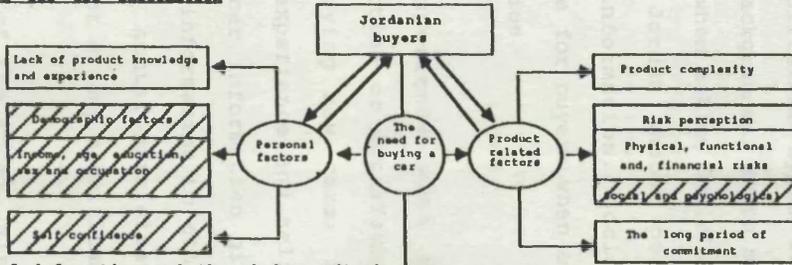
Stage two: Sources of information and the choice criteria:

The second stage of the model shows that, car buyers in

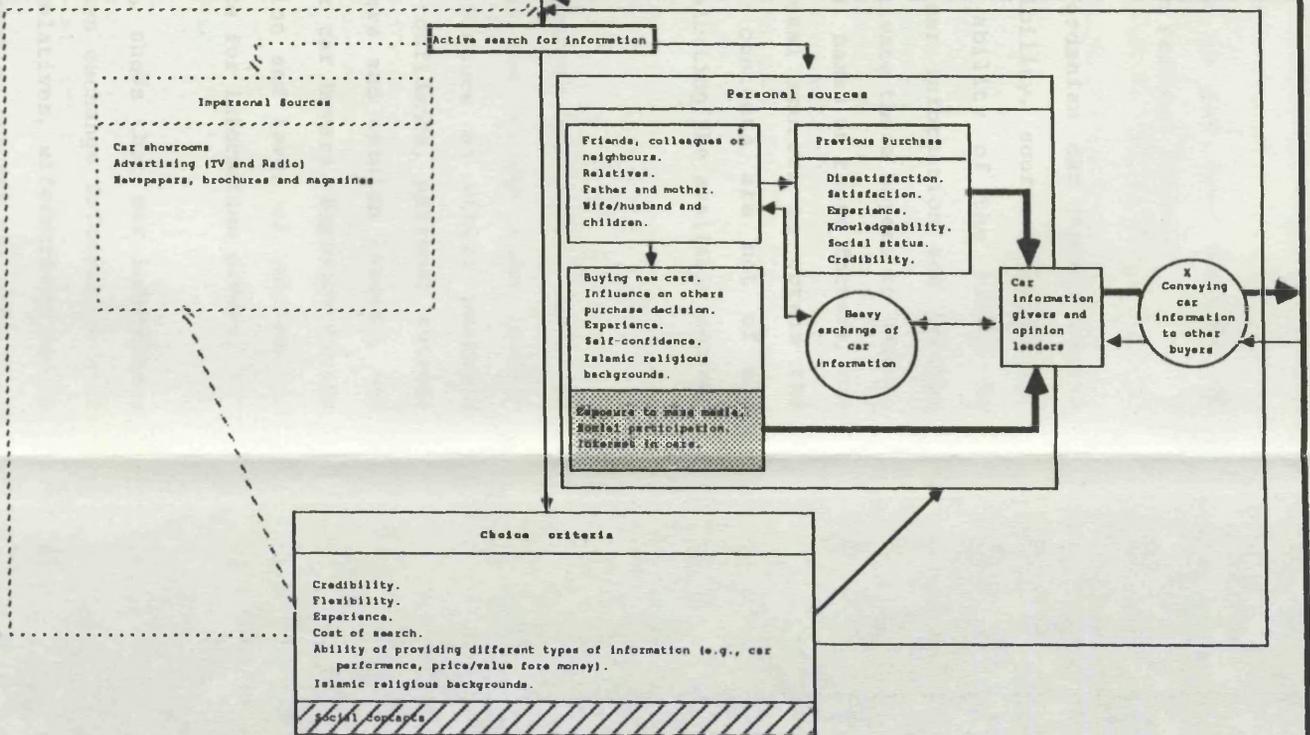
Figure (9.1)

A model describing the use of personal sources of information and word-of-mouth communications in Jordan.

Stage one: Pre-search for car information



Stage two: Sources of information and the choice criteria



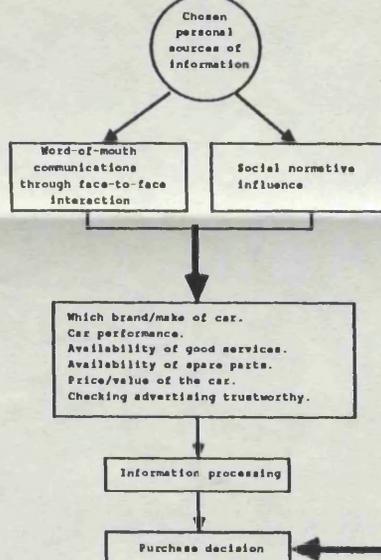
Stage two: The influence of personal sources on the purchase decision of cars

Key

- Very strong influence.
- Strong influence.
-** Weak influence.
- Significant with regard to the concerned area.
- ▨** Insignificant with regard to the concerned area.
- ▩** Insignificant with regard to information givers.

* Personal sources of information are in order according to their level of importance to Jordanian car buyers.

X Demographic factors were insignificant with regard to conveying car information to other buyers.



Jordan are, usually, exposed to two main sources of information (i.e., Impersonal and Personal sources).

To evaluate these sources, Jordanian car buyers employ criteria such as, source credibility, source flexibility, experience, cost of search, ability of the source in providing different types of car information and Islamic religious backgrounds, which motivate those buyers to consult each other when making decisions. Based on those factors, car buyers in Jordan choose personal sources to obtain the required information. Social contacts are not of any significance for buyers when evaluating the available sources of information.

Through experience with previous purchases such as dissatisfaction or satisfaction and through other factors such as buying new cars; influence on others purchase decision; experience and self-confidence, personal sources emerge as car information givers and opinion leaders, who convey car information to other car buyers. Exposure to the mass media, social participation and level of interest in cars were not of any significance for information givers.

This stage of the model, also, shows that car information givers and opinion leaders often exchange information with other people such as friends, relatives, wife/husband and so on. This heavy exchange of information opposes the concept of

the two-step flow of communication.

Stage three: The influence of personal sources on the purchase decision of cars:

Having identified the suitable source of information (i.e., Personal sources), Jordanian car buyers engage in word-of-mouth communication through face-to-face interaction with car information givers and opinion leaders. These verbal communications together with the social normative influence, which comes from these sources, provide car buyers with information on which make of car to be bought and why. Those buyers process the information they receive and make the purchase decision of a particular car.

The purchase decision is strongly influenced by word-of-mouth communication with car information givers and opinion leaders, and the social normative influence received from them. However, impersonal sources of information are perceived by Jordanian buyers to have weak influence on the purchase decision.

10.5. Limitations of the study:

Research, because of various constraints within which it is conducted, has varying degrees of limitation. This study is no exception. The primary limitation of this study is that which comes as a result of using a structured questionnaire.

Although the use of a structured questionnaire can offer a number of advantages such as reducing interviewer bias, wider coverage of geographical areas, lower cost and speedy form of data collection, this method has its own limitations. A structured questionnaire is not a flexible means of obtaining data from respondents and respondents' ability to express themselves is limited to the alternative answers given for each question in the questionnaire. Other methods, such as personal interviews or ethnographic methods are considered more flexible means of data collection and they provide the researcher with new ideas and richer information as respondents will be allowed to express themselves more freely.

However, any researcher planning a survey has to decide on the most appropriate method of data collection. Issues such as objectives of the research, respondents' social and cultural backgrounds (e.g., whether or not women would be allowed to be interviewed by male strangers) must be carefully considered. Time and financial constraints must be taken into consideration as well.

A second limitation is that, which is inherent in most studies that deal with attitude, psychological and behavioural variables - how to measure them? Almost all the study variables were either attitude, psychological or behavioural. These were measured through the use of five-point scales. The items chosen to measure the variables were

either similar or selected from previous research in the field or similar fields. However, doubts will probably persist as to the validity of the measurements, that is, to what extent these items/statements measure the variables they are supposed to measure. Doubts also may exist as to the reliability of the items/statements as measures. The main guide or reassurance is that the items employed in this study were, to a large extent, similar or used in previous research in this area of study. However, reliability analysis between these items/statements was carried out and the results of the Cronbach Alpha were high and encouraging except for the items included in question seven (Cronbach Alpha < 0.5 suggested by Peter J. 1979). Thus, question seven was not included in the analysis.

There is an additional limitation in the likelihood of distortion of response arising from the formulae (e.g., strongly agree - strongly disagree; to a great extent - not at all; very frequent - not at all) used in this study. For example, it is very difficult to distinguish between strongly agree and agree or quite disagree and disagree. These formulae were, however, adopted to facilitate completion by reducing to an acceptable minimum the length and complexity of the questionnaire.

A third limitation is that, which is inherent in the selection of the research variables. By delimiting, through a

priori reasoning, the number of independent variables, it is possible that some very vital variables active and influential in word-of-mouth communications have been left out.

A fourth limitation comes from the sample itself. The sample of the study was dominated by male car owners (i.e., 345 out of 411). This may be related to social and cultural issues. A principal technique of family-rearing in Jordan is shaming and fear of family embarrassment. For example, if a female has been raped or molested, it would be an enormous social problem for the concerned family. To avoid this type of social problem, men usually register their wives or sisters cars under their names. By doing so, men guarantee that their wives or sisters would not have to take their cars to the traffic department and maybe mix with dangerous male drivers.

Therefore, the findings of this research should be taken on tentative basis regarding female car owners. This should be the case, until further research is conducted on whether or not female car owners would engage in word-of-mouth communications and what influence these communications might have on their purchase decision.

A fifth limitation may be related to the generalisability of the research findings on rural life in Jordan. Although Amman has 55% of the total population of Jordan, the research findings may not be generalised on rural area. The researcher

suggests this limitation is based on his awareness of the Jordanian society. There is great variation between the way of thinking and behaviour of the people who live in urban areas and those who live in rural ones. For example, in the rural areas, mothers are allowed to inspect the houses of their married sons and for the sons to hand over their wages to their parents at the end of the month. However, this is not the case in the urban areas such as Amman.

Another limitation may be related to the nature of this study. It focusses on the importance of personal sources of information, car opinion leadership and word-of-mouth communication and its influence on the purchase decision of cars in Jordan. Therefore, the study does not pay any further attention to impersonal sources of information. For example, it does not answer questions as to how impersonal sources are managed in Jordan? What type of information they provide? How accessible are they? and how advertising messages are presented on TV, radio or newspapers and magazines?

The final limitation of this study is inherent in the generalisability of the findings on other Arabian society. Jordan has its own social and cultural backgrounds. The behaviour of Jordanians may differ from that of the Syrians, Lebanese, Saudies, and Algerians. Therefore, the research findings may not be generalised on other Arabian societies until further studies are conducted.

To sum up, this study applies specifically to personal sources of information within the capital of Jordan and the surrounding areas. Cultural restrictions also meant that Western concepts have to be examined and tested in a way that may result in the adaptation or changing of these concepts to the sensitive issues specific to Jordanian culture. Moreover, the cultural restrictions may, also, be extended to the validity of the study findings for other Arabian societies. These societies have their own social and cultural backgrounds which are different from those of Jordan. Furthermore, there are substantial social and cultural differences between males and females. Thus, the study findings may only apply to male car buyers as the sample of the study was dominated by them.

10.6. Suggestions for Further Research:

Because of the exploratory nature of this study, much more research is needed to validate the findings reported herein. As pointed out in the limitation section, the list of independent variables used in this study is by no means exhaustive. It is possible that some important variables or combination of variables active in word-of-mouth communication have been left out. More research is needed in this direction. Also, the role of some variables, for example, self-confidence and social contacts and information search, which have contradicted the existing literature,

require further research. This should clear any confusion as to whether the findings concerning these variables could be taken for granted.

The main empirical work of this study was done by questionnaire and the measurement of key variables was achieved through five-point scales. This approach has its own weakness especially when it comes to measuring psychological, attitudinal and behavioural variables. Almost all variables included in this study were of this type. Further research, using a different approach (e.g., personal interviews or ethnographic methods) are needed to examine whether similar findings to those of this study could be concluded. The use of this approach should also help to reveal whether new factors/variables related to Jordanians, other than those included in this study, could be discovered and concluded. A female researcher might succeed in using the approach of personal interviews or ethnographic methods in collecting data from Jordanian respondents, especially when females are included in the sample. She would be more socially acceptable and trusted than a male researcher. Therefore, a female researcher may be allowed into other peoples homes, and trusted with family information.

The possibility of collecting qualitative data by a female researcher, might imply the potential of conducting inductive research. This possibility could allow the discovery of a new way of explaining word-of-mouth communication in the

Jordanian context. For example, ethnographic research or comparative analysis for generating grounded theory might become possible.

If inductive research was to be successfully carried out, its findings might differ from those concluded in this study, as all the concepts tested here were generated in the West. The findings of inductive research might better describe these communication in Jordan, as all the concepts would be generated from the people themselves. Furthermore, generating a theory from data means that, most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research.

The survey of this study took place after the Jordanian buyer had exhibited his behaviour (the purchase of a car), and thus the answers obtained relied upon the respondent's recall of the situation. Moreover, the variable of time with reference to the buyer's decision making was totally eliminated. Therefore, further research would be needed to determine whether or not the measured variables in this study increase or decrease in importance, as the stage in the consumer decision making process progresses. For example, how do buyers realise the need for buying a car? What role personal sources of information play in the stage of problem recognition? How buyers identify their personal sources of information, who helps them in doing so and how do they screen the different possible sources? Who is involved in

evaluating the different car alternatives and what criteria are considered in this evaluation and how do they come to the final choice (purchase of a particular car)? Who is involved in this stage, and what type of influence personal sources and word-of-mouth communication play in this stage? Moreover, at which stage the influence of personal sources and word-of-mouth has its peak?

While the findings of this study may be generalised for the urban areas in Jordan, precautions and care must be considered regarding rural areas. There is a great variation between the behaviour of families who live in urban areas and those who live in rural ones. Families who live in rural areas are usually traditional, extended, patriarchal, endogamous, authoritarian, and occasionally polygamous. Marriages in rural areas are generally arranged by the parents, and the sexes are segregated. Endogamy in its extreme form requires a man to marry his paternal cousin. The family commands the primary loyalty of its members, all of whose decisions are made with the family's welfare in mind. A man is expected to give help and support to the family members, who include cousins and uncles, aunts and so on. Such support from other members of the family and dependence upon them are generalised to ones closest friends. Within the family, the relationship to the parents is basically a relationship of submission and obedience. However, almost the opposite is seen in urban areas.

Therefore, further research is needed to examine the influence of personal sources and word-of-mouth communication on the purchase decision of durables in rural areas. This is essential before generalising the findings of this study on these areas.

As Jordanians have perceived cars as high in complexity and perceived risk and low in testability, further research would be interesting to examine whether or not personal sources and word-of-mouth communication would have the same influence on the purchase of non-durables. These products are usually low in complexity and perceived risk, and may be high in testability. This investigation should clarify whether the influence of word-of-mouth communication in Jordan would change as the nature of the product changes from durable to non-durable.

Finally, a different area but worthy of study, is investigating whether or not word-of-mouth communication would occur when industrial purchase decisions are made by Jordanian firms. The nature of the industrial purchase decision is different from that of consumer purchase decision. It involves a multitude of complexities, such as different professionals participating in the purchase, each professional evaluating the required product on different dimensions and different supplies are considered. Therefore, it would be interesting to see, how word-of-mouth could occur in a professional environment? Who would be involved in the

purchase decision? What decision making stages they go through and in which stage word-of-mouth reaches its peak? What is the likelihood of these communications influencing the final outcome and how opinion leaders may be identified among such professionals?

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Appendix A:

Covering letter and Questionnaire in English



GLASGOW BUSINESS SCHOOL

Glasgow Business School, Department of Management Studies, University of Glasgow,
53-59 Southpark Avenue, Glasgow, G12 8LF, Scotland. U.K. Tel: 041-339 8855, Telex: 777070 UNIGLA, fax: 041-330 5669.

29 June 1989

STUDENT PROJECT

Dear Sir

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Management Studies at the University of Glasgow. At present I am undertaking research into "The impact of word-of-mouth on the purchase of durables in Jordan".

I would be most grateful if you could complete the enclosed questionnaire, which we hope will improve our understanding of the role of word-of-mouth communications in the purchase of durables within the Jordanian context.

May I assure you that any information you may provide will be treated in a strict confidence, and will only be used for the purpose of this research. Your help would be greatly appreciated. May I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Hussein El-Omari

Q1. In general, when you were considering buying your latest car, did you ask/search for information about it (e.g., from Advertising, Magazines, Newspapers, friends,....,etc)? (Please tick the appropriate reply)

Yes _____ No _____ Do not know _____

If yes, please answer the questions from 2-3. If your answer is No or Dont know, please move to question number 4.

Q2. In general, how much information did you ask/search for?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

A very large amount					Not at all
5	4	3	2		1

Q3. Please indicate below, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

	strongly agree				strongly disagree
a. My general knowledge of cars and car models/makes was not enough.	5	4	3	2	1
b. My technical/mechanical knowledge was not enough.	5	4	3	2	1
c. My experience in purchasing and selling cars was not enough.	5	4	3	2	1
d. My experience in repairing cars was not enough.	5	4	3	2	1
e. If my car breaks down, I won't know what has gone wrong with it.	5	4	3	2	1
f. Cars are complex and difficult to evaluate.	5	4	3	2	1
g. In general, cars are usually expensive and I had to be careful when I was thinking about buying my latest car.	5	4	3	2	1

- h. The price I paid for my latest car was higher than that of other cars I had before, therefore, I had to be careful and search for more information. 5 4 3 2 1
- i. I feel I am not sure of my self among strangers. 5 4 3 2 1
- j. In general, I feel I am not confident about my abilities. 5 4 3 2 1
- k. My self confidence was not enough to judge cars. 5 4 3 2 1
- l. A car can last more than five years, therefore I was concerned about buying a car which would keep running smoothly with minimum faults. 5 4 3 2 1

Q4. How important did you perceive the following statements when you were considering buying your latest car?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

- | | very
important | | | | Not
at
all |
|--|-------------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| a. You could have faced financial loss because of a continuous repairing and replacing of certain parts. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b. Your friends relatives or neighbours would have thought that the car was unsuitable for you. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c. The car could have not fit the way you think about yourself. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| d. The car could have had something wrong with it. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| e. The car could have been unsafe (e.g., the brakes do not stop the car when the engine gets over heated). | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Q5. To what extent would you

agree or disagree with the following statement?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

	Strongly agree			strongly disagree	
Buying a car is a very risky business.	5	4	3	2	1

Q6. How frequent do you visit or participate in social events (e.g., engagements, Weddings, and birthdays) with your friends, relatives and neighbours?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

Very frequent			Not at all	
5	4	3	2	1

Q7. How important were the following factors in providing you with the required information of whether or not to buy your latest car?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

	Very important			Not at all	
a. Your regular visits to your friends, relatives or neighbours.	5	4	3	2	1
b. Your participation in social events (e.g., engagements, Weddings, and birthdays) your friends, relatives or neighbours had.	5	4	3	2	1
c. Your general talks and discussions with your friends, relatives or neighbours are about general issues.	5	4	3	2	1

Q8. When you were considering buying your latest car, did you approach anyone (e.g., friends, relatives or neighbours) for advice, information or opinion? (Please tick the appropriate reply)

Yes _____ No _____ Do not know _____

If yes, please answer the questions from 9 to 11. If your answer is no or do not know, please move to question

number 12.

Q9. How much information did you ask/search from your relatives, friends or neighbours?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

A very large amount					Not at all
5	4	3	2	1	

Q10. please indicate below what form and frequency did your communication take?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

Form of communication	Very frequently					No communication at all
a. Mail	5	4	3	2	1	
b. Telephone	5	4	3	2	1	
c. Face-to-face	5	4	3	2	1	
d. Others (please specify)						
.....	5	4	3	2	1	
.....	5	4	3	2	1	

Q11. Please indicate below, the extent to which would you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

	Strongly agree					Strongly disagree
a. I asked my friends, relatives or neighbours because I needed to know many things about cars. For example, car's engine and economy of operation.	5	4	3	2	1	
b. Approaching a friend, relative						

or neighbour allowed me to take my time (e.g., my friend, relative or neighbour would not have to go to serve another waiting customer).

5 4 3 2 1

c. My friend, relative, or neighbour has been buying and driving cars for many years and have a lot of experience.

5 4 3 2 1

d. Approaching my friend, relative or neighbour would cost me nothing. For example, this does not incur travelling expenses.

5 4 3 2 1

e. Others (please specify)

.....

5 4 3 2 1

Q12. With regard to your latest car, could you please indicate below to what extent did your friends, relatives or neighbours provide you with information about the following.

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

- | | To a very
great
extent | | | | not
at
all |
|--|------------------------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| a. Make or place of purchase. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b. Car's performance (i.e., engine reliability, road handling, driving comfort and economy of operation. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c. Availability of good servicing (e.g., maintenance). | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| d. Availability of spare parts. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| e. Price/value for money. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| f. Checking the trustworthiness of the information received from advertising or read in a magazine or a newspaper. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| g. Others (please specify). | | | | | |

2. Also, I would talk to my friends, relatives or neighbours if:

- a. The performance of the car (i.e., engine reliability, Road handling, driving comfort and economy of operation) was good. 5 4 3 2 1
- b. The servicing (e.g., maintenance) was good. 5 4 3 2 1
- c. The spare parts were available. 5 4 3 2 1

Q17. How true would you see the following statements?
 (Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

- | | | Very
true | | Not true
at all | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------|---|--------------------|---|--|---|--|---|
| a. I would tell and advise my friends, relatives or neighbours about cars because they see me as an experienced car buyer. | 5 | | 4 | | 3 | | 2 | | 1 |
| b. I like telling my friends, relatives or neighbours about cars and I encourage them to approach me for advice or opinion because I have a lot of information about cars | 5 | | 4 | | 3 | | 2 | | 1 |
| c. I talk to my friends, relatives or neighbours about my car because they know I always buy a high standard quality car. | 5 | | 4 | | 3 | | 2 | | 1 |
| d. I would like to talk and advise my friends, relatives or neighbours about cars if I realize that the credibility of the content of the advertising message was not true. | 5 | | 4 | | 3 | | 2 | | 1 |
| e. Others (please specify) | | | | | | | | | |
| | 5 | | 4 | | 3 | | 2 | | 1 |
| | 5 | | 4 | | 3 | | 2 | | 1 |

Q18. When you were considering buying your latest car, has anyone said to you, for example, you should buy; I want you to buy; or I would like to see you buying this kind car? (Please tick the appropriate reply)

Yes _____ No _____ Do not know _____

If yes, please answer the questions 19 and 20. If your answer is no or do not know, please move to question number 21.

Q19. In your personal opinion, to what extent did they influence your decision of whether or not to buy your latest car?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

To a very					Not at
great extent					all
5	4	3	2		1

Q20. Please indicate below who were they and how important was their opinion or influence on whether or not to buy your latest car?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

	Very important				Not at all
a. Wife/husband and Children.	5	4	3	2	1
b. Parents.	5	4	3	2	1
c. Relatives (e.g., brothers and sisters).	5	4	3	2	1
d. Close friends.	5	4	3	2	1
e. Colleagues.	5	4	3	2	1
f. Neighbours.	5	4	3	2	1
g. Others (please specify)					

.....	5	4	3	2	1
.....	5	4	3	2	1

Q21. When you were considering buying your latest car, did you compare or were you willing to compare it with those owned by your friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours? (Please tick the appropriate reply)

Yes _____ No _____ Do not know _____

If yes, please answer the questions 22 and 23. If your answer is no or do not know, please move to question number 24.

Q22. If yes, please indicate below how similar/dissimilar do you view your friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours (whom you compared or whom you were willing to compare you latest car with) in terms of the following:

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

	Very similar			Very dis-similar	
a. Income.	5	4	3	2	1
b. Occupation.	5	4	3	2	1
c. General opinion.	5	4	3	2	1
d. Education.	5	4	3	2	1
e. Age.	5	4	3	2	1
f. Others (please specify).					
.....	5	4	3	2	1
.....	5	4	3	2	1

Q23. How important do you consider the following factors when you want to choose a friend, relative, colleagues or a neighbour for either comparing or being willing to compare your car?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

	Very important			Not at all important	
a. Income.	5	4	3	2	1

b. Occupation.	5	4	3	2	1
c. General opinion.	5	4	3	2	1
d. Education.	5	4	3	2	1
e. Age.	5	4	3	2	1
f. Others (please specify).					
.....	5	4	3	2	1
.....	5	4	3	2	1

Q24. Has anyone (e.g, friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours) approached you for advice, information or opinion before buying their own cars? (Please tick the appropriate reply)

Yes _____ No _____ Do not know _____

If yes, please answer the questions number 25 and 26. If your answer is no or do not know, please move to question number 27.

Q25. How much information did you give them when they approached you for advice?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

A very large amount				Not at all	
5	4	3	2	1	

Q26. What form and frequency did their communication take?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

Form of communication	Very frequently				No communication at all
_____	5	4	3	2	1
a. Mail	5	4	3	2	1
b. Telephone	5	4	3	2	1
c. Face-to-face	5	4	3	2	1
d. Others (please specify)					

..... 5 4 3 2 1

Q27. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

	Strongly agree				Strongly disagree
a. I always listen to radio and watch TV. programmes.	5	4	3	2	1
b. I always read newspaper, and magazines.	5	4	3	2	1
c. I always attend or participate in social events (e.g., engagements, Weddings, and birthdays) my friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours had.	5	4	3	2	1
d. I always attend national ceremonies (e.g., Jordan's independence day).	5	4	3	2	1
e. I would like to belong to a social club (e.g., The Muslim Youth Club).	5	4	3	2	1
f. I like to buy the latest model of my car when it comes out.	5	4	3	2	1
g. I always plan to replace my car with a new one.	5	4	3	2	1
h. I normally influence my friend's, relative's or neighbour's decision when they buy a car.	5	4	3	2	1
i. My friends, relatives or neighbours always take my advice into consideration when buying their cars.	5	4	3	2	1
j. I have a great deal of experience in selling and purchasing cars.	5	4	3	2	1
k. I have a great deal of experience in repairing cars.	5	4	3	2	1

- l. I am always confident about my abilities when buying cars. 5 4 3 2 1
- m. I am always confident about myself in terms of judging cars. 5 4 3 2 1
- n. I always like to join in discussions about cars. 5 4 3 2 1
- o. I always like to gather information and know about the latest car makes. 5 4 3 2 1

Q28. How important were the following sources in providing you with the required information of whether or not to buy your latest car?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

	Very important	4	3	2	1 Not at all important
<u>Sources of information</u>					
<u>personal sources</u>					
a. Wife/husband and children	5	4	3	2	1
b. Father and mother	5	4	3	2	1
c. Relatives (e.g., brothers and sisters)	5	4	3	2	1
d. Friends, colleagues or neighbours.	5	4	3	2	1
e. Others (please specify)					
.....	5	4	3	2	1
.....	5	4	3	2	1

Impersonal sources

f. Advertising (TV & Radio)	5	4	3	2	1
g. Sales men in car Showrooms.	5	4	3	2	1
h. Newspapers, brochures, leaflets and Magazines (e.g., The Arab Magazine).	5	4	3	2	1
i. Others (please specify)					
.....	5	4	3	2	1
.....	5	4	3	2	1

Q29. In your opinion, how credible were these sources of information?

Please note:

1. Highly credible: This source provided trustworthy information on the characteristics (e.g., quality and reliability) of cars.

2. Not credible: This source was not capable of providing trustworthy information on the characteristics (e.g., quality and reliability) of cars.

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

Sources of information	Highly credible					Not credible
<hr/>	5	4	3	2	1	ible
personal sources						
<hr/>						
a. Wife/husband and children.	5	4	3	2	1	
b. Father and mother.	5	4	3	2	1	
c. Relatives (e.g., brothers and sisters).	5	4	3	2	1	
d. Friends, colleagues, or neighbours.	5	4	3	2	1	
e. Others (please specify)						
.....	5	4	3	2	1	

Impersonal sources

f. Advertising (TV & Radio).	5	4	3	2	1
g. Sales men in Car Showrooms.	5	4	3	2	1
h. Newspapers, brochures, leaflets and magazines (e.g., The Arab Magazine).	5	4	3	2	1
i. Others (please specify)					
.....	5	4	3	2	1
.....	5	4	3	2	1

Q30. To what extent would you say your communication (i.e., exchanging information) with friends, relatives or neighbours influenced your decision of whether or not to buy your latest car?

(Please circle the most appropriate number on the following scale)

To a great extent					Not at all
5	4	3	2		1

Q31. Please indicate below your level of education.

(Please tick the appropriate reply)

- a. Below Secondary School. _____
- b. Secondary School and any other training courses. _____
- c. Diploma (College degree). _____
- d. University degree. _____
- e. Post graduate degree. _____

Q32. What Age group are you in?

(Please tick the appropriate reply)

- a. 20-29 _____
- b. 30-39 _____
- c. 40-49 _____
- d. 50-59 _____
- e. 60+ _____

Q33. Into which of the following groups does your monthly income fall? (Please tick the appropriate reply)

- a. J.D 100 or below _____
- b. 101 - 150 _____
- c. 151 - 200 _____
- d. 201 - 250 _____
- e. 251 + _____

Q34. Are you

- a. Male _____
- b. Female _____

Q35. Please state your present occupation.

Write here _____

Appendix B:

Covering letter from "Mu'tah University" to the Director of the Jordanian Traffic Authority and the English translation.



رقم ٢٠٤/٢٠٤٨
التاريخ ١١/١١/١٤١٠ هـ
الموافق ٩/٨/١٩٨٩ م

عطفة مدير الترخيص والسواقين المحترم

تحية طيبة وبعد،

تشهد جامعة مؤتة بان السيد حسين عبد الله العمري هو احد مبعوثيها
الى بريطانيا لنيل درجة الدكتوراه في الادارة وهو بحاجة الى معلومات خاصة ببحثه
بعنوان " تاثير الاتمال السلوي المباشر على شراء السيارات في الاردن " .

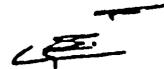
ارجو التكرم بتقديم التسهيلات اللازمة له ، شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم .

والقبولوا لائق الاحترام ...

مدير مكتب الارتباط


سامح هنداوي

إيضاحاً شرح ارسال
لتقديم وشكر لكم معاً ،


٨/٤.

To the Director of the Licence Authority

Dear Sir,

This is to certify that Mr. Hussein Abdulla El-Omari is one of our scholars who is pursuing his studies in Britain.

Mr El-Omari is undertaking Ph.D research in " word-of-mouth communication and its influence on the purchase of cars in Jordan".

We hope that you will offer him all the help he needs.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

Sameh Hindawi

Director of Liaison Office.

Appendix C:

Covering letter and Questionnaire in Arabic

" بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم "

الأخت / الاخ المحترم ،

تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

كجزء من متطلبات الحصول على شهادة الدكتوراه ، فاني أقوم باجراء
دراسة عن تأثير الاتصال الشفوي المباشر على المستهلك الاردني عند عملية
شراء للسيارات .

ان تفضلكم وساهمتكم بتخصيص جزء من وقتكم الثمين للاجابة على هذا
الاستبيان لهو مساعدة وخدمة كبيرة لي من اجل اتمام هذه الدراسة التي
ليس لها هدف آخر غير الهدف الاكاديمي . علما ان هذا الاستبيان سوف
لن يطلع عليه أحد ، وسوف يتلف حال الانتهاء من تجميعه . هذه الدراسة
تتطلب اكبر عدد ممكن من الاجابات ، لذا فاجابتكم لها الاثر الكبير على
نتائج هذه الدراسة .

• وشكرا لتعاونكم ومساعدتكم لي .

الباحث

حسين عبدالله العمري

س ١ : بشكل عام ، عندما كنت تفكر بشراء سيارتك الاخيره ، هل سألت او بحثت عن معلومات عنها قبل شرائك لها ؟
(الرجاء اختيار الاجابة المناسبه) .

نعم — لا — لا اعرف —

اذا كانت الاجابة نعم ، الرجاء الاجابة على الاسئلة رقم ٢ ، ٣ ، ٤ ،
واذا كانت الاجابة لا او لا اعرف فالرجاء الانتقال الى السؤال رقم ٤ .

س ٢ : بشكل عام ، كم كانت كمية المعلومات التي سألت او بحثت عنها ؟
(الرجاء وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي)

قليلة جدا ولا تذكر كمية كبيرة جدا

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

س ٣ : الى أى مدى توافق او لا توافق على الجمل التالية والتي من الممكن ان تكون عوامل قد شجعتك او حثتك على البحث عن المعلومات عن السيارة .
(الرجاء وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي)

أ . معلوماتي العامة عن السيارات وعن لا وافق
انواع السيارات لم تكن كافية . بشدة

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ب . معلوماتي الفنية والميكانيكية
عن السيارات لم تكن كافية .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ت . خبرتي في بيع وشراء السيارات
لم تكن كافية .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ث . خبرتي في تصليح السيارات
غير كافية .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ج . عادة انه لم الصعب علي ان
اعرف ماذا حصل لسيارتي اذا تعطلت

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

اوافق بشدة		لا اوافق بشدة			
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	ح . السيارات معقدة وعملية تقييمها مسألة صعبة .
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	خ . بشكل عام ، السيارات غالية الثلث وكان عليّ ان اكون حذرا جدا عندما كنت افكر بشراء السيارة
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	د . السعر الذي دفعته لسيارتي الاخير كان اكبر من السعر الذي دفعته على السيارات الاخرى التي اشتريتها سابقا ولذلك كان عليّ ان اكون حذرا وان ابحث عن الكثير من المعلومات عنها لتقييمها
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	ز . عادة انا اشعر بانني غير متأكد من نفسي امام الغرباء .
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	ر . بشكل عام ، اشعر بانني غير واثق من قدراتي لتقييم الاشياء .
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	ز . ثقتي بنفسني لم تكن كافية لتحكم على السيارات .
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	س . عادة السيارة تستعمل لمدة اقلها خمسة سنوات ولذلك كنت مهتما بشراء السيارة التي تعمل بشكل جيد ، تبقى مريحة واخطاؤها الفنية والميكانيكية قليلة .

س : عند ما كنت تفكر بشراء سيارتك الاخير ، الى أى مدى كنت تدرك امكانية
حدوث الاشياء اللاحقة لك ؟

(الرجاء وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي)

- أ . ممكن انك قد واجهت خسارة مادية بسبب تصليح مستمر او تبديل قطع غيار في سيارتك .
- ب . قد يعتقد اصحابك بأن السيارة غير مناسبة لك .
- ت . قد تكون السيارة غير مناسبة لافكارك الشخصية عن نفسك .
- ث . قد تحتوى السيارة على عطل متكرر وانها لا تعمل بشكل منتظم .
- ج . ممكن ان تكون السيارة غير آمنة او خطيرة ، على سبيل المثال الضوابط لا تعمل بشكل جيد عند ارتفاع درجة حرارة المحرك .

لم ادرك هذا على الاطلاق

ادركته بشكل كبير جدا

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

س . الى أى مدى توافق او لا توافق على الجملة التالية :

- شراء السيارة عملية خطيرة جدا ويجب الحذر من اجل شراء السيارة الانسب نوعية وسعرا .

(الرجاء وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي)

لاوافق بشدة

وافق بشدة

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

س . الى أى مدى كان تكرر حضورك ومشاركتك في الحفلات والمناسبات الاجتماعية (على سبيل المثال ، مشاركتك او حضورك لحفلات الزواج وحفلات الميلاد مع اصدقائك او اقاربك او جيرانك) .

(الرجاء وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي) .

لم احضر هذه الاشياء

احضر بشكل متكرر جدا

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

س ٧ . كم كانت أهمية العوامل التالية في تزويدك بالمعلومات اللازمة لاتخاذ قرارك لتشتري او لا تشتري السيارة ؟

(الرجاء وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي)

مهمة جدا	غير مهمة على الاطلاق	١	٢	٣	٤	٥

أ . زيارتك المتكرره لاصحابك ،
اقاربك او جيرانك .

١	٢	٣	٤	٥

ب . مشاركتك في الحفلات الاجتماعية
(على سبيل المثال ، حفلات الزواج ،
حفلات عيد الميلاد ، حفلات تخرج
اصدقاءك من جامعة او معهد . . الخ)

١	٢	٣	٤	٥

ت . محادثات ومناقشات مع
اصدقائك ، اقاربك او جيرانك عن امور
عامه .

س ٨ : عند ما كنت تفكر بشراء سيارتك الاخيره ، هل استعنت بآراء بعض الاشخاص
(على سبيل المثال ، اصدقاء ، اقارب او جيران) او هل سألتهم عن نصيحة
او معلومات عن السيارة . ؟

(الرجاء اختيار الاجابه المناسبه) .

نعم — لا — لا اعرف —

اذا كانت الاجابة نعم ، الرجاء الاجابة على الاسئلة رقم ٩ ، ١٠ ، ١١ ، واذا
كانت الاجابة لا او لا اعرف فالرجاء الانتقال الى السؤال رقم ١٢ .

س ٩ : كم كانت كمية المعلومات التي سألت او بحثت عنها من اصدقائك ، اقاربك
او جيرانك ؟

(الرجاء وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي) .

كمية قليلة جدا	كمية كبيرة
بحيث انها لا تذكر	جدا
١	٢
٣	٤
٥	

س. ١ : كيف كان شكل الاتصال بينك وبينهم ، وكم كان تكرار حدوث هذا النوع من الاتصال ؟

(الرجاء اختيار شكل الاتصال وكذلك وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة المناسبة على المقياس التالي) .

لم يحدث على الاطلاق	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	كان متكررا بشكل كبير جدا
أ . بواسطة البريد	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	
ب . بواسطة التليفون	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	
ت . بواسطة الزيارات الشخصية والتحدث (وجهها لوجه) .	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	
ث . الرجاء بيان اى شكل اتصال آخر (الرجاء كتابته ادناه وبيان مدى تكرار حدوثه)	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	

س. ١١ . الى اى مدى توافق او لا توافق على الجمل التالية كموامل قد شجعتك او حثتك على الاستعانة برأى او بحث عن معلومات من صديق او قريب او جار (الرجاء وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي) .

اوافق بشدة

لا اوافق بشدة

أ . كنت مهتما بالبحث والسؤال عن اشياء كثيرة فسي السيارات . فعلى سبيل المثال كنت مهتما بالسؤال عن هيكل السيارة بشكل عام وكذلك كنت مهتما بالسؤال عن اشياء معقدة مثل محرك السيارة وهذه الاشياء لا يمكن الحصول عليها من رجل البيعات .	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
ب . الاستعانة برأى او البحث عن معلومات من صديق او قريب او جار لا تتطلب منك ان تكون متعجلا كما هو الحال عند استشارة رجل البيعات .	١	٢	٣	٤	٥

اوافق بشدة

لا اوافق بشدة

ت . اصدقائي ، اقاربي او جيراني
لديهم خبرة كبيرة في السيارات كونهم
اشترؤا عدد من السيارات وكذلك لهم
باع طويل في السواقه .

٥ ٤ ٣ ٢ ١

ث . استشارة صديق ، قريب او جار
لا يتطلب منك دفع نقود كضمن للاستشارة
كما هو الحال عند استشارة ميكانيكي .

٥ ٤ ٣ ٢ ١

ج . اذا كانت هنالك أية اسباب
اخرى دفعتك لاستشارة قريب ، صديق
او جار فالرجاء كتابتها .

٥ ٤ ٣ ٢ ١

س٢٠ الى اى مدى تعتقد أنك اذا سألت او كان عندك الميول لسؤال اصدقائك ،
اقاربك او جيرانك بأنهم سيزودوك بالمعلومات عن الاشياء التالية .
(الرجاء وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة المناسبة على المقياس التالي) .

توقعته
بشكل كبير
جدا

لم اتوقع هذا
على الاطلاق

٥ ٤ ٣ ٢ ١

١ . معلومات عن نوع ومكان شراء السيارة

٥ ٤ ٣ ٢ ١

ب . نوعية السيارة (على سبيل المثال
تحملية المحرك ، المسير على الطريق ،
راحة السواقه والاقتصاد في الوقود . الخ .

توقعته الى
مدى كبير جدا

لم اتوقع هذا على
الاطلاق

ت . توفر خدمة جيدة (على سبيل
المثال ، توفر خدمة تصليح للسيارات
على مستوى عال) .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ث . توفر قطع غيار للسيارة

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ج . نوعية وقيمة السيارة مقارنة
مع السعر الذي سيدفع لشرائها .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ح . التأكد من مدى صحة المعلومات
التي حصلت عليها من اعلان ، مجلة
او جريدة .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

خ . اذا كانت هنالك اية اشياء
اخرى كنت تتوقع صدقك ، قريبك
او جيرانك تزويدك بها ، فالرجاء
كتابتها .

.....
.....
.....

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

س٣٠ . عندما استعنت او اذا كانت لديك الرغبة بالاستعانة ببعض الاشخاص
(مثلا اصحابك ، اقاربك او جيرانك) وسألتهم عن معلومات او نصيحة عن السيارة
فهل زودوك او هل تعتقد بأنهم سيزودوك بأنواع مختلفة من المعلومات عن السيارات؟
(الرجاء اختيار الاجابة الانسب) .

نعم — لا — لا اعرف —

س٣١ . هل تحبان تتحدث عن السيارات اذا لم تكن في نيتك شراء واحدة ؟
(الرجاء اختيار الاجابة المناسبة) .

نعم — لا — لا اعرف —

س ٥١ . اذا كانت الاجابة (لسوءال رقم ١٤) نعم ، ما هي اغلبية تحدثك
عن السيارات لاصدقائك ، اقاربك او جيرانك ؟
(الرجاء اختيار رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي)

قليل جدا بحيث انها
لا تذكر على الاطلاق

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

س ١٠ . الى أى مدى توافق او لا توافق على الجمل التالية كعوامل قد تحفزك
للحديث عن سيارتك لاصحابك ، اقاربك او جيرانك .
(الرجاء اختيار رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي)

لا اوافق بشدة اوافق بشدة

أ . اتحدث عن سيارتي لاصدقائي
او جبراني اذا كانت نوعية السيارة
(على سبيل المثال ، قوة المحرك
راحة السيارة ، الاقتصاد في الوقود)
غير جيدة .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ب . اتحدث اذا كانت الخدمة
المتوفرة للسيارة (على سبيل المثال
توفر خدمة تصليح للسيارة على مستوى
عال) غير جيدة .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ت . اذا كانت قطع غيار السيارة
غير متوفرة بشكل جيد

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ث . كذلك اتحدث عن سيارتي
لاصدقائي ، اقاربي او جبراني اذا
كانت نوعية السيارة جيدة .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ج . اتحدث عن سيارتي لاصدقائي
اقاربي او جبراني اذا كانت الخدمة
(مثل الخدمة المتوفرة لصيانة السيارة
جيدة) .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

اوافق بشدة

لا اوافق بشدة

ح . كذلك اتحدث عن السيارة
اذا كانت قطع الغيار اللازمة لها
متوفرة بشكل جيد .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

خ . اذا كانت هنالك اية اسباب
اخرى تدفعك للحديث عن سيارتك
لا صدقائك ، اقاربك او جيرانك ،
فالرجاء كتابتها .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

س١٧ . الى اى مدى ترى صحة الجمل التالية كعوامل قد تحفزك للحديث عن
سيارتك .

(الاجابة اختيار رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي) .

صحيحة جدا

غير صحيحة
على الاطلاق

أ . عادة أنا اخبر وانصح اصدقائي ،
اقاربي او جيرانى عن السيارات بسبب
انهم يعرفونى كخبير ومقيم جيد
للسيارات .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ب . عادة أنا اخبر وانصح اصدقائي ،
اقاربي او جيرانى عن السيارات
بسبب انهم يعرفونى كشخص يملك
الكثير من المعلومات عن السيارات .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ت . كذلك اخبرهم وانصحهم عن
السيارات ، لانهم يعرفونى كشخص
يشترى سيارات بنوعيه عاليه .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

صحيحة جدا

غير صحيح على
الاطلاق

ث . كذلك يمكن ان اتحدث لاصدقائي ،
اقاربي او جيرانني اذا لاحظت ان محسنتوى
دعاية او اعلان عن السيارات كان غير صحيح

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ج . الرجاء الكتابة ادناه اية اسباب
اخرى تدفعك للحديث عن السيارات .

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

س١٨ . عندما كنت تفكر بشراء سيارتك الاخيرة ، هل قال لك أحد على سبيل المثال ،
يجب ان تشتري هذا النوع من السيارات او ارفع ان اراك مشتريا هذا النوع
من السيارات ؟

(الرجاء اختيار الاجابة الانسب) .

نعم — لا — لا اعرف —

- اذا كانت الاجابة نعم ، الرجاء الاجابة على الاسئلة رقم ١٩ و ٢٠ و اذا
كانت الاجابة لا او لا اعرف ، فالرجاء تركهما دون اجابة والانتقال الى السؤال
رقم ٢١ .

س١٩ . في رأيك الشخصي ، الى اى مدى اثر / اثروا على قرارك بشأن شراء
او عدم شراء سيارتك . (الرجاء اختيار رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس
التالي) .

اثرت بشكل
كبير جدا

لم يتأثر على
الاطلاق

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

س٢٠ . الرجاء الايضاح ادناه من كان هذا الشخص / الاشخاص وما هي تأثيرهم
على قرارك في شراء او عدم شراءك لسيارتك . (الرجاء اختيار رقم الاجابة
الانسب على المقياس التالي)

مهمة جدا

غير مهمة
على الاطلاق

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

أ . الزوجة والابناء

١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

ب . الوالدين

مهجة جدا	غير مهمة على الاطلاق	1	2	3	4	5
	ت . الاقارب (مثلا ، الاخوان ، الاخوات	1	2	3	4	5
	ث . الاصدقاء .	1	2	3	4	5
	ج . زملاء العمل .	1	2	3	4	5
	ح . الجيران .	1	2	3	4	5
	خ . (آخرين ، الرجاء تحديدهم ادنائه .	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5

س ٢١ . عندما كنت تفكر بشراء سيارتك الاخيره ، هل قارنتها او هل كانت لديك الرغبة بمقارنتها مع السيارات الاخرى التي كانت بحيازة اصدقائك ، اقاربك أو جيرانك (.

(الرجااء اختيار الاجابة المناسبة) .

نعم — لا — لا اعرف —

— اذا كانت الاجابة نعم ، فالرجاء الاجابة على الاسئلة ٢٢ ، ٢٣ ، واذا كانت الاجابة لا او لا اعرف فالرجاء الانتقال الى السؤال رقم ٢٤ .

س ٢٢ . اذا قارنت او اذا كانت لديك الرغبة في المقارنة ، فالرجاء الايضاح ادناه الى اى مدى كان وجه التشابه او عدم التشابه بينك وبين اصدقائك ، اقاربك ، جيرانك من ناحية الاشياء التالية .

(الرجااء اختيار رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي) .

متشابهة بشكل كبير	غير متشابهة على الاطلاق	1	2	3	4	5
	أ . الدخل .	1	2	3	4	5
	ب . الوظيفة .	1	2	3	4	5
	ت . آرائهم بشكل عام .	1	2	3	4	5
	ث . التعليم .	1	2	3	4	5
	ج . السن .	1	2	3	4	5

متشابهة بشكل
كبير

غير متشابهة على
الاطلاق

ح . أى اشياء اخرى (الرجاء
ايضاها ادناه) .

.....
.....

س ٢٣ . اذا قارنت او اذا كانت لديك الرغبة بمقارنة سيارتك مع السيارات التي يملكها
اصدقائك ، اقاربك او جيرانك ، فكم تكون اهمية العوامل التالية لك في اختيارك
الشخصي الذي ترغب بمقارنة سيارتك معه . (الرجاء اختيار رقم الاجابة الانسب على
المقياس التالي) .

مهمة جدا

غير مهمة على
الاطلاق

أ . الدخل .
ب . الوظيفة .
ت . آرائهم بشكل عام .
ث . التعليم .
ج . السن .
ح . أى عوامل اخرى (الرجاء
ايضاها ادناه) .
.....
.....

س ٢٤ . هل سألك او استشارك احد عن رأى ، نصيحة او معلومات قبيل
شرايتهم لسياراتهم ؟

نعم — لا — لا اعرف —

— اذا كانت الاجابة نعم ، الرجاء الاجابة على الاسئلة رقم ٢٥ ، ٢٦ ،
اذا كانت الاجابة لا او لا اعرف ، الرجاء الانتقال الى السؤال رقم ٢٧ .

س ٢٥ . كم كانت كمية المعلومات التي اعطيتموها للشخص / الاشخاص عندما سألكم عن رأيك ، نصيغتك او عندما سألكم عن معلومات عن السيارات التي كانوا يبنون شرائها ؟

(الرجاء اختيار رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي) .

كانت كمية قليلة جدا	1	2	3	4	5
بحيث انها لا تذكر					
كانت كمية كبيرة جدا					

س ٢٦ . كيف كان شكل الاتصال بينك وبينهم وكم كان تكرار حدوث هذا النوع من الاتصال .

كان متكررا بشكل كبير جدا	1	2	3	4	5
لم يحدث على الاطلاق					
أ . بواسطة البريد .					
ب . بواسطة التليفون .					
ت . بواسطة الزيارات الشخصية والتحدث (وجهها لوجه)					
ث . الرجاء الكتابة ادناه عن اى شكل اتصال آخر حدث بينك وبينهم وبيان تكرار حدوث هذا .					
.....	1	2	3	4	5

س ٢٧ . الى اى مدى توافق اولا توافق على الجمل التالية :
(الرجاء اختيار رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي)

لا اوافق بشدة	1	2	3	4	5
اوافق بشدة					
أ . انا دائما استمع الى برامج التلفزيون					
ب . انا دائما اقرأ المجلات (مثلا مجلة العربي) والصحف .					

اوافق بشدة

لا اوافق بشدة

ت . انا دائما احضر واشترك في
الاحتفالات والمناسبات الاجتماعية
مثلا ، طهور ، عقد قران ، زواج ...
الخ) . مع اصدقائي ، اقاربي ،
وجيرانني .

1) 2 3 4 5

ث . انا دائما اشترك / ارغب
المشاركة والاحتفال بالاعياد والاحتفالات
القومية (مثلا عيد استقلال الاردن)

1) 2 3 4 5

ج . انا انتمي او ارغب الانتماء الى
نادى اجتماعي (على سبيل المثال ،
نادى الشباب المسلم ، و نادى الشباب
المسيحي) .

1) 2 3 4 5

ح . انا ارغب دائما بشراء احد
موديل للسيارات عند ادخالها للسوق
الاردني .

1) 2 3 4 5

خ . انا دائما توجد عندي خطة
لتبديل سيارتي الحالية بسيارة جديدة

1) 2 3 4 5

د . تأثيري على قرار اصدقائي ،
اقاربي او جيرانني ، عند شرائهم
لسياراتهم ، كبير .

1) 2 3 4 5

ذ . اصدقائي ، اقاربي او جيرانني
ياخذون بنصيحتي عند شرائهم لسياراتهم

1) 2 3 4 5

ر . توجد عندي خبره كبيرة عن بيع
وشراء السيارات

1) 2 3 4 5

ز . توجد عندي خبرة كبيرة عن
تصليح السيارات .

1) 2 3 4 5

- س . انا دائما اثق في مقدراتي ١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥
- ش . انا دائما اثق في نفسي في الحكم على السيارات . ١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥
- ص . انا دائما احب ان اشارك في نقاشات وكذلك احب ان اسمع شروحات عن السيارة . ١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥
- ض . انا دائما ارجب ان اجمع المعلومات وان اتعرف على آخر تطويع حدث على السيارات . ١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

س ٢٨ . كم كانت اهمية المصادر التالية بتزويدك بالمعلومات اللازمة من حيث شرائك او عدم شرائك لسيارتك الاخير ٢ .

(الرجاء اختيار مصدر المعلومات وكذلك وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي) .

مصادر المعلومات
غير مهمة على الاطلاق
مهمة جدا

مصادر المعلومات الشخصية
=====

- أ . الزوجة والابناء ١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥
- ب . الوالدين ١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥
- ت . الاقارب (مثل الاخ ، الاخت . . . الخ ١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥
- ث . الاصدقاء والجيران وزملاء العمل ١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥
- ج . أية مصادر اخرى (الرجاء كتابتها ادناه) .
-
-
- ١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥

المصادر الغير شخصية للمعلومات

- أ . الاعلان (على التلفزيون ، الراديو او غيرها .
- ب . محلات العرض (معارك السيارات)
- ت . الجرائد ، المجلات او النشرات
- ث . أية مصادر اخرى (الرجاء كتابتها ادناه
-
-

س ٢٩ . في رأيك الشخصي ، كم كانت مصداقية مصادر المعلومات التالية :

ملاحظة : نعني بالمصداقية ما يلي :

- ١ . مصداقيتها عالية . تعني ان مصدر المعلومات هذا قد زودك بمعلومات موثوق بها عن السيارة ، وكذلك انت بنفسك وجد هذه المعلومات صحيحة على سبيل المثال عن خصائص السيارة (مثل نوعية السيارة) .
- ٢ . مصداقيتها معدومة : تعني ان مصدر المعلومات هذا لم يستطع تزويدك بمعلومات تثق بها على سبيل المثال عن خصائص السيارة (مثل نوعية السيارة) .
- (الرجاء اختيار مصدر المعلومات وكذلك وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي) .

مصداقيتها معدومة . مصداقيتها عالية

مصادر المعلومات

المصادر الشخصية

- أ . الزوج والابناء
- ب . الوالدين .
- ت . الاقارب (الاخوان والاحوات . . الخ
- ث . الاصدقاء والجيران وزملاء العمل .
- ج . مصادر اخرى (الرجاء كتابتها ادناه) .
-

المصادر الغير شخصية للمعلومات
=====

٥	٤	٣	٢	١	١ . الاعلان (على التلفزيون ، الراديو او غيرها
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	ب . محلات العرض (معارض السيارات)
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	ت . الجرائد والمجلات والنشرات
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	ث . مصادر اخرى الرجاء كتابتها ادناه
٥	٤	٣	٢	١

س٣ . الى أى مدى تعتقد بأن اتصالك / سوءالك / استعانتك برأى صديقك او قريبك او جارك او سوءالهم عن المعلومات قد اثر على قرارك من حيث شرائك او عدم شرائك للسياره ؟

(الرجاء وضع دائرة حول رقم الاجابة الانسب على المقياس التالي) .

لم تؤثر على الاطلاق

اثر بشكل كبير

٥ ٤ ٣ ٢ ١

س٣١ . الرجاء الايضاح ادناه مستواك التعليمي ،

(الرجاء اختيار الاجابة المناسبة) .

- ١ . دون مستوى الثانوية العامة .
 ب . ثانوية عامة .
 ت . شهادة معهد / كلية (دبلوما) .
 ث . الشهادة الجامعية الاولى .
 ج . ماجستير او دكتوراه .

س٣٢ . في اى فترة من الفترات التالية يقع عمرك ؟

(الرجاء اختيار الاجابة المناسبة) .

- ١ . من ٢٠ - ٢٩ سنة
 ب . ٣٠ - ٣٩ سنة
 ت . ٤٠ - ٤٩ سنة

- ث . ٥٠ - ٥٩ سنة
 ج . ٦٠ فما فوق سنة

س٣٣ . في أى من الفترات التالية يقع دخلك الشهرى ؟
 (الرجاء اختيار الاجابة المناسبة) .

- أ . اقل من ١٠٠ دينار
 ب . من ١٠١ - ١٥٠ دينار
 ت . من ١٥١ - ٢٠٠ دينار
 ث . من ٢٠١ - ٢٥٠ دينار
 ج . من ٢٥١ فأكثر

س٣٤ : هل انت :

انثى _____ ذكر _____

س٣٥ . الرجاء الكتابة ادناه وظيفتك الحالية .