



A comparison of customers' readiness for mass-customisation

Turkish vs British customers

A comparison of customers' readiness

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Abstract

Purpose – To examine customers' readiness for mass-customised products in two European countries, Turkey and the UK.

Design/methodology/approach – Examines the demand side of the market and begins to explore whether mass-customisation can be implemented as an international product strategy. A questionnaire was developed, pre-tested and administered in the UK and (after translation) in Turkey to potential new car buyers.

Findings – A large proportion of customers from both countries would be willing to pay extra to own a product which exactly meets their needs and preferences. However, more respondents in the Turkish sample were willing to do so than in the UK sample. Additionally, Turkish respondents were keen to update the features of their car over time, which favours mass-customisation.

Research limitations/implications – This study is exploratory and limited in terms of research sample. Consequently further research is needed to verify the findings. Second, how far the organisation is ready to adopt a mass-customised approach is a further question to be answered requiring further research. Future research in contexts other than new cars should also be undertaken. Finally, we have focused on "readiness" for mass-customisation and do not attempt to provide any link between this "readiness" and behavioural intentions.

Practical implications – There may be a viable market of customers for mass-customised cars, in both the UK and Turkey. Producers now need to examine the price that would be acceptable to both customers and themselves.

Originality/value – This is the first systematic research study to address the demand side of mass-customisation in two European countries.

Keywords Mass customization, Automotive industry, United Kingdom, Turkey, Customers

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine customers' readiness for mass-customised products in two European countries, Turkey and the UK. In doing so the study examines the demand side of the market and begins to explore whether mass-customisation can be implemented as an international product strategy. It also attempts to link the theory of the globalisation of markets with the theory of mass-customisation.

Since Levitt (1983) argued that advances in technology in relation to transport and communication were the drivers of the globalisation of markets there has been much debate on the feasibility of globally standardised products. Pine's (1993) theory of "mass-customisation" appears to contradict the globalisation approach, however.

