Foster Igbinosa Jr

Final Marketing Research Report

Marketing Research

Abstract

This research was done to identify the factors that are affecting the lack of sales for Volkswagen's luxury model, the Arteon. Furthermore, market factors that affect sales reduction have been considered in the research.

Introduction/Background

The German government established the Volkswagen Group, commonly known as Volkswagen AG, in 1937 with the goal of mass-producing an affordable car. The German city of Wolfsburg serves as the headquarters. Once the most successful automaker in the world due to the success of the Beetle, the company's increasingly precarious financial situation began, and competition from tiny cars with more contemporary styling finally forced a shift in corporate strategy toward creating more modern and sportier automotive models. As a result, Volkswagen started transitioning away from its rear-engine vehicles in the 1970s in favor of front-engine, front-wheel-drive models. The brief-lived K70 was the first of these revolutionary automobiles, and the Passat followed. The Golf, which eventually debuted and was previously known as the Rabbit in the US, was the most significant invention. The Beetle was virtually replaced in the company's portfolio by the Golf, which went on to become Volkswagen's best-selling model globally.

As a more upscale replacement to the Volkswagen Passat CC, the Volkswagen Arteon was introduced for the 2017 model year. Unfortunately, since its release, it hasn't been a significant seller. Market analysts have blamed the high MSRP, which is comparable to those of Audi, a luxury car brand. The 2022 Arteon start at $40,750, depending on the trims and packages. According to carfigures.com, In 2022, sales worsened drastically for the Arteon, selling only 169 vehicles, becoming the poorest-selling vehicle in the Volkswagen line-up.

Reasons for Marketing Research

- Marketing research would benefit Volkswagen immensely because it would help determine Arteon's market problems and identify potential opportunities.
- It would also help Volkswagen in generating, refining, and evaluating the following market actions, such as: Whether or not to continue production and sale of the Arteon, if incentives can be created to encourage sales, if improvements can be made to Arteon's marketing mix, and if modifications can be made to Arteon's features.

Research Objectives

- To identify the factors affecting the sales reduction/lack of sales for the Arteon
- To provide recommendations for improvement/to overcome the lack of sales for the Arteon
- To determine an appealing approach to market Arteon to the target audience

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Decision Alternatives

- Changing the starting MSRP (Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price) to be more affordable for consumers. At $40,750, consumers would either lean more towards purchasing a cheaper alternative offered by competitors or purchasing a luxury sedan such as the Mercedes Benz's C-Class.
- The Arteon could undergo product modification or improvement, such as offering electric models. Consumers tend to lean more towards electric vehicles because of many benefits, such as costing less to operate than traditional gas cars, requiring no oil changes, less frequent brake replacements, instant charging, emission-free engines, and rebates for EV charging for residential and non-residential customers.
- Promotion for the Arteon seemed nonexistent, especially compared to other Volkswagen models such as the Passat, Tiguan, Toureg, and Jetta. Volkswagen could've developed a more robust advertising strategy for the Arteon.

Methodology

There is no recent or secondary data available to draw the specific conclusion that can adequately address the problems raised previously. Therefore, it is necessary to get primary or self-collected quantitative data. Data collection should only occur once for the project's benefit while still meeting the standard requirements for a thorough study. The online survey is selected as the study. Due to reduced staffing and distribution efforts, the online platform saves time and money. Additionally, because the data is gathered digitally, it can be analyzed and examined immediately after the survey is over. The questionnaire is only allowed to be completed for 20 minutes, which is the typical human attention span, to ensure a constant and high return rate and to prevent overwhelming respondents. Once a question has been answered, it is closed, preventing further modification. Furthermore, the language utilized for the questionnaire is rather straightforward, making it easier to prevent any misunderstandings with the respondents.

The research design used is descriptive, as it is pre-planned and structured so the information collected can be statistically inferred for a population. More so, descriptive research design strives to define attitudes, opinions, and behaviors. Descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe our market population, situation, or phenomenon. It can answer "what," "where, when, and "how" questions.

Properties Measured:

Preferred brand: With this, we want to understand our competitors better. to gather insights as to Arteon's placement in the product category.
Opinion: With this, we want to know what consumers think and feel about the Volkswagen Arteon and the overall outlook of Volkswagen as a brand.
Financing: With this, we want to weigh customers' income and spending ability versus how much they're willing to pay for an entry-level luxury vehicle.
Demographic: This will help in the determination of whether the individuals in this particular study are a representative sample of the market population.

Data Analysis done with SPSS Tool

Demographic

What is your age bracket?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 to 25	5	15.2	16.1	16.1
	25 to 40	20	60.6	64.5	80.6
	40 to 60	5	15.2	16.1	96.8
	60 and above	1	3.0	3.2	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

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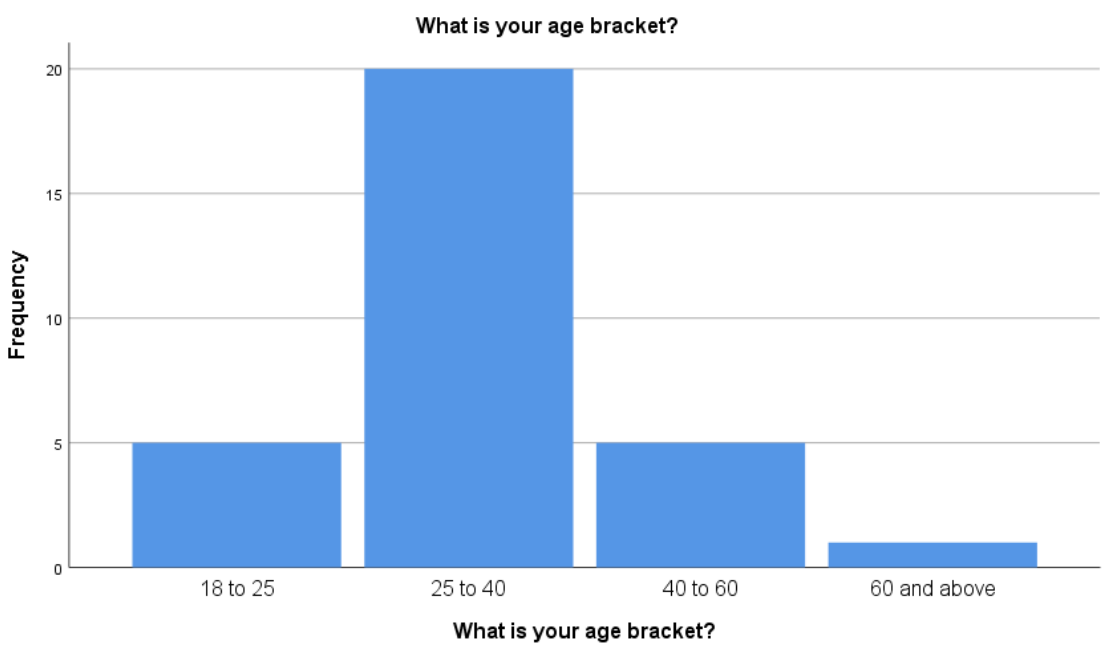
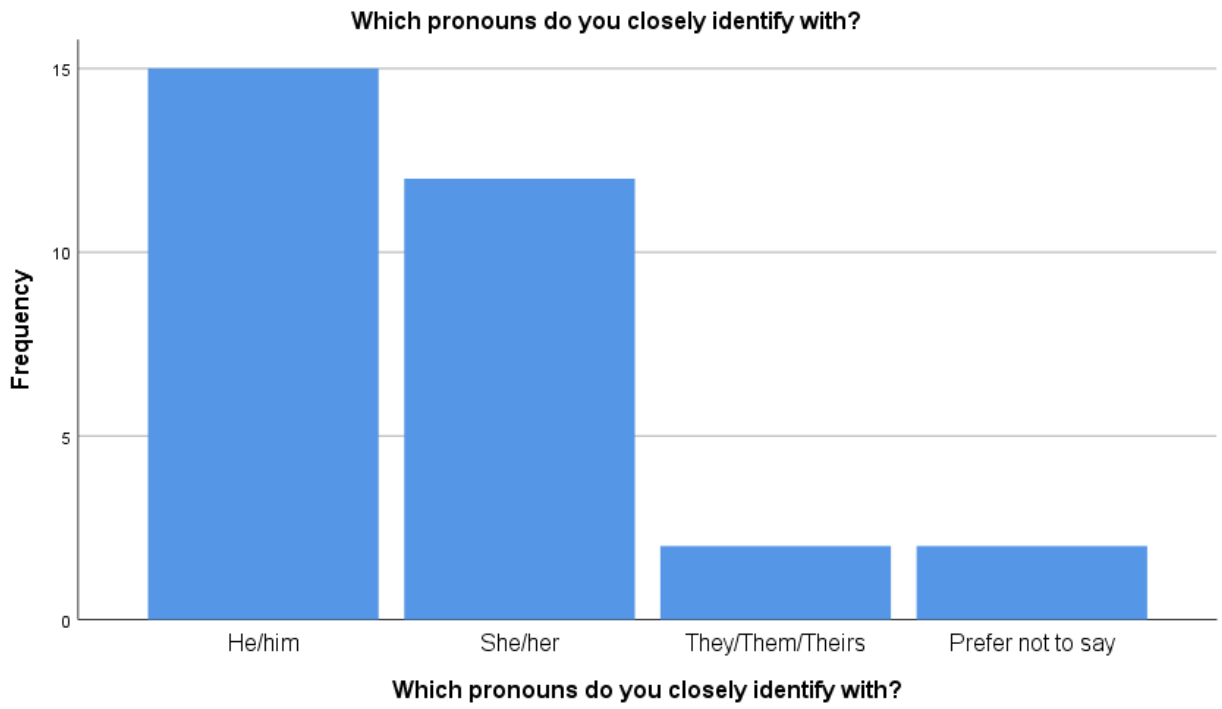
The table above shows the frequency distribution of respondent's age. From the table, we can infer that most of the respondents were between 25 to 40 years of age, as this particular age range has the highest frequency and percentage, 20 (60.6%).



Which pronouns do you closely identify with?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	He/him	15	45.5	48.4	48.4
	She/her	12	36.4	38.7	87.1
	They/Them/Theirs	2	6.1	6.5	93.5
	Prefer not to say	2	6.1	6.5	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

The table above shows the frequency distribution of respondent's gender. From the table, we can infer that most of the respondents were Males 15(45.5%) (He/him). While 12 (36.4%) are Female (She/her).



What is your marital status?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	22	66.7	71.0	71.0
	Married	9	27.3	29.0	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	

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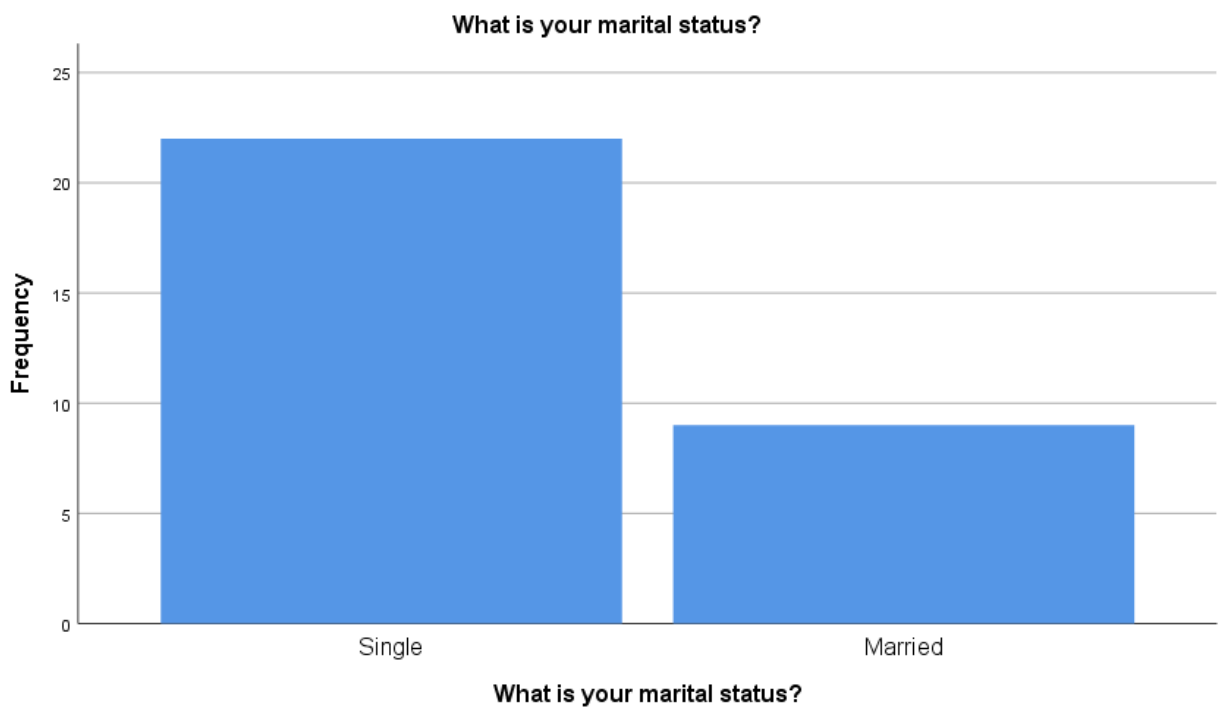
Missing	System	2	6.1
Total		33	100.0

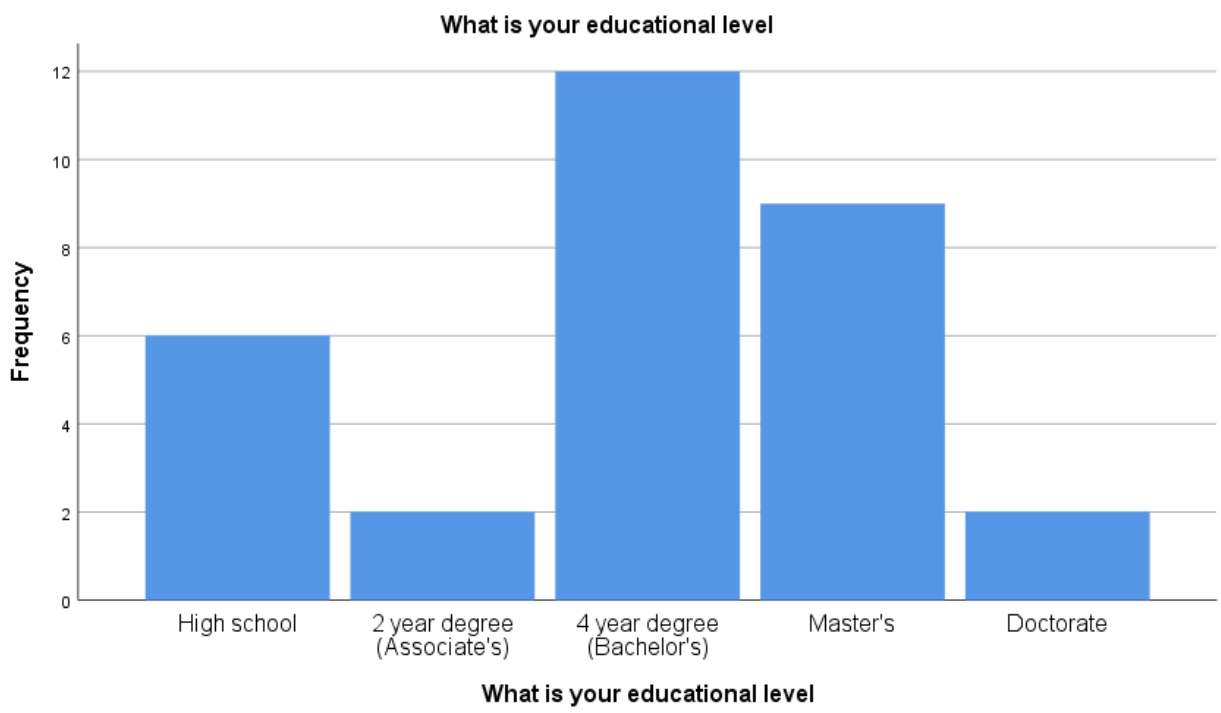
The table above represent the frequency distribution of respondent's marital status. From the table, we can deduce that most of the respondents are Single 22(66.7%). While only 9 (27.3%) of the participants are Married.



What is your educational level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High school	6	18.2	19.4	19.4
	2 year degree (Associate's)	2	6.1	6.5	25.8
	4 year degree (Bachelor's)	12	36.4	38.7	64.5
	Master's	9	27.3	29.0	93.5
	Doctorate	2	6.1	6.5	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

The table above illustrate the frequency distribution of respondent's educational level. From the table, we can extrapolate that most of the respondents had a bachelor's degree 12(36.4%).



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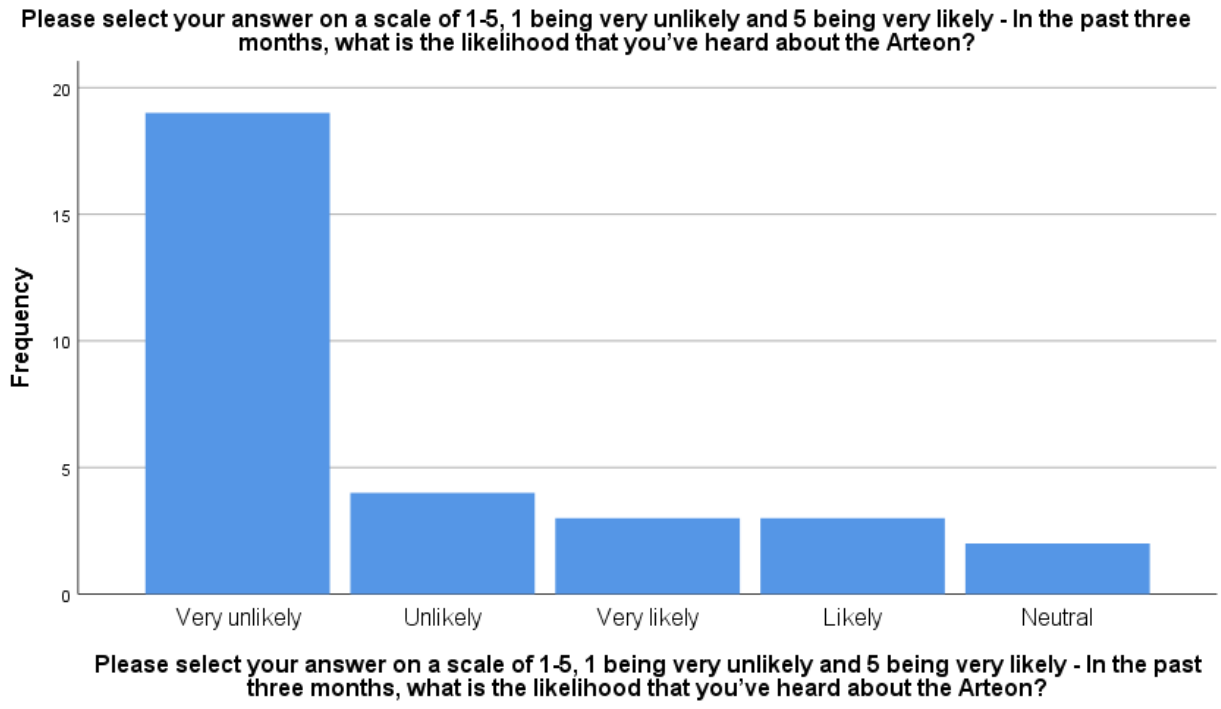
Frequencies for Research Question 1

Please select your answer on a scale of 1-5, 1 being very unlikely and 5 being very likely - In the past three months, what is the likelihood that you've heard about the Arteon?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unlikely	19	57.6	61.3	61.3
	Unlikely	4	12.1	12.9	74.2
	Neutral	2	6.1	6.5	80.6
	Likely	3	9.1	9.7	90.3
	Very likely	3	9.1	9.7	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

The table above show the frequency distribution of respondent's awareness about Volkswagen's Arteon. From the table, we can infer that most of the respondents are very unlikely to hear about Volkswagen's Arteon 19(57.6%).



Crosstabs for Research Question 2

*How much do you make annually? * Is $41,000 a justifiable amount for a new Arteon? Crosstabulation*

Count

		Is $41,000 a justifiable amount for a new Arteon?		
		Yes	No	Total
How much do you make annually?	Below $30,000	2	5	7
	$30,000 to $50,000	0	3	3
	$50,000 to $75,000	3	5	8
	$75,000 to $100,000	3	5	8
	$100,000 and above	3	2	5
Total		11	20	31

The table above represents the cross-tabulation of the participant's annual income and price for the new Arteon. From the table, we can deduce that most of the respondents (5) with annual income below $30,000 and those with the range of $50,000 – 100,000 does not agree that $41,000 is a justifiable amount for a new Arteon.

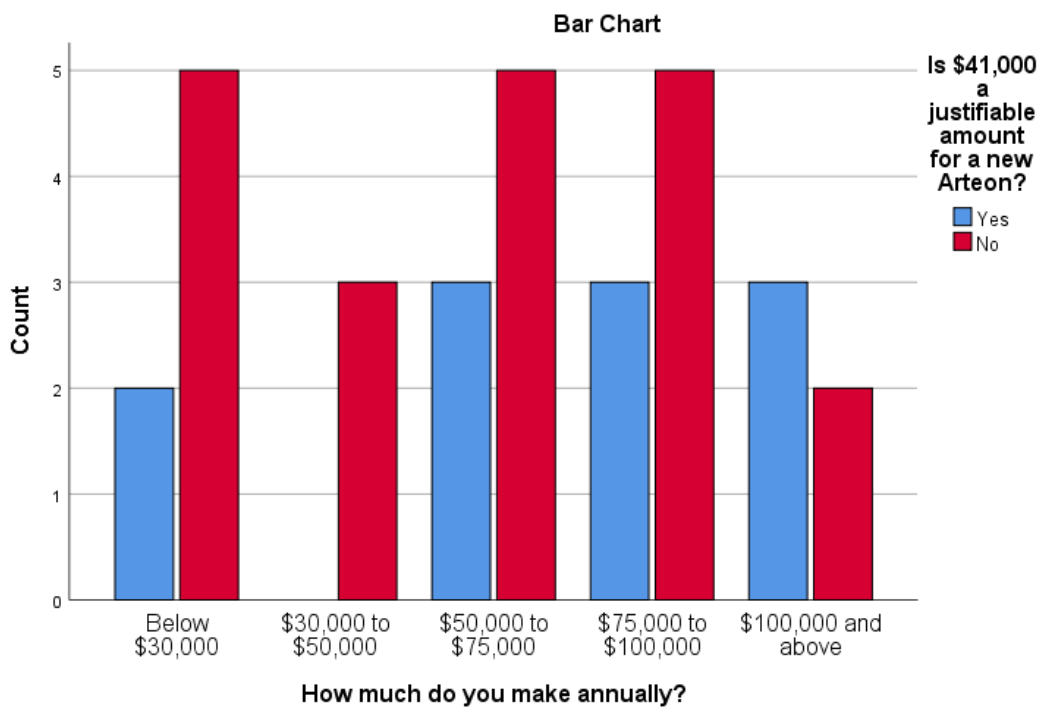
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)

Pearson Chi-Square	3.137[a]	4	.535
Likelihood Ratio	4.048	4	.400
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.547	1	.214
N of Valid Cases	31		

a. 8 cells (80.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.06.

The Pearson Chi-Square value of 3.137 and Significant value (P-value = 0.535) shows that there is no statistically significant association between the participant's annual income and price for the new Arteon since the P-value of 0.535 is greater than 0.05 (95% confidence level).



Crosstabs for Research Question 3

		Mercedes	Audi	BMW	Acura	Total	Pearson Chi-Square	P-value
Q2_1 * Q3_1	Body	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (100%)	11.873	0.221
	Engine	4 (57.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	7 (100%)		
	Interior	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (28.6%)	7 (100%)		
	Affordability	1 (25.0%)	3 (75.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (100%)		
Q2_1 * Q3_2	Body	3 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (100%)	13.757	0.131
	Engine	0 (0.0%)	3 (42.9%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	7 (100%)		
	Interior	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	7 (100%)		
	Affordability	0 (0.0%)	1 (25.0%)	1 (25.0%)	2 (50.0%)	4 (100%)		
Q2_1 * Q3_3	Body	1 (16.7%)	3 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (33.3%)	6 (100%)	12.267	0.199
	Engine	1 (14.3%)	4 (57.1%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (100%)		
	Interior	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (100%)		
	Affordability	2 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (100%)		
Q2_1 * Q3_4	Body	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	4 (66.7%)	6 (100%)	9.017	0.436
	Engine	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (71.4%)	7 (100%)		
	Interior	0 (0.0%)	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)	7 (100%)		
	Affordability	1 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (25.0%)	2 (50.0%)	4 (100%)		
Q2_2 * Q3_1	Body	3 (60.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	5 (100%)	6.027	0.737
	Engine	2 (25.0%)	4 (50.0%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	8 (100%)		
	Interior	2 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (100%)		
	Affordability	3 (37.5%)	2 (25.0%)	2 (25.0%)	1 (12.5%)	8 (100%)		

Q2_2 * Q3_2	Body	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	2 (40.0%)	1 (20.0%)	5 (100%)	8.540	0.481
	Engine	3 (37.5%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (25.0%)	3 (37.5%)	8 (100%)		
	Interior	0 (0.0%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	3 (100%)		
	Affordability	1 (12.5%)	2 (25.0%)	5 (62.5%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (100%)		
Q2_2 * Q3_3	Body	1 (20.0%)	3 (60.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (100%)	9.053	0.432
	Engine	2 (25.0%)	1 (12.5%)	3 (37.5%)	2 (25.0%)	8 (100%)		
	Interior	0 (0.0%)	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (100%)		
	Affordability	3 (37.5%)	4 (50.0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (100%)		
Q2_2 * Q3_4	Body	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	5 (100%)	14.195	0.116
	Engine	1 (12.5%)	3 (37.5%)	2 (25.0%)	2 (25.0%)	8 (100%)		
	Interior	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (66.7%)	3 (100%)		
	Affordability	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (87.5%)	8 (100%)		
Q2_3 * Q3_1	Body						7.517	0.276
	Engine	1 (25.0%)	3 (75.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (100%)		
	Interior	4 (36.4%)	3 (27.3%)	3 (27.3%)	1 (9.1%)	11 (100%)		
	Affordability	5 (55.6%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)	2 (22.2%)	9 (100%)		
Q2_3 * Q3_2	Body						8.145	0.228
	Engine	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (100%)		
	Interior	3 (27.3%)	3 (27.3%)	3 (27.3%)	2 (18.2%)	11 (100%)		
	Affordability	2 (22.2%)	1 (11.1%)	3 (33.3%)	3 (33.3%)	9 (100%)		
Q2_3 * Q3_3	Body						9.293	0.158
	Engine	3 (75.0%)	1 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (100%)		
	Interior	2 (18.2%)	4 (36.4%)	3 (27.3%)	2 (18.2%)	11 (100%)		
	Affordability	1 (11.1%)	5 (55.6%)	3 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (100%)		
Q2_3 * Q3_4	Body						4.444	0.617
	Engine	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (100%)	4 (100%)		
	Interior	2 (18.2%)	1 (9.1%)	2 (18.2%)	6 (54.5%)	11 (100%)		
	Affordability	1 (11.1%)	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)	4 (44.4%)	9 (100%)		
Q2_4 * Q3_1	Body	5 (38.5%)	4 (30.8%)	2 (15.4%)	2 (15.4%)	13 (100%)	5.577	0.781
	Engine	3 (60.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	5 (100%)		
	Interior	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (100%)		
	Affordability	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (100%)		
Q2_4 * Q3_2	Body	1 (7.7%)	3 (23.1%)	5 (38.5%)	4 (30.8%)	13 (100%)	11.926	0.218
	Engine	2 (40.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	5 (100%)		
	Interior	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (100%)		
	Affordability	2 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (100%)		
Q2_4 * Q3_3	Body	4 (30.8%)	4 (30.8%)	5 (38.5%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (100%)	22.983	0.006
	Engine	0 (0.0%)	4 (80.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (100%)		
	Interior	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (100%)		
	Affordability	0 (0.0%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (66.7%)	3 (100%)		
Q2_4 * Q3_4	Body	3 (23.1%)	2 (15.4%)	1 (7.7%)	7 (53.8%)	13 (100%)	9.190	0.420
	Engine	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	5 (100%)		
	Interior	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)		
	Affordability	0 (0.0%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	3 (100%)		

The table above represent the Chi-Square test for vehicle features and brands. From the above table, we can deduce that with the exception of the feature (Affordability) and brand (BMW) with P-value of 0.006 at the (Q2_4 * Q3_3) part in the above table, there is no statistically significant relationship/association between vehicle features and brands since their P-values are greater than 0.05 (95% confidence level).

Crosstabs for Research Question 4

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*In your opinion, what could we do to make the Arteon stand out from the competition? * What is your age bracket? Crosstabulation*

Count

		What is your age bracket?		
		25 to 40	40 to 60	Total
In your opinion, what could we do to make the Arteon stand out from the competition?	Better marketing and promotion	14	4	18
	Better car features	4	0	4
	Better customer service/dealerships	1	1	2
Total		19	5	24

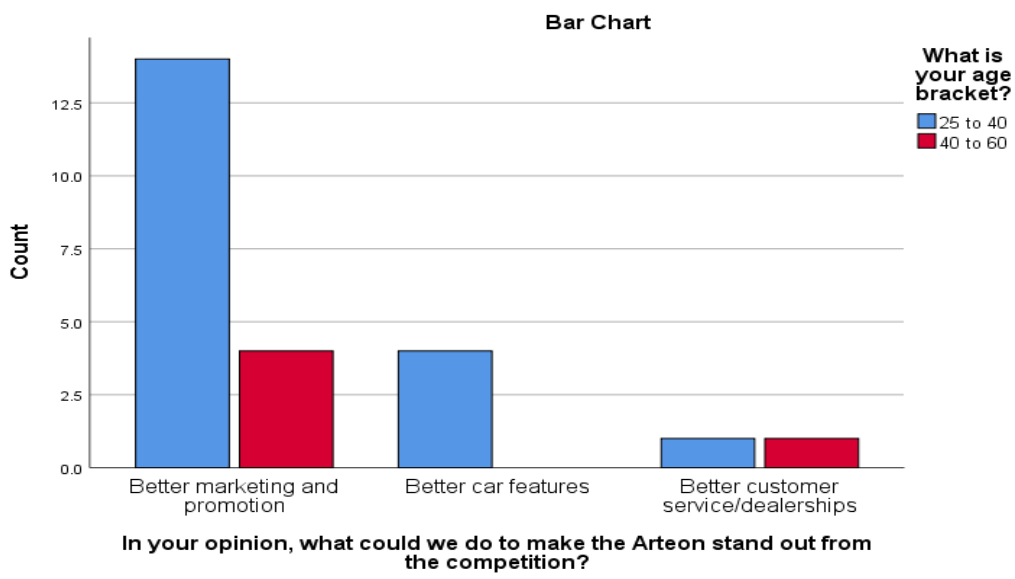
The table above illustrates the cross-tabulation of the participant's opinions on the most effective strategy in promoting sales among 25- to 60-year-olds. From the table, we can deduce that most of the respondents (14) with the age range of 25 to 40 agreed on better marketing and promotion as the most effective strategy in promoting sales among those that are 25- to 60 years of age.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.105[a]	2	.349
Likelihood Ratio	2.722	2	.256
Linear-by-Linear Association	.069	1	.793
N of Valid Cases	24		

a. 5 cells (83.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .42.

The Pearson Chi-Square value of 2.105 and Significant value (P-value = 0.349) shows that there is no statistically significant association between participant's opinion on the most effective strategy in promoting sales and Age (25- to 60-year-old) since the P-value of 0.349 is greater than 0.05 (95% confidence level).



Crosstabs for research Question 5

*In your opinion, what could we do to make the Arteon stand out from the competition? * Please select your answer on a scale of 1-5, 1 being very unlikely and 5 being very likely - In the past three months, what is the likelihood that you've heard about the Arteon? Crosstabulation*

Count

	Please select your answer on a scale of 1-5, 1 being very unlikely and 5 being very likely - In the past three months, what is the likelihood that you've heard about the Arteon?					
	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very likely	Total

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In your opinion, what could we do to make the Arteon stand out from the competition?	Better marketing and promotion	15	4	1	0	1	21
	Better car features	3	0	1	0	2	6
	Better customer service/dealerships	0	0	0	3	0	3
Total		18	4	2	3	3	30

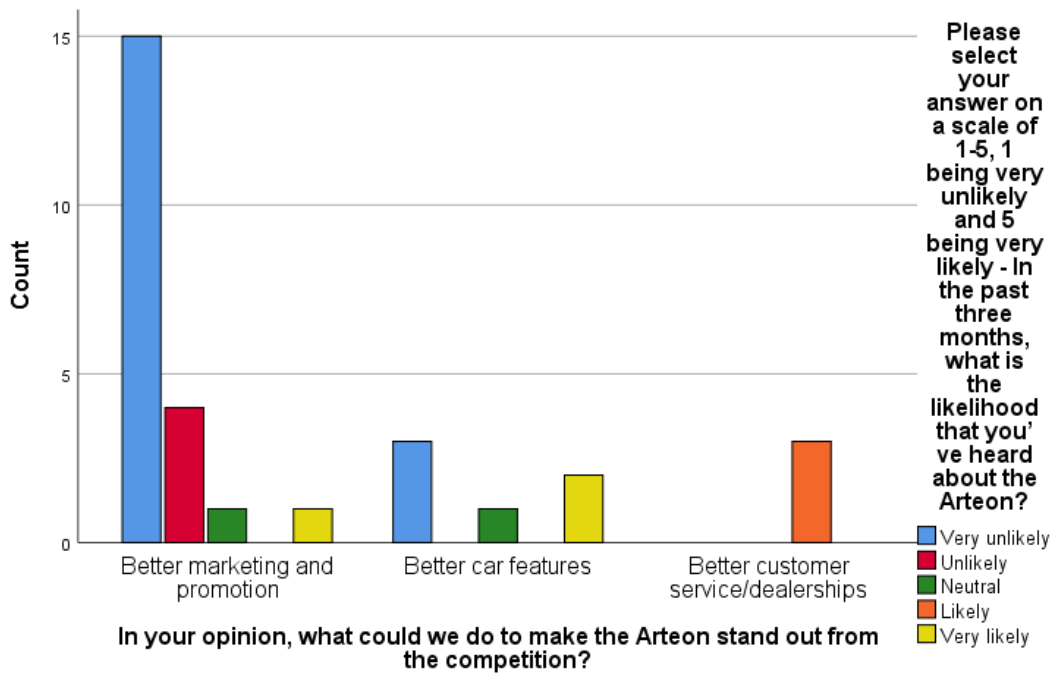
The table above represent the cross tabulation of participant's opinion on the most effective factor influencing Arteon awareness. From the table, we can extrapolate that most of the respondents (15) stated that they are very unlikely to have heard about Arteon and likewise agreed on better marketing and promotion as the most effective factor that can influence Arteon awareness.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	36.429[a]	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	25.297	8	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.021	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	30		

a. 14 cells (93.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

The Pearson Chi-Square value of 36.429 and Significant value (P-value = 0.000) shows that there is a strong statistically significant association between the influencing factors and Arteon awareness since the P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 (95% confidence level).



Crosstabs for Research Question 6

		Mercedes	Audi	BMW	Acura	Pearson Chi-Square	P-value
Q16_5 * Q3_1	Very unlikely	7 (63.6%)	3 (42.9%)	3 (75.0%)	1 (33.3%)	9.727	0.640
	Unlikely	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)		
	Neutral	2 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (33.3%)		
	Likely	1 (9.1%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)		
	Very likely	1 (9.1%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (33.3%)		
	Total	11 (100%)	7 (100%)	4 (100%)	3 (100%)		
Q16_5 * Q3_2	Very unlikely	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	6 (60.0%)	3 (60.0%)	14.286	0.283
	Unlikely	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)		

	Neutral	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)		
	Likely	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)		
	Very likely	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (40.0%)	0 (0.0%)		
	Total	5 (100%)	5 (100%)	10 (100%)	5 (100%)		
Q16_5 * Q3_3	Very unlikely	3 (50.0%)	5 (50.0%)	5 (83.3%)	1 (33.3%)		
	Unlikely	1 (16.7%)	1 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	21.567	0.043
	Neutral	0 (0.0%)	2 (20.0%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)		
	Likely	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (66.7%)		
	Very likely	2 (33.3%	2 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)		
	Total	6 (100%)	10 (100%)	6 (100%)	3 (100%)		
Q16_5 * Q3_4	Very unlikely	2 (66.7%)	3 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (64.3%)		
	Unlikely	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (7.1%)		
	Neutral	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	1 (7.1%)	19.826	0.070
	Likely	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	0 (0.0%)		
	Very likely	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (21.4%)		
	Total	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	5 (100%)	14 (100%)		

The table above represent the Chi-Square test for the willingness of gas car owners to change to Arteon if it was an electric car. From the above table, we can deduce that with an exception of the column (Q16_5 * Q3_3) with P-value of 0.043 reflecting a statistically significant association BMW car brand owners and their likelihood of buying the Volkswagen Arteon with an electric engine, there is no statistically significant relationship/association between all other gas car brand owners and their likelihood of buying the Volkswagen Arteon with an electric engine since their P-values are greater than 0.05 (95% confidence level).

Conclusion and Recommendation

The objective of this research was to find the factors which are affecting the lack of sales for the Arteon and to recommend possible solutions to Volkswagen for improvements or to overcome the issue. Moreover, as stated in the methodology, the research took place. The distributed questionnaires were provided to 31 respondents and after a time frame of one week, the data was collected with the help of the SPSS tool analysis. The data collected has been analyzed and some of the factors have been found to help Volkswagen make improvements to avoid sales reduction. While T-Test, Chi-square and cross tabulation were used, confidence interval was utilized for the mean of our sample size of 31. There were a total of 15 males, 12 females, 1 them/they and 1 prefer not to say that participated in this survey.

Although Volkswagen is supposed to be an affordable car line entering the luxury market, the pricing could be reduced to benefit customers and increase sales. Most of the respondents with annual incomes below $30,000 and those with the range of $50,000 – 100,000 do not agree that $41,000 is a justifiable amount for a new Arteon. Adjusting the MSRP to a more affordable price would be immensely beneficial to the Volkswagen brand.

Furthermore, most of the respondents have “very unlikely” heard about the Arteon and agreed on better marketing and promotion as the most effective factor that can influence Arteon’s awareness to its target market.

Weakness of this research

The weakness of this research is the timeframe to distribute the questionnaires as well as the deadline to complete this report. With more time, a wider sample size would have been selected to get the most accurate information from respondents in order to make a concrete decision about the next suggested steps for Volkswagen.