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**EXPLORING THE BRAND ORIGIN EFFECT ON CHINESE AUTOMOBILES : A CASE STUDY OF WULING MOTORS IN MANADO****MENGEKSPLORASI EFEK ASAL BRAND PADA MOBIL CHINA : STUDI KASUS WULING MOTORS DI MANADO**

by

**Timothy Wullur<sup>1</sup>**  
**Willem J.F.A. Tumbuan<sup>2</sup>**  
**Farlane S. Rumokoy<sup>3</sup>**<sup>123</sup>Faculty of Economics and Business, International Business Administration, Management Program  
Sam Ratulangi University

E-mail:

[<sup>1</sup>twullur@gmail.com](mailto:twullur@gmail.com)[<sup>2</sup>wjf@yahoo.com](mailto:wjf@yahoo.com)[<sup>3</sup>princefarlent@gmail.com](mailto:princefarlent@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Wuling Motors is a newcomer in the Indonesian car market. The purpose of this study is to provide insight into the Wuling automobile product and effects of its brand origin. This is done by interviewing 30 consumers to provide their insight and review of the brand origin and the quality of the product itself, from the perspective of owners as well as non-owners. This research is a qualitative research using case study approach. The results show that Chinese brand origin is still a disadvantage in attracting potential buyers, because the stigma and negative stereotypes are still evident. There is still doubt regarding the product's build quality and serviceability. Consumers perceive that Wuling's strongest points are its features and its luxuriousness. Performance and exterior toughness are also strengths of the Wuling automobile. The weaknesses are in its firm reputation which is still unsettled, and the maintenance and repair service is still found to be lacking, both in scale and quality of service. The company is advised to grow its service capabilities in order to provide more satisfaction for the consumers, create more trust in the product and at the same time improve its reputation.

**Keywords:** *brand origin and perceived quality*

**Abstrak:** Wuling Motors adalah pendatang baru dalam pasar otomotif Indonesia. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk memberikan wawasan tentang produk otomotif Wuling dan pengaruh dari asal mereknya. Hal ini dilakukan dengan cara mewawancarai 30 konsumen untuk memberikan wawasan dan ulasan mengenai produk mobil Wuling, dari sudut pandang pemilik maupun non pemilik. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa asal mereknya yang dari China masih merupakan kelemahan dalam menarik calon pembeli, karena stigma dan stereotip yang masih melekat. Masih ada keraguan mengenai kealitan dan ketahanannya. Konsumen melihat keunggulan mobil Wuling adalah dalam fitur dan kemewahannya. Performa dan ketangguhan eksterior juga merupakan keunggulan dari mobil Wuling. Kelemahannya adalah pada reputasi perusahaannya yang belum teruji, dan pelayanan perbaikan dan perawatan masih kurang, baik dari kapasitas maupun kualitas. Sebaiknya Wuling Motors di Manado meningkatkan kemampuan pelayanan servisnya, dari segi fasilitas bangunan fisik maupun penambahan jumlah dan keahlian tenaga kerja, agar menambah kepuasan konsumen, menambah kepercayaan atas produknya dan pada waktu bersamaan meningkatkan reputasinya.

**Kata Kunci:** *asal brand dan persepsi kealitan*

## INTRODUCTION

### Research Background

When discussing Chinese products, there are some automatically occurring perceptions that arise. China had become synonymous with cheap, low quality products, thanks to its cheap and abundant labor force, high volume of production, currency manipulation, and other factors (Nash-Hoff, 2011). Coupled with the deliberate and secret effort of Chinese manufacturers through the reduction of quality inputs (Midler, 2009), the stereotype was further entrenched. This in turn affected Chinese brands, with the stigma associated with the Chinese quality of products.

However, China's recent emergence as a new economic superpower added with the rise of many well-known names in the business have shaken the foundations of the stereotype. Chinese brands like Alibaba in online retailing, Xiaomi and Huawei in telecommunications, Tencent in gaming, etc. are rising to the top of their respective industries. For the automotive industry, Wuling is one of these emergent companies.

Wuling is an automotive company based in Liuzhou, Guangxi, China. It is a joint venture between SAIC Motor, General Motors, and Liuzhou Wuling Motors Co and was founded in 2001. It makes commercial and consumer vehicles sold in China under the Wuling and Baojun marques, respectively. It entered the Indonesian market with the launch of its first Indonesian market model, the Confero S in 2017. Judging from the full name of the joint venture, it is a product of more than one country, so with more than one point of judgment when focusing on country brand image.

The brand itself originated from China, but the manufacturing process for the Indonesian market is done locally. Theoretically, this would bring benefits for the company as there is a tendency that customers are more likely to evaluate products made in their own country more positively than they would a product made in a foreign country (Bilkey and Nes, 1982). However, the fact that the brand itself originates in China, it could be perceived as inferior to brands from other countries (Laforet and Chen, 2012).

As a relatively new competitor in the Indonesian automobile market, durability and resale value are some issues encountered when making the choice for Wuling automobiles in Indonesia, as asserted in an online article by Pradhono (2018). Its price puts in in the Low MPV segment of the market, but its quality and features are more akin to Medium MPVs. In short, it has great value for money. Judging by those terms, this automobile should be the market leader in both of the aforementioned segments. However, this is not the reality of the situation. Its Chinese brand origin seems come equipped with negative associations and perceptions.

In the context of Manado, studies have been done by Montolalu (2013), Limbongan, Saerang, and Mekel (2014), and Watung (2014). According to these studies, the cheap price appeals to Manadonese consumers, but the quality remains a setback to in consumers' considerations. None of the studies focused on Chinese automobiles, as automobiles are a relatively new category in the line of Chinese-originated products. By "Exploring The Brand Origin Effect On Chinese Automobiles" this study aims to fill that gap by focusing on the Wuling brand of Chinese automobiles, this study aims to explore the real experiences of owners of the product and the perceptions of those who do not own the product in order to gain insight into its brand origin and perceived quality.

### Research Objectives

The main objectives of this research paper are outlined as follows:

1. To explore how consumer's perceptions on the quality of Wuling's automobile products affected is affected by its brand origin.
2. To know how consumer perceive the quality of Wuling automobiles.

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

### Marketing

Kotler and Keller (2015) defined marketing as the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large. Marketing can be interpreted more simply as developing and maintaining of mutually satisfying relationships between companies and consumers.

### Consumer Perception

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) defined perception as the process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. Perception is the process

of sensing, selecting, and interpreting consumer stimuli in the external world. Perception occurs as individuals subjectively organize and interpret sensations. Perception depends not only on the physical stimuli, but also on the stimuli's relation to the surrounding field and on condition within the individuals.

### **Brand Origin**

Brand origin is defined as the place or country where a brand is from Jian and Yazdanifard (2014). It is the place, region or country where a brand is perceived to belong by its target customers (Thakor, 1996). It must be differentiated from country of manufacture, which in the global business environment of today, may not always be the same as the brand origin.

### **Perceived Quality**

Zeithaml (1988) defined perceived quality as the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority. Perceived quality is different from actual or objective quality (Aaker, 1991). The finding showed that the most significant determinants of perceived quality are brand image, familiarity, and moderately brand origin (Jian and Yazdanifard, 2014).

### **Previous Research**

Khan and Ahmed (2012) in Comparative Study of Consumer Perception of Product Quality: Chinese versus Non-Chinese Products assessed the perceptions of customers regarding price and quality aspects of Chinese and non Chinese products. It is found that the Chinese products are perceived as price effective but the area of product quality requires immediate attention because Chinese products are perceived as of low quality.

Sarwar et al. (2013) in Customer's Perception Towards Buying Chinese Products - An empirical investigation in Malaysia examined customer's perception towards buying Chinese products. The results indicate that price and product quality are the most important concern that have been frequently used by the respondents in this study while buying Chinese products.

Schniederjans et al. (2011) in a longitudinal study titled Consumer perceptions of product quality revisited: Made in China used the same metrics as used by Schniederjans, Cao, and Olson (2004) in Consumer Perceptions of Product Quality: Made in China to measure the consumer current value. It is found that the average quality rating of Chinese products was 2.082 out of 10 (poor rating) supporting the hypothesis that Chinese manufactured products are perceived as having significantly lower quality than those imported from other countries.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Approach**

This research used qualitative method to explore the brand origin effect on Chinese automobiles in Manado. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative research is method used to examine complex phenomenon where researcher is the key instrument. The most common sources of qualitative data include interviews, observations, and documents (Patton in Miles and Huberman, 1994). In this study, case study was chosen as the most appropriate approach. The case study approach was selected to enable a deeper understanding of the phenomenon with detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of conditions and their relationships.

### **Population, Sample and Sampling Technique**

The population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). In qualitative research, samples are not referred to as respondents but as informants (Sugiyono, 2007).

This research used purposive sampling technique, with samples drawn using specific criteria specified by the researcher. The requirements in selecting the samples are that the informants either own and drive a Wuling branded automobile or own and drive a different brand of automobile and have not experienced the Wuling automobile, but have interest and knowledge regarding the Wuling automobile. 15 owners and 15 non-owners were the informants interviewed in this research, after which inductive thematic saturation (Saunders et al., 2018) was reached.

### **Data Collection Method**

Primary data is the information that the researcher gathered in first-hand. The needed data for this research was collected by interviewing the informants using a semi-structured interview. Interviews are

particularly useful for getting the story behind an informant's experiences and allow the interviewer to pursue in-depth information around the topic (McNamara, 1999).

### **Operational Definition of Research Variables**

The variables in this research are brand origin and perceived quality. The indicators of brand origin are perceived brand origin and country brand image, and the indicators of perceived quality are aesthetics, features, performance, durability, serviceability, and prestige.

### **Instruments of Research**

The instruments of research are the tools that the researchers prepare for measurement while conducting the research. In an interview the instrument can be interview schedules, performance checklist, observation forms, attitude scales, and so on. In this research, the key instrument or research tool is the researcher itself.

### **Data Analysis Method, Validity and Reliability**

In this qualitative data analysis there are explanations in detail of the process after collecting data until getting conclusions. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), there are generally steps in qualitative data analysis, there are: data collection, data reduction, data display, drawing and verifying conclusion. In qualitative research, reliability often refers to the stability of responses to multiple coders of data sets. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009), reliability in qualitative data analysis includes category and interjudge reliability. Validity was defined as the extent to which an instrument measures purports to measure.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The 30 informants were interviewed on their perceptions of the **brand origin** and the **perceived quality**.

### **Informant 1: Government Official**

Informant 1 has owned a high-end Wuling Confero automobile for 1 year. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin is associated with stigma of low quality, low durability, and knockoff products. This negatively affected his decision to purchase a Wuling automobile. However, after online research and a test drive, he was convinced to purchase it. He says that the Wuling automobile has superior features and comfort, tough exterior, good performance and prestige. However, its serviceability is bad because the service center is lacking in capacity.

### **Informant 2: Telecom Company Employee**

Informant 2 has owned a high-end Wuling Confero automobile for 9 months. In his perception, the image around Chinese brands are improving. This is based on his experience with Chinese smartphones, and had a positive effect on his purchase considerations. He says that the Wuling automobile has not only a high top speed, but a good stability in high speeds. It also has a luxurious interior, unique features, and good prestige. However, the maintenance and repair service takes a long time because of its small capacity and lack of facilities.

### **Informant 3: Government Official**

Informant 3 has owned a mid-end Wuling Confero automobile for 10 months. In his perception, the image around Chinese brands are improving. This is based on his experience with Chinese smartphones. However, this had no effect on his purchase considerations. He says that the Wuling automobile has a tough exterior, superior features, and good endurance. It is also stable in high speeds. However, he says that the acceleration is low and that the maintenance and repair service is lacking because of its small capacity and the lack of facilities.

### **Informant 4: Gocar Driver**

Informant 4 has owned a standard Wuling automobile for 6 months. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin is associated with stigma of low quality. This negatively affected his decision to purchase a Wuling automobile. However, after being convinced by his family, he decided to purchase a Wuling automobile. He says that even though his Wuling automobile is the standard model, he finds it superior to its competitors. It is

spacious, has efficient fuel consumption and the booking system for maintenance and repair is convenient. A weakness is that firm reputation is still unsettled.

**Informant 5: Grab Driver**

Informant 5 has owned a mid-end Wuling Confero automobile for 8 months. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin is associated with stereotype of low cost. He has had good experience with Chinese smartphones, therefore it had a good effect on his purchase considerations. He says that the Wuling automobile has a good exterior, high top speed, luxurious interior, unique features not found in many other cars, and superior luxury. However, the gearshift makes strange noises and some parts had to be replaced. He says that the service center is also lacking and the firm reputation is unsettled.

**Informant 6: Business Owner**

Informant 6 has owned a high-end Wuling Confero automobile for 2 months. In his perception, the image around Chinese brands are improving. This is based on his own experience with Chinese products, and had a positive effect on his purchase considerations. He says that the Wuling automobile has a futuristic exterior, luxurious interior, and a powerful performance. Its main downside is the after sales support because of the lacking facilities in the service center.

**Informant 7: Business Owner**

Informant 7 has owned a mid-end Wuling Confero automobile for 8 months. In his perception, the image around Chinese brands are improving. This is based on his experience with Chinese smartphones. However, this had no effect on his purchase considerations. He says that the Wuling automobile has a high top speed with superior luxury and features. However, he has suffered many breakdowns of components and is not satisfied with the service that he received. The gearshift makes rough sounding noises. From his personal judgment, he says that Wuling has a bad reputation.

**Informant 8: Factory employee**

Informant 8 has owned a Standard Wuling Confero automobile for 6 months. In his perception, the image around Chinese brands are overall good. This is based on opinions of his peers, and had a positive effect on his purchase considerations. He says that the Wuling automobile has not only a high top speed, but a good stability in high speeds, along with superior luxury and features. However, he says that the service center is small.

**Informant 9: Grab driver**

Informant 9 has owned a high-end Wuling Confero automobile for 8 months. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin creates doubt because of the stigma associated with it. This negatively affected his consideration in purchasing a Wuling automobile. However, he was attracted by its features and luxuriousness. He says that the Wuling automobile has unique features, a high top speed, good stability in high speeds, and great comfort. However, the reputation is still unsettled because it is a new brand.

**Informant 10: Government Official**

Informant 10 has owned a high-end Wuling Cortez automobile for 6 months. In his perception, its Chinese brand origin is associated with low quality and low durability. However, this has no effect on his decision to purchase a Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has a luxurious interior and interior, efficient fuel consumption, stability in high speeds, and great comfort. However, the gearshift makes rough sounding noises when shifting and the maintenance and repair service is bad because it is small and lacking in facilities. Its reputation is also still unsettled.

**Informant 11: Retail Officer**

Informant 11 has owned a high-end Wuling Confero automobile for 4 months. In his perception, its Chinese brand origin is associated with low quality and low durability. This negatively affected his consideration in purchasing a Wuling automobile. It was the price that attracted him. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has a luxurious interior and a high top speed. However, the product has many faulty components. He has repeatedly come for repair in the service center and he says that the service very unsatisfactory. He says that his experiences have given him a bad perception of the brand's reputation.

**Informant 12: Mining company employee**

Informant 12 has owned a mid-end Wuling Confero automobile for 6 months. In his perception, its Chinese brand origin is associated with low durability. This is based on his personal experience but had no effect on his purchase considerations. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has powerful performance and a good endurance. It is also superior in its luxuriousness and features. However, the maintenance and repair service takes a long time and the firm reputation is still unsettled.

**Informant 13: Grab driver**

Informant 13 has owned a high-end Wuling Confero automobile for 3 months. From his personal experience, he says that Chinese brands are currently serious in the market. This had a positive effect on his purchase consideration. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has powerful performance, good stability in high speeds, efficient fuel consumption, and is superior in its luxuriousness and features. However, the maintenance and repair service takes a long time and the firm reputation is still unsettled.

**Informant 14: Grab driver**

Informant 14 has owned a standard Wuling Confero automobile for 6 months. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin creates doubt because of the stigma of low quality associated with it. This negatively affected his consideration in purchasing a Wuling automobile. However, he was attracted by its price. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it is powerful, has a high top speed and a spacious interior. However, he says that the gearshift makes rough sounding noises, the maintenance and repair service takes a long time and the brand reputation is still unsettled.

**Informant 15: Grab driver**

Informant 15 has owned a standard Wuling Confero automobile for 4 months. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin creates doubt because of the stigma of low quality associated with it. This negatively affected his consideration in purchasing a Wuling automobile. However, he was attracted by its price. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it is powerful, has a high top speed and a spacious interior. However, he says that the maintenance and repair facility is lacking in its service capability and capacity.

**Informant 16: Grab driver**

Informant 16 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin creates doubt because of the stigma of low quality associated with it. This negatively affects his perception on the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has superior features and good comfort but its serviceability is still doubtful.

**Informant 17: Grab driver**

Informant 17 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin is associated with low quality. This is based on his own personal experience. This negatively affects his perception on the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has superior features but has a feeble exterior and unremarkable design.

**Informant 18: Military Officer**

Informant 18 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin creates doubt because of the stigma of low quality associated with it. This negatively affects his perception on the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has superior features and good comfort but its serviceability is still untested.

**Informant 19: Leasing Collector**

Informant 19 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin creates doubt because of the stigma of low quality associated with it. This negatively affects his perception on the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that its serviceability is still doubtful.

**Informant 20: Government official**

Informant 20 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, Chinese brands are improving in their image. This is based on his own personal experience. This has a positive effect on his perception on the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has superior features and has enough appeal to affect the demand of competitors.

**Informant 21: Government official**

Informant 21 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin is associated with low quality. This is based on his own personal experience. This negatively affects his perception on the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that its is comfortable but has a bad buil quality and its serviceability is doubtful.

**Informant 22: Retail Officer**

Informant 22 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, Chinese brands are improving in their image. This is based on his own personal experience. This has a positive effect on his perception on the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has good aesthetics and build quality, and good value for money.

**Informant 23: Building Manager**

Informant 23 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin is associated with a low cost. This is based on his own personal experience. This has no effect on his perception of the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that the serviceability is untested and so is the firm reputation.

**Informant 24: Business owner**

Informant 24 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin is associated with low quality. This is based on his own personal experience. This negatively affects his perception on the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that ithas good value for money, but the durability is still untested.

**Informant 25: Doctor**

Informant 25 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin is associated with low quality. This is based on his own personal experience. This negatively affects his perception on the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has superior features and good value for money, but the downside is the untested durability.

**Informant 26: Hospital Officer**

Informant 26 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin is associated with low quality and low durability. This is based on his own personal experience. This negatively affects his perception on the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has good value for money but the downsides are bad build quality and untested durability.

**Informant 27: Government official**

Informant 27 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin has a stigma of low quality. From his personal experience, he says that Chinese brands are up to par in their durability. However, the stigma still negatively affects his perception on the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it is comfortable and has a mildly assuring build quality.

**Informant 28: Business owner**

Informant 28 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin is associated with a stigma of low durability. This negatively affects his perception on the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has untested durability.

**Informant 29: Business owner**

Informant 29 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin is associated with a low cost. This is based on his own personal experience. This has a positive effect on his perception of the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it is comfortable, has good value for money, and good build quality.

**Informant 30: Government official**

Informant 30 is an owner of another brand of automobile. In his perception, a Chinese brand origin is associated with a low cost. This is based on his own personal experience. However, this has no effect on his perception of the Wuling automobile. On the Wuling automobile, he says that it has untested durability.

**Brand Origin**

The interview results show that the Chinese brand origin is still a disadvantage. Even though there are improvements in the current image of Chinese brands, the stigma and stereotypes of low quality and low durability are still evident. This still has a negative effect on purchase considerations and perceptions, from owners and non-owners, respectively.

When comparing the owners and non-owners, it can be said that the brand origin effect is more evident in non-owners than in owners. This can be seen from the fact that 8 out of 15 owners gave a positive description regarding the Chinese brand origin with 7 giving negative descriptions, while that is only true for 5 of the non-owners, with 10 giving negative descriptions. For the owners, 5 are positively affected in their perception, while 6 are negatively affected, and 4 are not affected at all by the brand origin. For the non-owners, 10 are negatively affected while 3 are positively affected, and 2 say that the brand origin has no effect at all.

**Perceived Quality**

The interview results have shown the strengths and weaknesses of the Wuling automobile according to owners and non-owners. The main strengths are the features and luxuriousness, which are seen as being above its competitors. The performance and exterior toughness are also strengths mentioned by the owners. Its stability in high speeds is also a strong point. Value for money is also a good attraction to a Wuling automobile.

However, the main issues are the serviceability, durability, and firm reputation. Regarding its serviceability, this is the most negatively reviewed aspect of Wuling Motors in Manado according to the owners. The non-owners are also doubtful of this aspect of the Wuling automobile. The maintenance and repair service center in Manado is found to be lacking in capacity and capability. As a result, the queuing for a service appointment takes a long time and when they do get an appointment, some informants are not satisfied with the service. The owners say that the service center is small and lack machinery that are usually found in service centers of competing brands. The durability is also doubtful. However, this is understandable because the brand is a newcomer in the market, and automobiles need a longer time frame to measure their durability. Because it is new, the brand reputation is also still unsettled, which may mean lower resale value.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS****Conclusion**

The interview results show that the consumer perceptions regarding the Wuling automobile products themselves are dominantly positive. Its strongest points are its features and its luxuriousness. They are the main selling points for potential buyers and most prominent assets for those who are already owners. Performance and exterior toughness are also strengths of the Wuling automobile. The Wuling automobile is not only fast, but also stable when driving in high speeds. Its exterior is found to be thicker and tougher than the usual.

However, this does not mean that the Wuling automobile does not have weaknesses. A frequently occurring flaw is found in the rough sounding gearshift. Its firm reputation is still unsettled, and the maintenance and repair service is not helping to grow that reputation. Service is a weakness for Wuling Motors in Manado. The consumers feel like the service takes a longer time than what they are accustomed to, because of the low number of service demands that can be accommodated in one day. This is because the service center is still small, and has not grown with the increase in sales. The workforce for the maintenance and repair service is very small compared to the sales workforce. This shows a lack of commitment in long-term support for the customers in Manado. The owners have expressed their most negative opinions about owning a Wuling automobile in regards to this policy.



The reputation of Wuling itself is still unsettled in the Manadonese and Indonesian automotive market as a whole. Its Chinese brand origin is still a disadvantage in attracting potential buyers, because even though perceptions on Chinese brands are mostly improving, the stigma and negative stereotypes are still evident. This effect is more prominent in non-owners than it is with owners, which means the more conservative car buyers will be less likely to purchase the Wuling automobile because of this brand origin effect and the unsettled reputation.

### Recommendations

This research was conducted to provide an insight into brand origin and perceived quality of Wuling automobiles in Manado. Recommendations were formulated based on the findings in this research, for the company, consumers, and further researchers.

1. For the Wuling dealer in Manado, the maintenance and repair service is perceived by the customers as lacking, both in capacity and quality. This is a source of doubt for non-owners and also a source of dissatisfaction for the non-owners. The company must show a long-term commitment to the Manadonese market by increasing the capabilities of its maintenance and repair center, both in the size and competence of the workforce and the physical building facilities and machinery.
2. For the Wuling manufacturing plant, a small number of owners in this study have units that have defects which are rarely found in other units. This points to a need to be more thorough in the quality control in the manufacturing plant.
3. For Wuling automobile owners in Manado, it would be wise to start booking for service earlier than what is usually the norm, because during the time taken for the queuing process, the odometer may exceed the specified limit for periodic service.
4. For potential buyers, this study has shown the main strengths and weaknesses of a Wuling automobile. It shows that the features and luxuriousness are main strengths that are already advertised, performance and exterior toughness as lesser-known strengths. The weaknesses are the maintenance repair service taking a long time, being understaffed and lacking facilities, and the unsettled reputation, which means a low resale value. For the automobile itself, a rough sounding gearshift is experienced by some owners. These are points of consideration should there be an intention to buy a Wuling automobile.
5. For future researchers that are interested in conducting a similar study, it is recommended to do so with a wider population, in a quantitative method. The aspect of durability and firm reputation still need to be researched further at a later time, because even though problems have been identified in other aspects, durability still needs more time to be thoroughly tested, and firm reputation for automobiles is still mostly unsettled in the early years of entry.

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