



Double Degree Program in Global Management and Politics.

Course of Corporate Strategy.

Global Account Management as a Competitive Lever for
Chinese EV Brands: A BYD Strategy Study.

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Abstract.

The rapid change in the international competitive environment requires companies to develop systems capable of coordinating complex relationships and ensuring continuity in different markets. In this context, Global Account Management (GAM) emerges as an evolutionary model of Key Account Management, capable of coordinating complex relationships with multinational customers, ensuring contractual uniformity, operational efficiency, and co-creation of value. This thesis therefore analyzes GAM as a competitive lever for Chinese car manufacturers, with particular attention to the case of BYD (Build Your Dreams), a global leader in electric vehicles and currently expanding rapidly in Europe. The study is divided into several sections: a theoretical and historical review of the evolution from KAM to GAM, a qualitative analysis of the European context, a quantitative analysis of market and sales data, and an empirical section based on questionnaires with fleet managers, dealers, and industry operators. The results show that European players perceive GAM not only as an organizational model, but also as a crucial element in overcoming cultural, regulatory, and operational barriers. Almost all survey participants consider the presence of a single Global Account Manager at European level to be important, and empirical evidence also confirms that, in the European B2B market, the choice of electric vehicle suppliers is driven by technical robustness, commercial uniformity, and sustainability, rather than price alone.

This work ultimately leads to a reflection on how a Global Account Management (GAM) model could be specifically applied to the electric vehicle sector. Drawing on the BYD case study, the research develops a conceptual framework that illustrates

how such a model might function in practice, while considering four major global megatrends currently reshaping the automotive industry.

In conclusion, the research shows that BYD's adoption of a GAM could be a winning strategic lever to consolidate its position in Europe, strengthen stakeholder trust, and transform complex relationships into a sustainable competitive advantage. GAM is therefore not only a management tool, but also a strategic and cultural bridge between China and Europe, essential for the entry of new global players into mature markets.

Key words: Global Account Management (GAM), BYD, Electric Vehicles (EV), Internationalization, Competitive Strategy.

Table of Contents.

1. Introduction.....	5
1.1 Topic Selection.	7
1.2 Problem statement and Research question.	8
1.3 Significance of the study.....	10
2. Literature review.	12
2.1 The Evolution of key account management.	12
2.2 The rise of Global account management.	14
2.3 Internationalization and the role of GAM.	16
2.4 Operational and Organizational challenges in GAM.	18
2.5 The Electric Vehicle Market.	20
3. Research Methodology.	25
4. Theoretical foundations of Global Account Management.	27
4.1 Key Concepts and Evolution.	27
4.2 The shift toward Global Account Management (GAM).	35
4.2.1 Rationale of GAM adoption.	38
4.2.2 Objective and empirical evidence of GAM adoption.	44
4.2.3 Challenges of GAM.....	49
4.3 Criteria for implementation of GAM.	53
4.3.1 Customers Scorecard.	58
5. Case study: BYD Case.....	62
5.1 BYD Origins.....	63
5.1.1 A SWOT analysis of BYD.	66
5.2 BYD in Europe: analytical framework.....	73
5.2.1 Analytical Overview of the European Market.....	74
5.2.2 Quantitative Evidence.	78
5.2.3 Empirical data.....	82
6. Results and Discussion.	95
6.1 Beyond GAM: a model for electric vehicles in Europe.....	100
6.1.1 EV-GAM.	106
7. Conclusion.....	111
7.1 Contribution.....	114
7.2 Limitation and Future Research.....	115
List of Figures.....	117
List of abbreviations.....	119
Bibliography.....	120

1. Introduction.

Recently, the transformation of international markets has made it increasingly clear that global companies need to find a balance between strategic vision and the ability to adapt locally. In this situation, Global Account Management (GAM) presents as one of the most advanced responses. It is not simply an organizational model, but a tool that brings with it the need to translate theory into concrete business practices consistent with the company's objectives, internal structures and, above all, culture. It is precisely this ability to customize that makes GAM an interesting practice from every point of view, as it combines strategic, operational and cultural dimensions. This thesis is based on the idea that GAM cannot be understood solely as a theoretical model but must be observed in its application to real contexts, where growth strategies, corporate identity and market dynamics are intertwined. For this reason, the focus is on BYD (Build Your Dreams), one of the most representative companies of the new Chinese automotive industry. BYD is a company that, on the one hand, is experiencing a phase of strong international expansion with production and logistics investments in Europe, and on the other hand continues to maintain a profoundly “Chinese” imprint: an attitude that reflects a desire not to depend on anyone, evident from the early stages of its history, when it produced its own batteries independently, to more recent decisions such as the construction of a fleet of ships dedicated to vehicle transport. It is therefore particularly interesting to analyze how this approach can be translated and reconciled with the theoretical practices of GAM, assessing the extent to which they are compatible or in conflict. The structure of the thesis therefore reflects this approach.

The first chapter presents an introduction to the topic, the reasons for the choice and the research question. The second chapter offers a review of the literature, analyzing the evolution from Key Account Management to GAM, the logic of internationalization and the main organizational challenges. The third chapter describes the methodology adopted, based on a combination of qualitative, quantitative and empirical approaches. The fourth chapter explores the theoretical foundations of GAM, from its founding concepts to its implementation criteria. The fifth chapter represents the empirical core of the research and focuses on BYD: from its origins to its expansion in Europe, through to qualitative, quantitative and empirical analysis. The sixth chapter reports the results and discusses them in light of the theories previously examined. Finally, the seventh chapter draws conclusions, highlighting the theoretical and practical contributions of the research, its limitations and possible future directions.

1.1 Topic Selection.

The choice of the topic of this thesis arises from the need to create a bridge between two experiences that have profoundly marked my academic and personal path: Italy, my country of origin, and China, where I had the opportunity to live and study for a year. Two worlds that, seen from the outside, often appear to be irreconcilable, both culturally and strategically, and actually are in part so. However, it was precisely in this gap that I saw space for a research topic that could give meaning and direction to this path: Global Account Management (GAM). GAM systems, in fact, do not simply manage customers on an international scale, rather, they offer a structure that allows companies to replicate a “familiar” operating environment in distant markets, while maintaining consistency, quality and strategic value. It is a mechanism that, in order to work, requires more than just the willingness to expand, it requires skills, structures, coordination, but above all an environment that wants to accommodate that particular product or service. It is exactly this bilateral relationship between the company and the host market, so complex and so delicate, that makes GAM not only a managerial system, but also a practice heavy with strategic, cultural and moral considerations. Hence the decision to analyze the case of BYD, one of the fastest growing automotive companies on the international scene. BYD, an acronym for Build Your Dreams, is a Chinese colossus that started out in the battery sector and has now become a central player in the production of electric vehicles, both in Asia and Europe. The company is a perfect example of a fast-growing transnational reality, aiming to establish itself in a European context where the perception of “Made in China” is still ambivalent.

The comparison will be conducted with Tesla, which in many aspects can be defined as a ‘strategic twin’ of BYD: both were born as fully electric realities, not as evolutions of historical brands, both come from outside Europe, but with a different image heritage (Made in USA vs. Made in China), which strongly affects brand reception. Through this comparison and the detailed analysis of the BYD case, the thesis aims to evaluate to what extent the implementation of a Global Account Management system can represent a strategic tool to facilitate the entry and consolidation of a Chinese brand in the Italian market. It will do so, in particular, by combining qualitative, quantitative and empirical data, in order to offer an as accurate assessment as possible, free from cultural or economic preconceptions. In this sense, GAM also becomes a lens through which to observe the dynamics of openness, adaptation and acceptance between two worlds that are apparently distant but destined to interact more and more.

1.2 Problem statement and Research question.

Despite the growing interest in strategic management techniques in international markets, the academic and managerial literature still presents a certain degree of fragmentation in the analysis of Global Account Management (GAM), especially in emerging industries such as eclectic vehicles (EVs) where global scalability and local adaptation are critical. The evolution of global dynamics, the changes in value chains and the acceleration of phenomena such as the geopolitical repositioning of Chinese multinationals have posed companies with new strategic challenges, which require flexible, coordinated solutions capable of combining global vision and local adaptation. While GAM is now recognized as an advanced response for the need to

manage key customers globally, significant gaps persist in understanding its implementation in culturally complex markets (Europe vs. China) and in sectors with rigid incumbents. The absence of structured comparisons between Western and Chinese GAM approaches, highlights the need for empirical research.

Given the above considerations, this research is structured to answer the following central question:

“How can the Global Account Management model be effectively adopted and structured by multinational EV companies like BYD to leverage cost, performance and procurement advantages, and what are the main theoretical, managerial and empirical criteria guiding its success?”

In order to comprehensively articulate the central question, this investigation sets out to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What are the strategic and organizational motivations driving companies to adopt a Global Account Management model, and to what extent does this choice represent an evolution from traditional Key Account Management?
2. What strategic advantages (e.g., cost control, supply chain leverage, B2B flexibility) make GAM a critical tool for asset-driven EV brands like BYD?
3. How can the effectiveness and performance of a Global Account Management system be measured, and which metrics are most significant in assessing its strategic impact?

4. What cultural, geopolitical, and operational hurdles (e.g., EU protectionism, Italian buyer skepticism) must BYD address through GAM to replicate its Chinese success abroad?

1.3 Significance of the study.

The significance of the study of this research lies in its ambition to provide a precise, structured and credible framework for understanding how and why BYD (one of the fastest growing eclectic vehicle manufacturers globally) should implement a Global Account Management (GAM), a field which, although widely explored, still offers much to think about, especially with regard to the dynamics linking multinational companies and their global customers. Although the subject of Key Account Management (KAM) and the motivations that drive companies towards internationalization have been covered, this research aims to offer an overall and detailed overview of the variables that influence and determine the evolution and application of GAM. In particular, the investigation will focus on its genesis, exploring how and why KAM evolved into GAM, in light of changes in the global economic environment, business management techniques and the demands of an increasingly transnational market, with a specific and applied focus on BYD's European expansion strategy. Throughout the research, the connection between theory and practice will be highlighted, with a strong focus on the existing literature that has helped define the foundations of these strategies, as well as recent applications of GAM in multinational corporations. Indeed, this study aims to not leave anything to chance, treating both established theories and more modern applications with equal importance. To complete the theoretical and conceptual part,

the study will focus on a case study on China and Italy: two realities with profoundly different economic and cultural characteristics but connected by the need to adapt account management practices to international contexts. The objective is to explore how GAM strategies can be implemented and managed in a transnational context, where challenges and opportunities are many and varied. In this regard, the research will specifically examine the case of BYD, a Chinese electric vehicle manufacturer currently expanding into Europe, and evaluate how the adoption of a GAM structure could enhance its competitive position in the Italian market.

The choice to focus on China, a country with extraordinary economic growth and growing importance on the world stage, together with Italy, as an example of a European country with a strong industrial and commercial tradition, offers a singular focus. This study, conducted on the ground in China, will be of added value, as it will provide a direct, contextualized analysis and offer original contributions to the existing literature. Finally, the comparison between the two countries represents not only an opportunity to explore GAM models applied to very different realities, but also to draw conclusions that could be meaningful for global companies operating between these two crucial markets.

2. Literature review.

2.1 The Evolution of key account management.

Key Account Management (KAM) represents one of the most consolidated strategies in the area of business-to-business marketing and has been the subject of extensive theoretical reflection since the 2000s. Among the most significant contributions on the subject is the study by Workman, Homburg and Jensen, which explores the intra-organizational determinants of KAM effectiveness. According to the authors, the success of a KAM program depends largely on the internal structure of the company, cross-functional alignment and the level of empowerment of key account managers. This approach highlights how, in order to maximize the value generated by key accounts, deep integration across business functions and a clear definition of the roles and competencies involved are required¹. To reinforce this perspective, a further study conducted by the same authors proposes a configurational analysis of the KAM, arguing that there is no single model of strategic customer management, but rather a series of possible configurations², adaptable to the specific characteristics of each company and the nature of the customer-supplier relationship. Key variables of such a configuration include the degree of centralization, market orientation and approach to internal collaboration, confirming the highly contextual and dynamic nature of the KAM. In addition, the study conducted by the Boston Consulting Group emphasizes the importance of value creation in KAM programs.

¹ John P. Workman Jr., Christian Homburg, and Ove Jensen, "Intraorganizational Determinants of Key Account Management Effectiveness," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 31, no. 1 (2003): 3–21.

² Christian Homburg, John P. Workman Jr., and Ove Jensen, "A Configurational Perspective on Key Account Management," *Journal of Marketing* 66, no. 2 (2002): 38–60.

According to the report, companies that manage to create shared value with their key customers, through innovation, customization of offerings and proactivity in problem solving, are those that perform best in terms of both revenue growth and retention³.

This study, although more oriented towards strategic consulting than academic theory, fits perfectly into the strand linking the effectiveness of KAM to a company's ability to structure long-term collaborative relationships.

Finally, Abratt and Kelly provide a perspective based on the perceptions of the corporate actors involved in KAM programs. Their qualitative study, conducted through interviews and company case studies, identifies the distinctive traits of programs perceived as effective, among which transparency in communication, customer orientation, continuity in relationships and mutual trust⁴ between company and key account stand out. This work contributes to completing the conceptual framework by adding an empowering and relational dimension to the KAM analysis.

Overall, these studies constitute a solid theoretical basis for understanding the origin, characteristics and determinants of effectiveness of Key Account Management, outlining a discipline that, while consolidated, lends itself to continuous evolution and adaptation.

³ Boston Consulting Group, "Creating Value in Key Accounts," July 2010, <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2010/sales-organization-creating-value-key-accounts>.

⁴ Russell Abratt and Phillip Michael Kelly, "Customer–Supplier Partnerships: Perceptions of a Successful Key Account Management Program," *Industrial Marketing Management* 31, no. 5 (2002): 467–476.

2.2 The rise of Global account management.

The emergence of Global Account Management (GAM) as an autonomous practice compared to the traditional Key Account Management marked an important turning point in the management of strategic clients by multinational companies. In effect, GAM is an evolutionary response to the need to support clients that operate simultaneously in multiple markets and require contractual uniformity, strategic consistency and organizational coordination at a global level.

One of the best known and often cited contributions is that of David Arnold, Julian Birkinshaw and Omar Toulan, who in their seminal essay "Can Selling Be Globalised?" highlight the main difficulties associated with the centralized management of global business relationships. The authors argue that although companies are driven to standardize relations with multinational customers for reasons of efficiency and control⁵, such an approach can generate tensions with local units, which see their autonomy reduced. GAM's proposal is therefore problematized as a theoretically effective but operationally complex solution, to be implemented only in the presence of certain strategic and organizational prerequisites.

These reflections find an extension and systematization in the "Global Account Management Study" edited by Wilson, Croom, Millman and Weilbaker, in which GAM is explored through an empirical analysis conducted on several multinational companies. The work provides a useful categorization of GAM strategies, highlighting how the success of the model depends on the firm's ability to adapt to

⁵ David Arnold, Julian Birkinshaw, and Omar Toulan, "Can Selling Be Globalized? The Pitfalls of Global Account Management," *Harvard Business Review*, 79, no. 7 (2001): 92–100.

the structure and culture of global customers⁶, as well as its internal organizational maturity. This methodological approach adopted by the authors gives the work a solid comparative basis, highlighting the concrete conditions under which GAM produces visible results in terms of value, customer loyalty and sales growth.

A further theoretical and strategic contribution, is offered by Yip and Madsen, who define GAM as the “new frontier of relationship marketing.” According to the authors, the transition from a local to a global model is not limited to a question of scale, but involves a profound revision of relational, informational and decision-making processes between customer and supplier. GAM, in this view, is not just an operational tool but a true relational framework⁷, in which value creation is based on the company's ability to establish trust, transparency and shared vision with the global customer. This perspective relates closely to the work of Gosselin and Bauwen, who analyze GAM as a lever for strategic alignment between supplier and customer. Their thinking turns around the concept of customer alignment, which is the ability of the company to adapt its resources, structures and competencies according to the needs of the strategic customer. Value is then co-generated and not simply delivered⁸, through a collaborative process that is strengthened over time. The innovative aspect of this contribution lies in its focus on the strategic interdependence among global

⁶ Kevin Wilson, Simon Croom, Tony Millman, and Dan C. Weilbaker, *The Global Account Management Study Research Report*, The Sales Research Trust, 2000.

⁷ George S. Yip and Tammy L. Madsen, “Global Account Management: The New Frontier in Relationship Marketing,” *International Marketing Review* 13, no. 3 (1996): 24–42.

⁸ Derrick Philippe Gosselin and Guy André Bauwen, “Strategic Account Management: Customer Value Creation through Customer Alignment,” *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* 21, no. 6 (2006): 376–385.

actors, emphasizing how GAM requires a systemic rather than hierarchical view of the relationship.

Finally, in the study published in the *Journal of International Business Studies*, the same Birkinshaw, Toulan and Arnold return to the topic of GAM with a theoretical and empirical analysis that aims to understand under what organizational and strategic conditions the model can be successfully implemented. The authors propose a framework that considers the structure of the firm, the level of international integration and the degree of centralized decision-making, thus providing a useful benchmark for assessing corporate “readiness” with respect to GAM adoption⁹. The work represents one of the most comprehensive attempts to systematize the topic, combining theoretical rigor and practical application.

2.3 Internationalization and the role of GAM.

It is precisely the internationalization of markets and the increasing complexity of business-to-business relationships that have fostered the emergence of Global Account Management as a structured response to the need for coordination and consistency in the management of key clients operating globally. One of the contributions on this topic is provided by George S. Yip, David B. Montgomery and Belen Villalonga, who in a study conducted at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, analyze the demand for and use of GAM among multinational corporations. The authors note that the adoption of GAM is generally motivated by the need to

⁹ Julian Birkinshaw, Omar Toulan, and David Arnold, “Global Account Management in Multinational Corporations: Theory and Evidence,” *Journal of International Business Studies* 32, no. 2 (2001): 231–248.

manage complex customers in international settings¹⁰, ensuring uniform standards and creating synergies among the company's different business units.

Komor's paper, on the other hand, provides a practical perspective on the introduction of GAM, focusing particularly on SMEs operating in B2B. Komor highlights how, despite their smaller size, medium-sized companies can greatly benefit from implementing GAM strategies to consolidate relationships with global customers and simplify cross-border management, emphasizing the need for a structured and progressive approach¹¹. From a cross-cultural perspective, Lautenschlager et al. explore the influence of cultural variables in global account management, identifying how cultural distance between headquarters and foreign branches can impact GAM effectiveness¹². Their research shows how transparent communication, adaptation to local specificities, and support of advanced information systems are key factors in the success of the model.

Capon and Capon, in their landmark volume on strategic marketing in the 21st century, include GAM as an integral part of the customer-centric strategies of global enterprises. The authors propose a strategic view of GAM as a tool for improving the loyalty and profitability of multinational customers, tying it closely to the concepts of perceived value and customer satisfaction¹³. Finally, in “Managing Global

¹⁰ George S. Yip, David B. Montgomery, and Belen Villalonga, Demand for and Use of Global Account Management, Research Paper No. 1520, Stanford Graduate School of Business.

¹¹ Ralf H. Komor, Global Account Management. Basics for a Successful Introduction of a Global Account Management Strategy in B2B Medium-Sized Businesses, KOMOR.DE.

¹² Christian Lautenschlager, Nektarios Tzempelikos, Kaouther Kooli, and Giampaolo Viglia, “Cross-Cultural Determinants of Global Account Management: Findings from B2B Services,” *Industrial Marketing Management*.

¹³ Noel Capon and Roy Capon with James Mac Hulbert, *Managing Marketing in the 21st Century: Developing & Implementing the Market Strategy*, European Edition (New York: Columbia University Graduate School of Business).

Customers,” George S. Yip reiterates how GAM should be viewed not only as a business practice but as a strategic asset for multinational companies. According to Yip, GAM enables companies to gain competitive advantages through integrated relationship management¹⁴, which fosters internal efficiency, greater coordination and the ability to offer complex solutions on a global scale.

In conclusion, the analyzed literature confirms that GAM represents a coherent organizational response to internationalization processes, acting as a strategic lever for the effective management of global customers. It is a tool that goes beyond the commercial function and becomes a critical component in building the relationship between the company and the international market.

2.4 Operational and Organizational challenges in GAM.

Effective implementation of a Global Account Management program involves a number of organizational and operational challenges that reflect the complexities of managing transnational relationships with large clients. Although GAM is a powerful strategic tool for ensuring uniformity and consistency in global customer relationships, its implementation can prove arduous without an adequate internal support structure and a shared vision among the company's different locations. One of the most recurrent problems relates to defining the scope of action of the global account manager, who is often caught between the pressure of headquarters and the autonomy of local subsidiaries. Harvey, Myers and Novicevic analyze in depth the

¹⁴ George S. Yip, *Managing Global Customers* (Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University).

managerial tensions arising from the need to reconcile global strategies with local operating practices, highlighting how the GAM frequently finds himself operating in a “dual system,” having to respond simultaneously to sometimes divergent interests¹⁵. The lack of cultural and organizational uniformity among the various countries in which the company operates is another obstacle. Wilson, Croom, Millman and Weilbaker, in their study of GAM best practices, point out that one of the main difficulties encountered by firms is integrating the different levels of management and technological maturity of foreign offices. Cultural distance and lack of standardization of internal processes contribute to inefficiencies, slowing down the Global Account Manager's ability to create value for the customer¹⁶.

Moreover, as pointed out by The KAM Coach platform, the introduction of a GAM model imposes a profound change in corporate mindset, which must shift from a territorial to a global customer-centric approach. This shift is not automatic and is often met with internal resistance¹⁷, particularly from local managers who perceive GAM as a threat to their decision-making autonomy. This dynamic can undermine internal cohesion and obstruct the effectiveness of the global strategy. Finally, it is important to consider the resource allocation and technology infrastructure needed to support a GAM program. As Wilson et al. further explain, companies that successfully adopt GAM are those that invest in integrated information systems, shared Customers Relationship Management platforms, and ongoing training for the

¹⁵ Michael Harvey, Mathew B. Myers, and Milorad M. Novicevic, *The Managerial Issues Associated with Global Account Management*.

¹⁶ Dr. Kevin Wilson, Dr. Simon Croom, Professor Tony Millman, and Dr. Dan C. Weilbaker, *The Global Account Management Study Research Report*, The Sales Research Trust.

¹⁷ “Global Account Management,” The KAM Coach, <https://www.thekamcoach.com/global-account-management/>.

staff involved. However, many of these programs fail precisely because of the absence of these key elements, which are the operational foundation on which the entire GAM architecture should rest.

In sum, although GAM offers numerous opportunities in terms of strengthening the relationship with strategic clients and competitive positioning in international markets, the operational and organizational challenges should not be underestimated. The success of this model is highly dependent on the company's ability to build a smooth and yet integrated structure that combines central leadership, local autonomy and global coherence.

2.5 The Electric Vehicle Market.

Over the past two decades, the transition to electric mobility has redefined the strategic dynamics of the global automotive industry. The evolution of the electric vehicle (EV) market is not only a technological shift, but a real reconfiguration of the industrial, regulatory and commercial strategies of the world's major economies. China, Europe and Italy constitute three emblematic contexts for analyzing the scope and criticality of this transition. Globally, China is indisputably the leading market for EV deployment, production and regulatory support. Khaleel et al. point out how the Chinese government has played a decisive role through a system of subsidies, restrictions on number plates for internal combustion vehicles, and massive investment in charging infrastructure¹⁸. The white paper of the International Council

¹⁸ Mohamed Khaleel et al., Electric Vehicles in China, Europe, and the United States: Current Trend and Market Comparison, *International Journal of Electrical Engineering and Sustainability* 2, no. 1 (2024): 1–20.

on Clean Transportation by Lutsey, Cui and Yu confirms that China has focused on a long-term structured approach, with tax benefits, exemptions from driving restrictions and national targets binding until 2035¹⁹, strengthening the leadership of manufacturers such as BYD, which is now among the world's leading players not only in terms of volume but also in terms of innovation and vertical integration. According to Yankun Hou's report published by Nomura International, the Chinese government has been able to build a favorable ecosystem through an integrated approach combining financial incentives, active industrial policies, and a long-term vision on technological autonomy. Hou points out that China not only dominates the production of batteries and key components for electric vehicles but has also invested heavily in strengthening domestic supply chains, reducing dependence on foreign suppliers and becoming a global benchmark for the entire industry²⁰. Alongside these structural dynamics, the study by Yumeng Wang analyses the internal criticalities of the Chinese market, offering a more articulated picture. Among the main issues identified are the saturation of the urban market, uneven access to charging infrastructure in rural areas, and the need to strengthen consumer confidence in new Chinese brands. Wang also highlights the existence of a large gap between the high-tech offerings and the more conservative expectations of certain segments of the population, suggesting that future efforts by manufacturers, including BYD, should focus on educating consumers, strengthening after-sales service, and reinforcing

¹⁹ Nic Lutsey, Hongyang Cui, and Rujie Yu, Evaluating Electric Vehicle Costs and Benefits in China in the 2020–2035 Time Frame, International Council on Clean Transportation, April 2021.

²⁰ Yankun Hou, Electric Vehicles, China Industrials, Autos & Auto Parts, Nomura International (HK) Limited, Research Report, 2024.

brand reputation²¹. The combination of these factors makes the Chinese case extremely interesting for the study of international expansion. On the one hand, industrial efficiency and technological leadership allow brands like BYD to propose themselves as competitive players in the European market; on the other hand, the reputational and cultural challenges that derive from exporting a Chinese model of mobility in different institutional and regulatory contexts, such as those of the European Union, require advanced strategies of commercial and relational adaptation. In this scenario, the implementation of a Global Account Management system by BYD would represent not only an organizational response, but also a strategic lever to facilitate cultural and operational integration in Western markets.

Europe, while starting behind China, has made substantial progress with the adoption of the European Green Deal, the CO₂ quota system and national electric mobility plans. Kjeld van Wieringen's report for the European Parliament²² shows how the regulatory push and tax incentives have facilitated an acceleration in EV adoption, albeit with large differences between individual Member States. However, as shown in the study by Blumberg et al. the growth of the EV market in Europe inevitably intersects with issues of grid capacity, charging infrastructure and balancing energy demand²³. The authors, through a detailed scenario analysis, highlight how the expected increase in EV penetration may lead to significant impacts on the stability of the European electricity system, especially if not accompanied by synergetic

²¹ Yumeng Wang, "China's Electric Vehicle Market: Issues and Solutions," SHS Web of Conferences 208, 02014 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202420802014>.

²² Kjeld van Wieringen, *The Future of European Electric Vehicles*, European Parliamentary Research Service, PE 762.873, November 2024.

²³ Gerald Blumberg, Roland Broll, and Christoph Weber, "The Impact of Electric Vehicles on the Future European Electricity System – A Scenario Analysis," *Energy Policy* 161 (2022)

planning between production, distribution and consumption. In particular, the increase in electric demand associated with EV recharging is expected to generate concentrated peaks in the evening hours, with potentially critical effects on the electric grid, unless intelligent demand-side management strategies, distributed recharging infrastructures and dynamic pricing policies are implemented. In this perspective, the adoption of commercial and organizational strategies such as Global Account Management assumes a relevant role: not only to build stable and centralized relationships with large B2B customers (corporate fleets, leasing companies, public transport), but also to coordinate at transnational level the infrastructural needs related to the mass deployment of EVs. As a matter of fact, GAM can foster an integrated and long-term vision of the market, contributing to the creation of efficient, resilient and coordinated energy and logistics ecosystems between countries and operators. In this sense, the presence of manufacturers such as BYD, which integrate car and battery production, could be particularly strategic in responding to the need to align mobility supply and energy capacity, in a systemic perspective.

In the Italian context, the transition to electric mobility appears more fragmented and slower than in other major European markets, despite the country has a long industrial tradition in the automotive sector. As Crestia, Sbardella and Virgillito point out, Italy has adopted a weak and intermittent approach to the electric transition, often subordinated to the political conjunctures of the moment and poorly supported by a unified strategic vision. The authors highlight three key obstacles in particular²⁴: the absence of a long-term industrial plan, the lack of coordination between national and

²⁴ Lorenzo Crestia, Angelica Sbardella, and Maria Enrica Virgillito, *The Automotive Industry and the Transition to Electric Mobility in Italy*, Working Paper, 2024.

local policies, and the fragility of the recharging infrastructure network, especially in non-urban areas. These shortcomings not only slow down the spread of electric vehicles but also weaken the country's competitive position compared to other EU members. Expanding on this dynamic is the working paper by Bonacina et al., which defines Italy as “the slow lane”²⁵ of the electric transition. Through a comparative analysis and a critical re-reading of incentive policies, the study shows how the diffusion of full-electric cars is still very limited in the Italian market, with a particularly low penetration in the B2B segment, precisely the strategic one for the application of Global Account Management. According to the authors, poor product awareness on the part of companies, regulatory uncertainty and the difficulty of accessing leasing or fleet management solutions on a national scale represent systemic barriers to transition. The analysis also highlights a strong dependence on the European context, with Italy receiving but not leading the sector's transformations, limiting itself to a passive role in technological and commercial innovation. These elements reinforce the relevance of a case study such as BYD's in Italy, where the adoption of a Global Account Management strategy could make up for some of the inefficiencies of the local market, facilitating access to large institutional customers and corporate fleets, and creating stable relationships that overcome the discontinuities of the distribution and regulatory system. It is in a context that is less mature but still open to experimentation that GAM could act as an

²⁵ Monica Bonacina, Mert Demir, Antonio Sileo, and Angela Zanoni, *The Slow Lane: A Study on the Diffusion of Full-Electric Cars in Italy*, Working Paper No. 19.2024, Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM).

instrument of commercial stabilization and acceleration, representing a concrete lever to make an operational model suitable for European needs scalable and replicable.

3. Research Methodology.

The proposed research methodology of this study will be divided into two main phases, which will allow the research questions to be answered exhaustively. In the first part, devoted to the theoretical and historical analysis of KAM and GAM, the approach adopted will be mainly qualitative. It will include a detailed review of the academic literature mapping the evolution of KAM and GAM, starting from the origins of those management practices to their modern applications. Articles, books and studies published by leading authors in the field will be analyzed, as well as reports and documents provided by major consulting firms such as McKinsey & Company, Boston Consulting Group (BCG), Accenture and Deloitte. These reports, which deal in detail with changes in the international landscape and the adaptation of account management techniques to new global challenges, will offer an applied perspective on the dynamics at work. In addition, government documents and other official sources, where available, will be explored that can offer an updated view on global account management, particularly in the context of corporate internationalization.

The second part of the research will focus on the case study, which will concentrate on the implementation of GAM in a transnational context, with a specific focus on a company operating between Italy and China. The selected case will be the Chinese eclectic vehicle manufacturer BYD, and the study will investigate the strategic value

of implementing a Global Account Management system to support its expansion into the Italian and the European markets. In order to ensure the robustness and reliability of the findings, the research will adopt a multi-method approach, combining qualitative, quantitative, and empirical components. The qualitative dimension will include the analysis of European and Chinese documents and industry studies relevant to BYD's strategic positioning, while the quantitative dimension will be supported by metrics such as total cost of ownership (TCO) analysis and market penetration indicators. Finally, the empirical dimension will be covered through interviews and surveys involving professionals from BYD, fleet managers, potential corporate clients, and leasing companies. This integrated structure will enable the research to deliver results that are as accurate and comprehensive as possible, reflecting both the theoretical implications and the practical realities of implementing GAM in the European automotive context.

4.Theoretical foundations of Global Account Management.

4.1 Key Concepts and Evolution.

Key Account Management (KAM) has its roots in the US corporate environment of the 1970s-1980²⁶s, when large corporations began to structure more sophisticated approaches to managing their most strategic customers. In an age of growing multinational corporations and complex B2B relationships, the traditional sales model proved insufficient to meet the needs of increasingly demanding and globalized customers. However, it was not until the 1990s that the limits, implementation conditions and long-term objectives of this practice began to be more clearly defined. Currently, one of the most widely accepted definitions of Key Account Management describes it as a systematic process aimed at managing and growing a company's most relevant and strategic B2B customers, with the objective of maximizing value for both organizations involved²⁷. This definition, in its apparent simple nature, nevertheless contains a profound conceptual and operational complexity, which has emerged over time through the theoretical and practical development of the model. The entire historical development of KAM, as well as its evolution towards more advanced models such as GAM, can in fact be read as an ongoing attempt to respond to the implications contained in this definition, and to adapt it to changing, increasingly globalized, dynamic and interdependent contexts. An interesting contribution to consider, in this regard, is Millman and Wilson's 1994 study, which lays the theoretical foundations for understanding the shift from a purely

²⁶ Benson P. Shapiro and Rowland T. Moriarty, "National Account Management: Emerging Insights," MSI Report No. 80-104 (Cambridge, MA: Marketing Science Institute, 1980)

²⁷ DemandFarm. "Key Account Management: A Comprehensive Guide." <https://www.demandfarm.com/key-account-management/>.

commercial logic (key account selling) to an integrated relational and strategic management (key account management). In this paper, the authors describe how, at the time, many companies were still in the exploration phase of the KAM concept itself, without having precisely defined its scope, purpose and operational tools. One of the main problems that emerged was the difficulty in analyzing the profitability of key customers. In fact, strategic decisions in key markets had to be based on the measurement of performance and the value generated for the customer (customer value), in order to assess the real profitability of the account. However, one of the main obstacles to implementing an effective analysis of customer profitability was the inability of management accounting systems to accurately allocate costs. In particular, it was complex to determine which costs to allocate to individual customers and at which levels of aggregation, thus preventing a clear and reliable assessment of the operating margins associated with each key account. To address the systemic difficulty associated with measuring the profitability of strategic accounts, Millman and Wilson suggest the adoption of a more informed and layered analytical approach, capable of overcoming the limitations of traditional accounting systems, which are often unable to provide an accurate representation of the costs attributable to individual accounts. In fact, it is proposed to approach the assessment of customer profitability not as a standard accounting operation, but as a strategic process to be constructed along an evolutionary cycle articulated in phases. This cycle, which accompanies the transformation of the relationship between seller and customer, involves the progressive development of analytical and relational skills as the account takes on a more central role within the company's portfolio. In this sense, the analysis of profitability must take into account not only immediate economic returns, but also

the potential for long-term joint development, relational stability and the possibility of competitive differentiation. The implicit proposal of the authors is to combine accounting systems with a more flexible measurement logic, centered on the strategic value of the customer and the company's ability to adapt its resources and organizational structures to a complex and dynamic relationship. In this way, profitability is no longer read as a fixed and universally measurable variable, but as a contingent element, dependent on the nature and intensity of the relationship between the parties. Another important contribution concerns the conceptualization of the KAM development cycle, understood as an evolutionary process through distinct phases. The path starts with an initial pre-KAM phase, in which the company does not yet have a dedicated structure, and then moves to an initial experimental approach, called early-KAM, in which a number of relevant accounts are identified. The next phase, called mid-KAM, coincides with the formalization of the program and the creation of well-defined roles and responsibilities. As the relationship progresses, an advanced stage of partnership-KAM is reached, in which the relationship becomes collaborative, long-term oriented and based on co-development²⁸. Finally, one may reach a stage of synergistic-KAM, characterized by a high degree of integration and mutual value, or, conversely, of uncoupling, where the relationship no longer yields strategic benefits and is progressively discontinued. This model shows that KAM is not an immediately replicable technique, but an organizational and cultural path that requires investment, time and adaptability.

²⁸ Tony Millman and Kevin Wilson, From Key Account Selling to Key Account Management (paper presented at the 10th IMP Conference, University of Groningen, 1994).

With the beginning of the new millennium, Key Account Management had already acquired an increasing centrality in the strategy of companies operating in B2B markets, imposing itself as a practice almost indispensable for the management of relations with strategic customers. Nevertheless, while the academic debate was enriched with increasingly complex and articulated theoretical contributions, and companies continued to introduce innovative elements into their commercial organization, a basic uncertainty remained as to what were the optimal conditions to really adopt a KAM program. The crucial question was no longer whether to adopt such a system, but when, how and with which strategic premises to proceed towards an effective and sustainable implementation. This point is all the more relevant considering that KAM represents, to all intents and purposes, the foundational basis of subsequent global account management models, and in particular of GAM (Global Account Management), the main focus of our analysis. Understanding in detail the dynamics and conditions that legitimize the adoption of KAM allows, in fact, a more precise picture of the transformational logic that has led companies to extend the concept on an international scale, adapting it to multicultural, multi-level and transnational contexts. It is only through a detailed analysis of the managerial levers, organizational constraints and operational dynamics underlying the KAM that it is possible to outline a reliable picture of its evolution in a global key.

An exploratory study conducted in 2006²⁹ systematically investigated how companies operating in B2B contexts approach the implementation of Key Account

²⁹ Stefan Wengler, Michael Ehret, and Samy Saab, "Implementation of Key Account Management: Who, Why, and How? An Exploratory Study on the Current Implementation of Key Account Management Programs," *Industrial Marketing Management* 35, no. 1 (2006): 103–112.

Management, revealing that it never follows a linear path, nor can it be considered a standardized practice. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews with a selected sample of German companies with the aim of understanding not only if and how KAM had been introduced, but also why. The analysis revealed a considerable variety of approaches, confirming that KAM cannot be applied as a universal technique, but rather requires a thorough adaptation to the internal structure of the company, its organizational culture, and above all to the type of value it intends to generate for strategic customers. The motivations that prompted the interviewed companies to start a KAM program are numerous, but they center around a few common threads. First, many companies recognized the need to minimize the risk of losing strategic customers by seeking to secure them through a customized and structured relationship. This need is accompanied by a growing drive towards customer orientation, understood not only as operational responsiveness, but as a willingness to anticipate their needs, expectations and decision-making dynamics. Another fundamental reason concerns the internationalization of customers: the increasing geographical expansion of key customers has made it essential to adopt more robust and coordinated relational structures. Some companies also saw the KAM as a useful tool to improve internal coordination between functions, particularly between sales, marketing, logistics and after-sales. Finally, there was also a desire to better structure customer segmentation, distinguishing between high-potential and “traditional” customers, in order to manage them differentially. These motivations have directly influenced the way companies have designed and implemented their KAM system.

A particularly thought-intriguing question, which emerges explicitly in one of the most recent studies on the topic, concerns the real solidity of the benefits attributed to Key Account Management: if the benefits of KAM are not entirely certain or easily measurable, how do we explain that its adoption has become so pervasive as to be considered one of the most significant transformations in the way B2B companies organize their sales and marketing activities?³⁰ This question is all the more relevant given that the previous sections have mainly highlighted the critical issues associated with the introduction and management of KAM programs, such as the difficulty of allocating costs accurately, organizational challenges and the vulnerability associated with identifying the optimal condition for adopting a KAM program. However, the answer to this apparent paradox lies in the fact that, even in the absence of immediate and definitive metrics to calculate the economic return of such programs, companies recognize KAM as a powerful tool for differentiation and relationship-building. According to the findings, the benefits of KAM are not so much linked to short-term results that can be measured with accounting precision, but rather to the potential to create long-term relationships with high added value, capable of generating competitive advantages that are difficult for competitors to replicate.

The aim of this study was to critically question the real effectiveness of key account management practices, starting from the paradoxical observation made explicit above. The authors thus wanted to fill a gap found in the literature: numerous studies had described what the ideal KAM should be, but there was a lack of up-to-date empirical investigations on how this model is actually translated into everyday

³⁰ Iain A. Davies and Lynette J. Ryals, "The Effectiveness of Key Account Management Practices," *Industrial Marketing Management* 43, no. 7 (2014): 1183.

practice by key account managers and their organizations. To achieve this, Davies and Ryals designed mixed methods research, combining a structured questionnaire distributed to a large sample of key account managers in the UK with a series of qualitative in-depth interviews. This methodological strategy allowed them to collect representative quantitative data, but also to explore individual perceptions, operational difficulties and non-formalized practices in depth, thus offering a more multi-faceted picture of reality. The questionnaire was constructed on the basis of the main theoretical recommendations on KAM and aimed to measure the level of adoption of a number of key practices: from the segmentation of strategic clients to the alignment between internal functions, from relational planning to the use of relational and economic performance measurement tools. Qualitative interviews, on the other hand, served to investigate the reasons for any deviations between what was stated in the questionnaires and day-to-day practice, as well as to explore organizational obstacles and cultural barriers that often hinder the full implementation of a rigorous KAM approach.

The analysis of the data led to enlightening results. On the one hand, the authors found that most of the companies surveyed proclaim to have a KAM program, often presented as the flagship of their business strategy. On the other hand, however, empirical verification of the actual practices in use revealed a much less uniform and linear situation than might have been expected. Some fundamental activities such as proactive planning and the integration of cross-functional teams, were applied sporadically or, in some cases, not at all. A lack of shared tools to assess the effectiveness of KAM also emerged: the measurement of relational performance, for example, is often vague or linked to traditional sales indicators, without taking into

account the qualitative dimensions of the relationship. Davies and Ryals conclude, therefore, that the success of a KAM program cannot be assessed solely in terms of statements of intent, but must be measured by the depth to which the recommended practices are actually integrated into organizational processes. Their research suggests that many companies underestimate the complexity of building a coherent KAM system: to be truly effective, it requires dedicated resources, professionals with advanced skills, appropriate control systems and a corporate culture oriented towards cross-functional collaboration. In other words, if KAM has become so widespread, it is not so much because it produces immediate benefits that can be easily measured, but because it responds to a long-term strategic demand, namely, to create relationships of trust and shared value with key customers, guaranteeing stability, differentiation and a lasting competitive advantage in increasingly complex and turbulent market environments.

In summary, Key Account Management originated as a response to the increasing complexity of B2B relationships and has evolved, since the 1970s, from a sales logic focused on key customers to an integrated relational and strategic model, oriented towards maximizing value and loyalty. The literature highlights how effective key account management is not a standardized practice, but a dynamic process articulated in evolutionary phases, requiring organizational investments, flexible profitability measurements and strong alignment between internal functions. Despite the difficulties of implementation and the challenge of quantifying immediate benefits, KAM is recognized as a powerful tool for competitive differentiation and building long-term partnerships, setting the conceptual and operational foundations for the

evolution towards more complex and global models such as Global Account Management (GAM).

4.2 The shift toward Global Account Management (GAM).

Since the 1970s, the advent of information technologies and the progressive opening up of markets have accelerated a process of globalization that has profoundly transformed the competitive dynamics of companies. The spread of the Internet, satellite communications and international travel has made companies more interconnected and customers more informed, while increasing the speed with which products and information circulate on a global scale³¹. In this context, business relationships have become more articulated and interdependent: no longer mere transactional exchanges, but networks of long-term strategic relationships, often spanning multiple actors and multiple countries. Globalization has therefore changed the nature of demand, customers are no longer isolated local entities, but multinational realities with a need for contractual standardization and consistency in services, independently of the reference market. This change has made it necessary for suppliers to equip themselves with organizational structures capable of guaranteeing continuity, coordination and the ability to adapt simultaneously on a local and global scale. As pointed out by Gosselin and Bauwen, the emergence of dominant strategic customers, which are responsible for significant shares of total revenues, has prompted companies to develop dedicated forms of management to

³¹ Sheena Leek, Peter Naudé, and Peter W. Turnbull, "Interactions, Relationships and Networks in a Changing World," *Industrial Marketing Management* 32, no. 2 (2003): 87–90.

protect these relationships and maximize mutual value creation³². The so-called ‘relationship issues’ of the new millennium described by Leek et al. clearly highlight the challenges that companies face (Figure 1), and so, the increasing complexity of networks, the evolution of purchasing processes and the need to maintain quality relationships despite the impersonality of new digital media. Customers' expectations have become more sophisticated: they demand not only technologically advanced and customizable products, but also fast after-sales services and proactive problem management, which are key elements for customer loyalty.

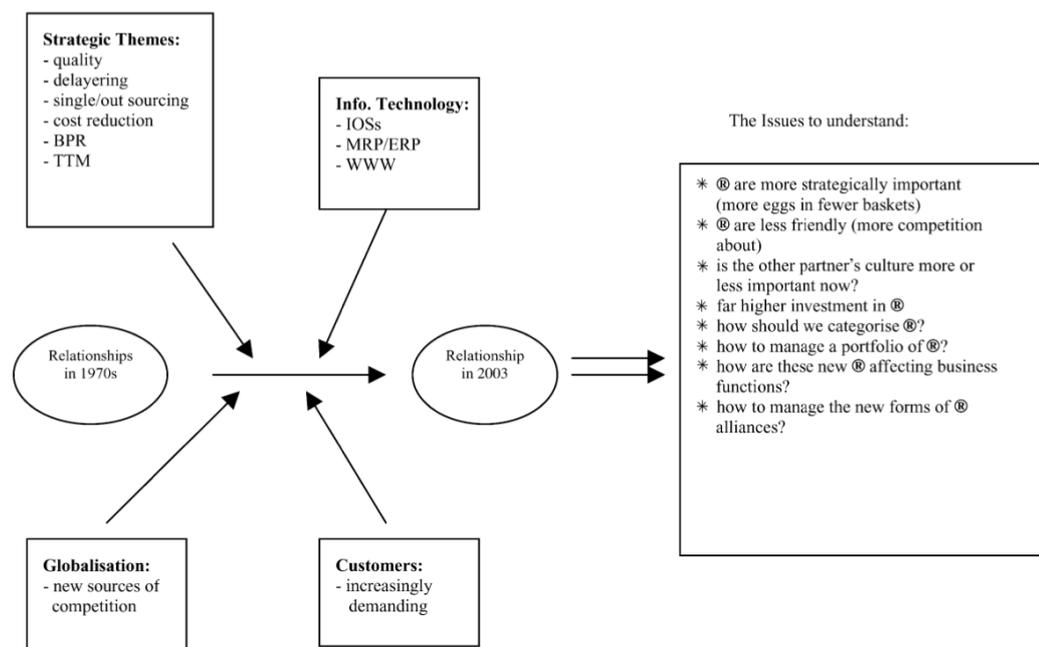


Figure 1: Relationship issues in the new millennium.

Source: Adapted from Sheena Leek, Peter Naudé, and Peter W. Turnbull, "Interactions, Relationships and Networks in a Changing World," *Industrial Marketing Management* 32, no. 2 (2003): 89

³² Derrick Philippe Gosselin and Guy André Bauwen, "Strategic Account Management: Customer Value Creation through Customer Alignment," *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* 21, no. 6 (2006): 376–385.

Understanding this graph is strategic for delving into the reasons why companies developed Global Account Management (GAM) systems.

In the 1970s, relationships between companies were mainly based on simple and localized exchanges, but with the advancement of globalization, the spread of new information technologies such as the use of IOS, MRP/ERP and Internet, thus the emergence of strategic issues such as quality, cost reduction, outsourcing and time-to-market, these relationships have progressively transformed into complex connections crucial for competitiveness. In the new millennium, maintaining stable and quality relationships has become essential but also riskier: increasingly, companies find themselves concentrating a large share of their turnover on a few key customers, thus exposing themselves to the logic of "more eggs in fewer baskets". At the same time, relationships have become less "friendly" because they increase competition between partners for more advantageous terms and require much higher investment in dedicated resources, monitoring systems and qualified personnel. Further complicating the picture is the cultural variable, considering that collaborating with global organizations requires an understanding of whether and how the culture of the other partner influences common outcomes. In parallel, companies must learn how to classify and segment different types of relationships accurately, manage multinational account portfolios, coordinate different internal business functions and govern new forms of strategic alliances. All these critical issues explain why traditional key account management has proved inadequate to meet the needs of global customers, making it indispensable to create GAM structures capable of combining central strategic vision and local operational adaptation, ensuring contractual consistency and shared value in increasingly complex

transnational contexts. GAM thus emerged as an organizational and strategic response to the new relational challenges of the new millennium. In the course of this paper we will analyze in detail the characteristics that distinguish GAM from traditional models, its main objectives, the strategic motivations behind the organizational choices it entails, as well as the operational and managerial challenges that this advanced approach also inevitably brings with it.

4.2.1 Rationale of GAM adoption.

At the heart of the adoption of Global Account Management (GAM) is the increasingly urgent need for multinational corporations to respond in a structured way to the challenges posed by globalization and the expansion of their strategic customers on a global scale. As purchasing and sales activities extended beyond national borders, companies realized that the simple replication of Key Account Management at a local level was no longer sufficient: they needed a model capable of coordinating complex relationships centrally, ensuring consistency of commercial policies, product standardization and synchronization of supply processes across all markets. GAM is thus configured as an organizational form and, at the same time, as a collaborative process that allows the integration of resources, skills and routines of two different organizations into an alliance capable of creating “dyadic competitive advantages”³³. This approach is based on the principle that true competitive advantage does not only derive from a company's internal assets, but also from the

³³ Linda Hui Shi, Shaoming Zou, and S. Tamer Cavusgil, *A Conceptual Framework of Global Account Management Capabilities and Firm Performance*, *International Business Review* 13, no. 5 (2004): 547.

ability to develop shared resources with selected partners through joint investments that are difficult for competitors to imitate. From this perspective, strategic alignment between customer and supplier, defined as GAM Strategic Fit, is a crucial element in ensuring that global strategies are coherent and synergetic, reducing conflicts and inefficiencies between local offices and central management. Next to strategic fit, another main pillar is Collaborative Orientation, that is, the orientation towards genuine collaboration, which goes beyond the simple exchange of information to a sharing of objectives and priorities. Finally, the GAM Configuration represents the tangible part of this set-up: dedicated teams, specific incentives, standardized procedures and qualified human resources constitute the infrastructure that makes the global relationship operational. We could therefore say that the rationale of GAM lies in the intuition that a well-structured global co-ordination, supported by a collaborative culture and targeted organizational configurations, can generate higher joint results than each actor would achieve alone, maximizing value for both in an increasingly interconnected competitive environment.

Now that the rationale behind the evolution of Global Account Management has been clarified, such as the increasing complexity of international markets, the spread of increasingly demanding multinational customers and the need to overcome the limits of traditional Key Account Management models, it is essential to focus on the theoretical assumptions that explain why GAM represents an effective organizational response to these challenges. Before moving on to describe in detail the concrete objectives that a GAM program proposes to achieve, it is appropriate to recall two reference conceptual approaches: the Resource-Based View (RBV) and the Relational View.

The RBV, as illustrated by Barney³⁴, assumes that a firm's sustainable competitive advantage derives not only from the characteristics of the sector in which it operates, but above all from its ability to possess, develop and protect internal resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate and irreplaceable. These resources may take the form of tangible assets, specialized knowledge, patents, reputation and unique managerial skills, which together enable the firm to differentiate itself from competitors and achieve superior performance over time. However, in contexts characterized by increasingly interdependent exchange networks, such as those that emerge in the management of multinational customers, the mere availability of internal resources is no longer sufficient to guarantee a lasting competitive advantage. It is in this direction that Dyer and Singh, extending the classical RBV perspective, propose the Relational View: an approach that also recognizes as part of a company's strategic assets the resources created and developed within close, stable inter-organizational relationships based on mutual trust and specific investments. According to this view, shared routines, co-developed know-how, joint learning processes and idiosyncratic investments become critical assets that are difficult to replicate, capable of generating superior returns that neither organization could produce alone³⁵.

In light of this discussion, it is evident that Global Account Management represents a concrete organizational form that translates these principles into managerial practice. In line with the conceptual framework proposed by Shi, Zou, and Cavusgil,

³⁴ J.B. Barney, "Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage," *Journal of Management* 17, no. 1 (1991): 99–120.

³⁵ J.H. Dyer and H. Singh, "The Relational View: Cooperative Strategy and Sources of Interorganizational Competitive Advantage," *Academy of Management Review* 23, no. 4 (1998): 660–673.

GAM can be interpreted as a mechanism through which two organizations, typically a multinational supplier and a global customer, not only co-ordinate their purchasing and selling activities centrally, but also create unique relational resources that are difficult for competitors to imitate. This ability to generate dyadic competitive advantages³⁶ derives precisely from the activation of shared routines, specific investments and joint learning processes, elements that fully embody the relational logic of RBV. In the framework of Shi et al., this translates into three key organizational capabilities, discussed above, which act as levers to transform the interaction between supplier and customer into a source of joint profits superior to those that each actor could achieve independently.

In this sense, GAM is not only an operational response to the challenges of globalization and market complexity, but a true platform for co-creating strategic value for the company itself. Integrating the RBV approach with the Relational View means recognizing that, within a well-structured GAM program, the partnership itself becomes an inimitable competitive asset, and therefore, a combination of tangible and intangible assets, underpinned by trust, strategic friendliness and dedicated structures, that strengthens the position of both parties in the long run. This conceptual link clarifies why, for many leading companies in complex B2B sectors, investing in Global Account Management is not just an organizational choice, but a strategic positioning decision, consistent with the most advanced theories of resource management and inter-organizational relations.

³⁶ Linda Hui Shi, Shaoming Zou, and S. Tamer Cavusgil, "A Conceptual Framework of Global Account Management Capabilities and Firm Performance," *International Business Review* 13, no. 5 (2004): 545-546.

Complementing what has been said about the rationale and theoretical foundations of the Resource-Based View and their natural development into the Relational View, the diagram below provides a concise but highly effective representation of how Global Account Management translates these concepts into management practice. This model, taken from Shi, Zou and Cavusgil, illustrates in visual form the key factors that underpin the success of a GAM program, logically linking the starting conditions, the organizational capabilities required and the expected strategic results.

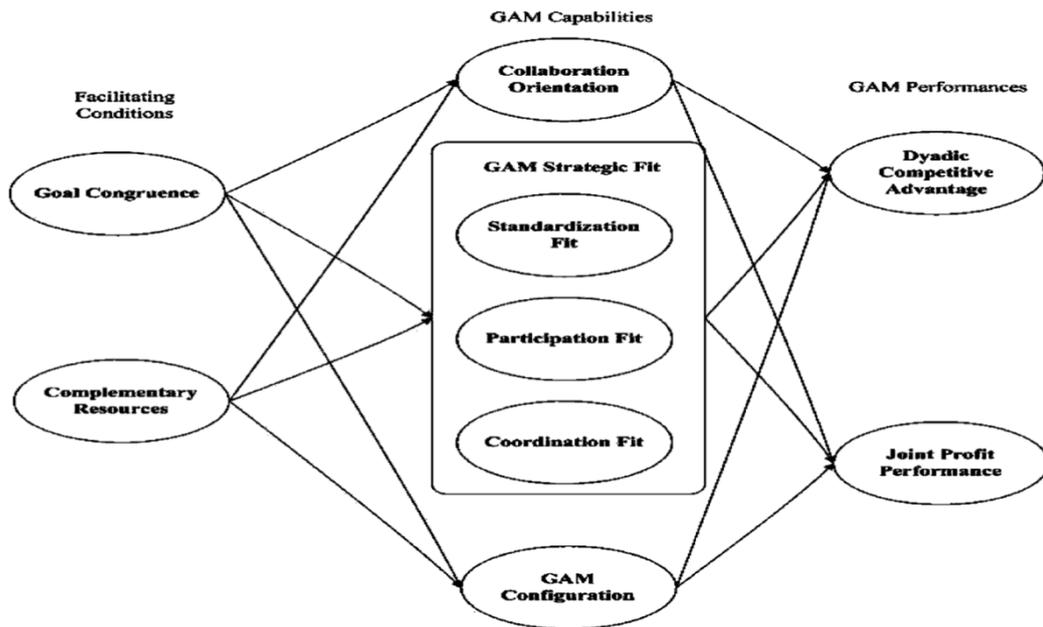


Figure 2. A Conceptual Model of GAM Capabilities and Performances.

Source: Linda Hui Shi, Shaoming Zou, and S. Tamer Cavusgil, A Conceptual Framework of Global Account Management Capabilities and Firm Performance, *International Business Review* 13, no. 5 (2004): 544.

On the left- side of the diagram are the Facilitating Conditions, the prerequisites that must be in place for a Global Account Management to be implemented effectively. Among these, Goal Congruence represents the level of alignment between the strategic goals of the supplier and the global customer: without a clear understanding

of long-term goals, collaboration risks fragmentation. Beside it, Complementary Resources indicate the presence of distinctive resources that each partner brings to the relationship: knowledge, technologies, specific skills that, combined, generate more value than could be achieved separately. These two basic conditions embody fully the idea, central to the Relational View, that part of the competitive advantage arises outside the formal boundaries of the firm, within dyadic relationships built on strategic compatibility and integrated resources. Moving to the center of the diagram, we find the GAM Capabilities, that is, the organizational capabilities that act as a bridge between the starting conditions and the final results. These are elements that have already been discussed in detail in the previous paragraphs: Collaboration Orientation, which expresses the cultural attitude to collaborate and build mutual trust; GAM Strategic Fit, articulated in the three dimensions of Standardization Fit, Participation Fit and Coordination Fit, which defines how coherent the strategic approach of the two partners is at the level of product standardization, presence in key markets and co-ordination of global activities; finally, GAM Configuration, which includes structures, roles, incentives and formal procedures dedicated to managing and consolidating the global relationship. These capabilities are not just operational tools but represent relational resources in the strict sense, developed through shared routines and specific investments, just as the Relational View expects. To the right of the diagram are the GAM Performances, which summaries the strategic benefits of a well-designed GAM consistent with the theoretical framework. The Dyadic Competitive Advantage reflects a strengthened market position resulting not from internal resources alone, but from the synergetic combination of assets, knowledge and processes developed together with the global customer. Finally, the

Joint Profit Performance indicates that this collaboration generates a higher profit than each partner would achieve acting in isolation: a result that justifies investment in complex configurations and dedicated management routines.

4.2.2 Objective and empirical evidence of GAM adoption.

Having clarified the theoretical context and the strategic assumptions underlying Global Account Management, it is now possible to delve into the main concrete objectives that this model proposes to pursue and consolidate over time. The first fundamental goal is represented by customer satisfaction, understood not only as the ability to respond to a client's expectations, but as the construction of a consistent, uniform experience that is at the same time adaptable to the peculiarities of each local market. In a global context, guaranteeing a homogeneous service in terms of quality, response times and contractual standards means offering the multinational customer a stable and reliable point of reference, reducing the risks of misunderstandings and conflicts between local offices³⁷. A well-structured customer experience thus favors a high degree of satisfaction and, consequently, greater loyalty, reducing turnover and the risk of the strategic account being attracted by competing offers. Alongside this qualitative objective, GAM also responds to quantitative growth logics, acting as a tool to consistently increase the revenues generated by global customers. Through centralized monitoring of emerging needs and an integrated view of business opportunities in different markets, companies can identify cross-selling, up-selling and tailor-made solution development spaces at an earlier stage. This allows them not

³⁷ DemandFarm, "The Ultimate Guide to Global Account Management," DemandFarm,, <https://www.demandfarm.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-global-account-management/>.

only to consolidate the relationship with the existing account, but also to expand the overall order book, with direct effects on overall turnover growth³⁸.

A third objective concerns profitability, which in the GAM context is pursued not so much through mere volume expansion, but through more efficient management of resources and cost structures. By coordinating activities between subsidiaries and regional teams, eliminating duplication and internal conflicts and fostering operational synergies, companies are able to optimize margins from their key customers, ensuring that the value created is not eroded by organizational inefficiencies. Indeed, Arnold, Birkinshaw and Toulan pointed out that one of the most common risks is a lack of control between local offices, which can result in unauthorized discounts, inconsistent pricing policies and diseconomies of scale, all of which GAM aims to prevent in a structured way³⁹.

Alongside these immediate benefits, GAM also pursues long-term partnership objectives, based on mutual trust, transparency and strategic information sharing. The intent is to transform the traditional customer-supplier relationship into a relationship of value co-creation, in which both partners invest specific resources, share risks and benefits, and jointly develop innovative solutions that are difficult to replicate by competitors. In this perspective, the GAM acts as a lever to build a sustainable competitive advantage, positioning the company as a privileged interlocutor that is difficult to replace in a global market characterized by high competition and rapid

³⁸ Julian Birkinshaw and A. Lindkvist, "Critical Success Factors for Managing Global Accounts," *Journal of Service Research* 1, no. 2 (1998): 144–54.

³⁹ David Arnold, Julian Birkinshaw, and Omar Toulan, "Can Selling Be Globalized? The Pitfalls of Global Account Management," *California Management Review* 44, no. 1 (2001): 16-18.

evolution⁴⁰. Finally, one of the most practical and often underestimated objectives concerns increasing operational efficiency. In effect, Global Account Management aims to simplify and standardize complex processes, ensuring that the various business functions: sales, logistics, after-sales, product development, are aligned and coordinated across national borders. This approach reduces unnecessary costs, minimizes response times and strengthens the ability to offer timely and consistent solutions, thereby improving the overall quality of service and freeing up resources for higher value-added activities.

The strategic and operational objectives outlined above find solid empirical support in numerous industry studies and research, which demonstrate their effectiveness and tangible benefits for businesses. For example, Kapta points out that companies with a structured account management system experience a significantly higher organic growth rate than competitors without proactive management, as increased recurring sales and the ability to activate well-targeted cross-selling campaigns help to reduce acquisition costs by up to 50% and extend the average contract duration, thereby strengthening the long-term revenue base⁴¹. In support of the centrality of customer satisfaction, Survicate provides very clear data: according to their surveys, 86 per cent of loyal customers are willing to pay more for a personalized and consistent experience, while companies that invest in post-sales satisfaction strategies are 60 per cent more likely to up-sell and cross-sell than the average⁴².

⁴⁰ DemandFarm, "The Ultimate Guide to Global Account Management," DemandFarm,, <https://www.demandfarm.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-global-account-management/>.

⁴¹ Kapta, "Account Management Drives Organic Growth," Kapta, <https://kapta.com/resources/key-account-management-blog/key-account-management/account-management-drives-organic-growth>.

⁴² Survicate, "Customer Satisfaction: What It Is, Importance & Examples," Survicate, <https://survicate.com/blog/customer-satisfaction/>.

Such evidence reinforces the assumption that one of the main tasks of a global account management system is precisely to ensure, through dedicated structures and centralized coordination, a consistent, high-level experience for multinational customers in all markets served. Similarly, Madill, Haines and Riding have shown in an empirical analysis conducted across multiple industries that the continuity of the relationship between account manager and customer is one of the most predictive variables of perceived satisfaction and contractual stability: a high turnover rate of account management personnel leads to a significant loss of trust and a drop in customer purchasing volumes⁴³. This result is particularly relevant for GAM, which by its very nature requires stable, trained global teams capable of servicing strategic clients on an international scale, thus ensuring consistency, historical memory and continuity of service regardless of internal rotations or market changes.

Regarding long-term partnerships, Vitasek in Forbes points out, with data taken from concrete cases, that companies that invest in collaborative and long-term alliances achieve an average return on investment (ROI) of up to 20% higher than those that merely manage transactional and short-term relationships⁴⁴. This figure confirms the logic behind Global Account Management, which aims precisely at transforming the customer-supplier relationship into a strategic partnership, stabilizing revenue streams and building barriers to entry for competitors. In line with this perspective, LBB Online shows how account management today is evolving from a mere

⁴³ Judith J. Madill, George H. Haines Jr., and Allan L. Riding, "Managing Customer Relationships: Account Manager Turnover and Effective Account Management," *Industrial Marketing Management* 36, no. 2 (2007): 241–248.

⁴⁴ Kate Vitasek, "Partnerships: Three Data-Backed Reasons Two Heads Are Better Than One," *Forbes*, November 30, 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/katevitasek/2022/11/30/partnerships-three-data-backed-reasons-two-heads-are-better-than-one/>.

operational coordination function to a strategic lever to foster value co-creation and joint innovation, helping to make the relationship more resilient over time⁴⁵.

Concerning the goal of operational efficiency, McKinsey emphasizes that strong well-defined governance, a hallmark of a mature GAM program, is critical to reduce conflicts between functions and regional offices, align global resources with the objectives of a multinational client, and maximize the value generated by both partners⁴⁶. Consistent internal organization and centralized process management enable economies of scale, simplify complex procedures, and reduce inefficiencies and unnecessary costs, all of which are key to effective global account management. In support of the economic sustainability of these objectives, further empirical evidence comes from McKinsey, which estimates that market-leading B2B companies, through integrated sales models and strategic, global management of key customers, are able to record revenue growth rates up to twice as high as traditional competitors, while maintaining more stable operating margins even in times of macroeconomic uncertainty⁴⁷. This reinforces the argument that global account management, if supported by adequate resources, dedicated skills and sound governance, is not just a coordination structure, but a long-term competitive lever.

⁴⁵ LBB Online, "How Account Management Is Evolving in 2025," <https://lbbonline.com/news/how-account-management-is-evolving-in-2025>.

⁴⁶ McKinsey & Company, "Improving the Management of Complex Business Partnerships," accessed June 21, 2025, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/improving-the-management-of-complex-business-partnerships>.

⁴⁷ McKinsey & Company, Future of B2B Sales: The Big Reframe, November 2022, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/future-of-b2b-sales-the-big-reframe>.

4.2.3 Challenges of GAM.

Considering that Global Account Management (GAM) can be understood as an evolution of Key Account Management (KAM), it is evident that the main critical issues facing companies remain essentially the same, although amplified by the global context. In the course of this section, the specific challenges that characterize the successful implementation of a GAM model will be analyzed in detail.

Among the main challenges related to the adoption of a Global Account Management model is the inevitable increase in organizational and structural complexity. While structures and processes are already articulated within a single multinational organization, global account management requires effective interaction not only between different internal functions, but also between multinational client structures, each with its own logic, hierarchies and priorities⁴⁸. This dual dimension and so coordinating global teams, central functions and local offices internally, and at the same time aligning to the multilevel needs of client organizations, inevitably generates overlapping roles and responsibilities, risks of operational duplication and slow decision-making processes. A frequent obstacle comes from the strong local roots of many business units, which sometimes show resistance to integrate into global-scale management dynamics, also because most traditional customers still require a personalized service and a proximity presence. GAM, as a transversal process, impacts the entire corporate structure, requiring continuous coordination between heterogeneous functions, shared information systems and control tools capable of maintaining strategic coherence while respecting local specificities. In this

⁴⁸ Arnold, D., Birkinshaw, J., & Toulan, O. (2001). *Global Account Management in Multinational Corporations: Theory and Evidence*. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 32(2), 231–248.

context, the difficulty of aligning priorities between global account managers and local teams may fuel internal conflicts.

Another challenge in the implementation of a Global Account Management program concerns the risk of internal conflicts between the global account manager and local teams. Industry literature shows that this type of tension is frequent and, if not managed effectively, can compromise the consistency of the global approach and the overall effectiveness of GAM⁴⁹. This dynamic stems first and foremost from the fact that local teams, traditionally oriented to respond to domestic market logics and evaluated according to local performance metrics, may perceive GAM as a threat to their decision-making autonomy and their direct relationship with customers. This generates resistance to adopting standardized processes, sharing resources and information and, more generally, to coordination that is perceived as imposed from above. The risk of misalignment is worsened in cases where there is a lack of effective coordination and communication mechanisms between different hierarchical levels and between the functions involved. In this sense, Shi and Gao provide a concrete and very relevant example. In their study, the analysis of real-life cases such as Siemens and Schneider Electric shows how global account managers, although invested with global responsibilities, often have to negotiate on a daily basis the cooperation of managers and engineers in national subsidiaries, who may, in fact, facilitate or hinder the execution of promises made to the global customer⁵⁰. This shows how crucial it is in a GAM program to balance central power and local flexibility by building internal trust relationships and investing in appropriate

⁴⁹ Yip, G. S. & Bink, A. J. M. (2007). Managing Global Accounts, Harvard Business Review.

⁵⁰ Shi, L. H., & Gao, T. (2016). *Performance Effects of Global Account Coordination Mechanisms: An Integrative Study of Boundary Conditions*. Journal of International Marketing, 24(2), 1–21.

coordination tools. We can think about the risk of conflict between global account managers and local teams as a concrete application of the broader “global vs. local dilemma”, a tension that structurally characterizes relationship management in international contexts. According to this perspective, the internal conflict between GAM managers and national offices should not be seen as a simple communication or power issue, but as the operational expression of a structural dilemma: on the one hand, the value of uniformity and integration at the global level, on the other hand, the importance of adapting to the specific needs, culture and dynamics of local markets⁵¹. To this problem, however, there is no definitive solution, but it is necessary to adopt an approach that allows to obtain benefits from both sides, that is, to implement strategies and tools that support both standardization and local customization. Ultimately, the proper management of this risk of internal conflict in GAM depends on the company's ability to recognize and treat the global-local dilemma as an ongoing challenge, adopting multi-level coordination mechanisms frameworks and spaces for dialogue between headquarters and local offices, so as to ensure a valuable relationship with the global customer without sacrificing responsiveness to specific markets.

In addition to the structural challenges already discussed, Global Account Management presents a number of "particular challenges", reflecting the operational and relational complexity of managing multinational clients in heterogeneous contexts. Among these challenges is cultural diversity, where managing business relationships with clients and internal teams spread across different countries means

⁵¹ Stewart-Allen, Allyson. 2024. “Global or Local? The Cross-Border Dilemma.” *Duke Corporate Education*.

dealing with heterogeneous mindsets, communication styles and working practices on a daily basis⁵². This is particularly delicate in virtual interactions, where lack of context and asynchronous communication amplify the risk of misunderstandings and misinterpretations, requiring the global account manager to have intercultural skills and relational sensitivity. Adding to this complexity are geographical barriers and time zones, which complicate the planning of synchronous meetings and lengthen operational reaction times: coordinating teams spread across several continents often implies recalibrating work schedules and operational routines, with inevitable repercussions on the timeliness of responses and the fluidity of information flow.

A further critical element related to organizational complexity concerns the fact that companies implementing a GAM program must integrate central functions and local units, each with its own priorities and performance metrics. This stratification can generate duplication of activities, mandate conflicts and inefficiencies if it is not supported by a clear and shared organizational design. In this context, it becomes essential to provide the global account manager with adequate formal authority, without a clear mandate to manage resources, negotiate priorities and resolve conflicts between global and local needs, the risk is that the manager will be perceived as a coordinator with no real power to intervene, rendering the integration effort futile. Finally, a key prerequisite for the success of GAM is the constant support of top management. Although not always explicitly mentioned in the empirical studies, it recurrently emerges from the literature that the tension between global standardization and local autonomy can only be governed if top management

⁵² Lautenschlager, C., Tzempelikos, N., Kooli, K., & Viglia, G. (2024). *Cross-cultural determinants of global account management: Findings from B2B services*. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 123, 358–371.

demonstrates a visible and lasting commitment: senior management commitment reinforces the legitimacy of the GAM program⁵³, facilitates cultural alignment across locations and stimulates cross-site collaboration, reducing internal resistance and promoting consistency of approach towards global customers.

4.3 Criteria for implementation of GAM.

The decision to start a Global Account Management program is never a step that a company takes lightly, as it implies a series of strategic and operational responsibilities that directly affect the corporate structure. In addition to the organizational aspect, in fact, the implementation of a GAM requires targeted investments that can range from the recruitment of new specialized personnel to the purchase of specific machinery, from the design of ad hoc training courses to the development of dedicated marketing campaigns and more complex monitoring systems. Precisely because of the scope of such choices and considering that "yet little is known about successful GAM strategies"⁵⁴, it is essential that companies, while adapting the model to their own peculiarities and the margins of customization allowed by their sector, orient themselves towards selection criteria that the literature has progressively contributed to clarify and systematize over time. Over the years, academic research has focused on defining more and more accurately what are the key variables that motivate a company to undertake a Global Account Management

⁵³ Noel Capon, Dave Potter, and Fred Schindler, *Managing Global Accounts* (South-Western Educational Pub., 2005), chap. 2, 26–29.

⁵⁴ Shi, W., White, R.E., Zou, S., & Cavusgil, S.T. (2010). "Global Account Management Strategies: Drivers and Outcomes." *Journal of International Business Studies*, 41(4), 620–638.

project. On the basis of these dimensions, various authors have over time developed evaluation matrices and scoring tables that allow companies to objectively analyze their client portfolio and determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether the adoption of a GAM program is not only appropriate, but also adequately supported by solid economic and organizational assumptions.

Among the indispensable prerequisites to justify the introduction of a Global Account Management program, the international literature agrees in underlining at least three basic conditions that every company should verify. Firstly, the presence of significant multinational customers (a concept that will be expanded further in the course of this section): it is in fact the globalization of customers, even before that of the supplier's offer, that drives companies to develop centralized management strategies. In their 2010 study, Shi et al. provide one of the most cited empirical analyses to demonstrate how the strategic priority of serving multinational customers is the main driving factor in the adoption of a global account management program. The authors construct a quantitative model based on data collected through an extensive questionnaire given to managers responsible for global accounts in several multinational corporations, with the objective of statistically testing which variables have the greatest impact on the effectiveness of a GAM strategy. The data analysis shows that the variable defined as “global strategic priority” that is, the centrality attributed by top management to the integrated management of multinational customers, has the highest and most significant correlation coefficients with respect to the other drivers considered, such as competitive pressure or organizational

complexity⁵⁵. In practical terms, this means that when a company assigns strategic priority to uniformly and consistently serving large customers operating on a global scale, the probability of implementing an effective GAM program increases substantially. Moreover, the study shows that this priority does not remain confined to declarations of intent, but is translated into dedicated operational structures, specific investments and more robust transnational coordination mechanisms. This direct link between strategic vision and practical implementation confirms the assumption that without a clear push from the top, motivated by the weight and importance of multinational customers in the corporate portfolio, a Global Account Management program is unlikely to produce tangible results in terms of relationship continuity, increased business volumes and consolidation of competitive position.

The second key criteria is the presence of a complex demand, which is not to be understood in a purely quantitative but in a qualitative sense: the needs of the global customer often require integrated solutions, contractual adaptations, customization of after-sales services and synchronized management of supplies distributed over several countries. As early as the end of the twentieth century, Tung and Miller in 1990 had already foreseen how the growing interdependence of international markets would force companies to adopt a systematic global orientation, no longer limited to simply exporting products or managing subsidiaries around the world. According to their analysis, the real challenge for 21st century organizations is to be able to read the emerging complexity of global customers needs, that it is not just a matter of selling the same goods or services in different countries, but of adapting solutions

⁵⁵ Wei Shi et al., "Global Account Management Strategies: Drivers and Outcomes," *Journal of International Business Studies* 41, no. 4 (2010): 620–638.

according to local regulations, different corporate cultures, heterogeneous contractual practices and personalized service expectations⁵⁶. In other words, Tung and Miller identify the need to develop a coordinated global vision, capable of integrating strategy, operations and resources to meet a demand that, by its nature, cannot be rigidly standardized. This reasoning constitutes one of the conceptual pillars justifying the evolution of Key Account Management towards more advanced models such as Global Account Management. Twenty years later, Shi and Prashantham in 2011 revisit and update this discourse, placing it in a scenario made even more complex by the accelerating dynamism of global markets. Their study highlights how the volatility of demand, the entry of new international competitors and the rapid evolution of technologies force companies not to limit themselves to establishing static account management structures, but to equip themselves with a constant “reconfiguration” capacity⁵⁷. This means that companies need to be able to reallocate resources, redefine roles, update operational processes and quickly adapt their offerings to meet changes in global customer requirements. This leads us to believe that an effective GAM program is the organizational tool that enables this complex demand to be met in a consistent, rapid and integrated manner. Without a GAM, the company faces fragmentation; each subsidiary or country unit could handle the global customer with different logic, creating inefficiencies, duplication of effort and conflicting messages to the customer. Instead, the GAM acts as a centralized interface, translating the differentiated needs of the multinational customer into a coordinated offering, while providing local flexibility to adapt to regulatory and

⁵⁶ Rosalie L. Tung and Edwin L. Miller, “Managing in the Twenty-First Century: The Need for Global Orientation,” *Management International Review* 30, no. 1 (1990): 5–18.

⁵⁷ Wei Shi and F. Prashantham, “Dealing with Market Dynamism: The Role of Reconfiguration in Global Account Management,” *Management International Review* 51 (2011): 635–663.

cultural specificities. Similarly, the reconfiguration capability, made possible by GAM, is what allows global customer satisfaction to be maintained even when the market context is dynamic and changing, so adopting a GAM is a way to institutionalize the ability to respond to complex demand, turning contextual variability into a source of competitive advantage rather than operational risk.

The third basic principle is the search for a sustainable competitive advantage. The implementation of a GAM program does more than just consolidate the relationship with strategic customers but allows the company to differentiate itself from competitors by offering more consistent contractual conditions, faster responses and a perceived superior quality of service. In his 2019 article, Deszczyński proposes a decision-making model that clarifies in depth what factors motivate a company to adopt a Global Account Management plan and, more importantly, what concrete benefits result from it in terms of competitive advantage. The author starts from the assumption that GAM should not be understood as a simple operational tool, but as a real strategic relationship choice, aimed at building long-term relationships with key multinational customers. Through an empirical analysis conducted on B2B companies with global customer portfolios, Deszczyński identifies customer size, geographic distribution, demand complexity, growth potential and competitive pressure in the industry as key determinants, highlighting how the presence of these characteristics makes it convenient and logical⁵⁸ to develop a structured GAM program. The most interesting part of the study is devoted to the competitive benefits: the author points out that companies that effectively implement a GAM achieve

⁵⁸ Bartosz Deszczyński, "The Determinants of Global Account Management (GAM). A Relationship Decision-Making Model," *Argumenta Oeconomica* 2(43) (2019): 79–106.

greater customer loyalty, more efficient and centralized management of strategic information, increased barriers to entry for competitors, and an established position as a preferred supplier for global customers. These effects combine over time, generating a sustainable competitive advantage that is difficult to imitate, allowing the company not only to stabilize revenues, but also to position itself as a strategic partner of choice in the international market. In this perspective, Deszczyński demonstrates that GAM is much more than a tactical response, it is a competitive differentiation and protection tool, capable of translating relational complexity with multinational customers into a strategic asset for long-term growth.

4.3.1 Customers Scorecard.

As already highlighted, the preliminary and non-negotiable condition for the implementation of a Global Account Management program is the presence of customers who are not simply international, but truly global and strategically relevant to the company. However, determining who these customers are and how important they actually are is not a simple exercise; clear parameters are needed to assess, on a case-by-case basis, whether it is worth investing resources in dedicated and integrated global management. In response to this need, Yip and Bink in a 2007 study⁵⁹ propose a set of key characteristics that every company should consider in order to accurately identify its priority global customers. The first variable is the current size and revenue potential: a customer must generate substantial business volumes already in the

⁵⁹ George S. Yip, *Managing Global Customers: An Integrated Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

present, but above all show enough growth potential to justify a customization and coordination effort on an international scale. The second element is geographical distribution: a successful global customer does not operate in just one foreign market but has a widespread and significant presence in several regions of the world, which makes it essential to ensure consistency in the offer and support provided. A third criterion concerns integration capabilities: if the customer has organizational structures and decision-making systems capable of centrally managing purchasing, logistics or innovation, then a GAM program will find a way to function effectively. Added to this is the strategic importance of the customer for the growth or reputation of the supplier company: sometimes a customer, even if it is not the largest in terms of volume, can open up access to new markets or act as a prestigious testimonial. Yip and Bink also encourage consideration of strategic, cultural and geographic alignment, the more the customer shares similar values, service expectations and partnership logics to those of the supplier, the greater the likelihood of building a solid and efficient long-term relationship. Finally, a close relationship based on mutual trust is the last essential characteristic: managing a global account requires continuous exchanges of information and cooperation that goes beyond the pure business transaction. All these factors, when assessed correctly, help to distinguish multinational clients with high strategic potential from those for whom a structured global approach would be oversized or ineffective.

All the characteristics identified by Yip and Bink to identify relevant global clients were subsequently summarized even more operationally through a practical tool, the Global Account Selection Scorecard (figure 3), published in the same article. The objective of this scorecard is to make the evaluation of each multinational client not

only structured, but also comparable, allowing management to make decisions on an objective and shared basis. The scorecard thus transforms theoretical characteristics into measurable criteria, each of which can be rated on a scale of 0 to 100.

Customer Characteristics	Scoring Guidelines	Score (0-10)
Current account size (minimum about \$5M in revenue)	10 = your largest account 5 = half that size 1 = one tenth that size	
Revenue potential	10 = can grow 100% or more in the next 3 years 5 = can grow 50% 0 = no growth potential	
Profitability (minimum about \$1M in gross margins)	10 = the highest margins among all your customers 5 = half that 0 = no profits	
Geography	10 = operates in countries that account for 100% of your market 5 = operates in countries that account for 50% 1 = operates in countries that account for 10%	
Integration capabilities	10 = all the capabilities required for global integration and coordination 5 = moderate capabilities 0 = no capabilities	
Strategic importance	10 = absolutely vital to your business 5 = moderately important 0 = of no strategic importance	
Strategic fit	10 = many joint strategies 5 = some joint strategies 0 = no joint strategies	
Cultural fit	10 = complete fit (might happen if customer is in the same industry, from the same country, and of similar size and age) 5 = partial fit 0 = no fit	
Geographic fit	10 = you operate in all the countries in which the customer operates 5 = you operate in half of them 0 = you operate in none of them	
Relationship	10 = a very close and trusting relationship, in which vital information is shared 5 = moderate sharing 0 = no sharing	
TOTAL SCORE		

Total score	The customer is
0 – 25	not a good prospect for GAM
26 – 50	worth considering
51 – 75	a very promising prospect
76 – 100	should be one of your key global accounts

Figure 3: A Scorecard for Selecting Global Accounts.

Source: George S. Yip and Audrey J.M. Bink, “Managing Global Accounts,” Harvard Business Review, September 2007.

The items represented are those analyzed earlier, each is assigned a score from 0 to 10, and the sum of all scores produces a total that can range from 0 to 100. This total score is what allows us to classify the client according to four guiding categories: a

score between 0 and 25 indicates that the client is not a good candidate for a Global Account Management plan, a score between 26 and 50 suggests that the client might be worth considering, a range between 51 and 75 identifies a very promising prospect, while a score between 76 and 100 indicates that the client should definitely be included among the key global accounts and followed up with a dedicated structure.

5. Case study: BYD Case.

In the previous sections, this study has developed a theoretical framework with the aim of clarifying what is meant by Global Account Management (GAM), its assumptions, the requirements for its application, and the main challenges that companies face. Having established this frame of reference, the next step is to shift the analysis to a more concrete dimension, where the reflections developed can be compared with the operational reality of companies. This second part of the paper therefore takes on a more empirical and applied character, as it aims to verify how the principles and issues of GAM are reflected in the choices of a global company. It is no longer just a matter of describing a theoretical model, but of observing how it is interpreted, adapted or possibly questioned by a company that faces the challenges of international markets on a daily basis. The case study chosen is that of BYD (Build Your Dreams), a Chinese group that is one of the most significant players in contemporary electric mobility. Analyzing BYD's development history, its attempts to establish itself in Western markets and the strategies it uses to overcome cultural, political and commercial resistance not only provides a better understanding of its competitive positioning, but also allows us to assess the extent to which the adoption of a Global Account Management model could be a decisive advantage in its European expansion, with particular focus on the Italian market. Let's try to provide some context and information about this company.

5.1 BYD Origins.

When Wang Chuanfu, a young engineer from a rural family in Henan, founded a small rechargeable battery factory in Shenzhen in 1995⁶⁰, no one could have imagined that in less than thirty years that workshop would become one of the biggest global players in electric mobility. The company took the name BYD, Build Your Dreams, a slogan that initially seemed more like a wish than an industrial program. Yet that very dream (to build a sustainable and technologically autonomous future for China) would become the company's signature. In its early years, BYD established itself as a low-cost manufacturer of batteries for mobile phones and electronic devices, winning over international customers thanks to a simple but successful strategy: combining engineering expertise and intensive labor with an aggressive cost reduction policy. From there, the shift to the automotive industry was a natural one: if the battery was to be the heart of the car of the future, then whoever controlled the battery would hold the keys to the entire sector. In 2003, BYD acquired a small local car manufacturer and began producing its first electric models. It was a risk at a time when the market was skeptical about zero-emission cars, but the company's foresight was decisive. With the support of the Chinese government's industrial policies, which focused on electric mobility as a strategic sector, BYD managed to grow rapidly. Not just cars, but also electric buses, energy storage systems, integrated solutions for smart cities. The company soon became a conglomerate, embodying Shenzhen's transformation from a low-cost manufacturing laboratory to a global capital of innovation. Today, the company is the world's largest manufacturer of electric

⁶⁰ "BYD Company Limited," Encyclopedia Britannica, last updated 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/money/BYD-Co-Ltd>.

vehicles by sales volume, with impressive figures: in the first half of 2025, it sold 2,145,954 vehicles⁶¹, consolidating its role as industry leader. Furthermore, in April 2025 alone, BYD sold 7,231 electric cars in Europe⁶², surpassing Tesla, which sold 7,165. In order to understand whether and to what extent the Global Account Management model could be an optimal strategy for BYD, it is necessary to consider certain aspects specific to the company, such as its origins and growth trajectory, organizational culture, business model and, finally, prospects for future development.

As mentioned above, BYD started out as a company specializing in battery production and, over the years, has grown exponentially to become a model not only within its own sector, but also globally. It is no coincidence that in 2010 BYD was ranked eighth among the Top 50 Global Innovative Enterprises⁶³ and first among the Top 100 Global Technological Enterprises, while its founder, Wang Chuanfu, topped the Forbes China Rich List 2009 with an estimated personal fortune of RMB 35 billion.⁶⁴ As discussed in previous sections of this paper, following Porter's five forces model, we know that sustainable competitive advantage derives from a company's ability to control key variables such as costs, barriers to entry, bargaining power and differentiation. In the case of BYD, one of the main strengths that has ensured a lasting competitive advantage is vertical integration. This strategic choice

⁶¹ "BYD Dominated 7 Overseas Markets, According to the Company's GM," *Car News China*, August 4, 2025, <https://carnewschina.com/2025/08/04/byd-dominated-7-overseas-markets-according-to-the-companys-gm/>.

⁶² Keith Bradsher, "China's BYD Surpasses Tesla in Europe's Electric Car Race," *New York Times*, May 22, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/22/business/china-byd-tesla-sales-ev-europe.html>.

⁶³ "Most Innovative Companies 2010," *Fast Company*, 2010, <https://www.fastcompany.com/section/most-innovative-companies-2010>.

⁶⁴ "Wang Chuanfu Tops Forbes China Rich List 2009," *People's Daily Online*, November 5, 2009.

reflects not only economic rationality but also the organizational spirit typical of large Chinese companies, where the centralization of managerial power is accompanied by the ability to implement complex strategies. It is no coincidence that BYD is able to independently design, develop and produce around 70% of its own components and specialized tools⁶⁵, this, allows the company to maximize resources, reduce costs and generate a competitive advantage that is difficult to replicate internationally. Alongside this, BYD adopts a model known as the Innovation Model, which is key to interpret its exceptional growth, enabling it to transform from a small battery manufacturing company into a global leader in electric mobility in just a few decades. The fundamental characteristic of this model is its multidimensional nature, it is not innovation confined to a single area, but an integrated system that encompasses technology, processes and marketing. This approach has enabled BYD to significantly reduce transaction costs and shorten development times, closing the gap with Western competitors who had over a century of experience behind them in just a few years. The first pillar of the innovation model is technology, which becomes not only an engine of growth but also a factor of strategic autonomy. The centrality of R&D, combined with the ability to successfully patent solutions and replicate existing technologies, enriching them with local adaptations, has enabled BYD to consolidate a competitive advantage in the battery sector and subsequently transfer these skills to the automotive industry. In this perspective, innovation is not understood as a radical change, but as a cumulative process, starting from the “simulation” and imitation of existing models and then transforming them into

⁶⁵ Hongmei Zheng, Yang Cong-kun, Mou Tong-hua, and Du Fang, The Growth and Expansion Path of BYD Company Limited and Its Innovation Model, *International Journal of Advanced Culture Technology* 8, no. 1 (2020): 74.

original products capable of meeting the needs of new market segments. Besides tech innovation, process innovation plays a big role, showing how BYD can adapt production to local conditions. The decision to go with semi-automatic lines, which mix human labor and machines, has helped cut fixed costs and make production more flexible than Western multinationals, which often have to deal with complex and expensive plants. In this way, the company has taken full advantage of the availability of low-cost labor in China, transforming it into a structural competitive advantage. Finally, the third pillar is marketing innovation, which has been expressed through original and context-sensitive distribution strategies. BYD has developed an expansion model that starts with secondary and tertiary markets and then gradually penetrates higher-end markets. This approach has allowed the company to build a solid customer base in segments less dominated by competition and then capitalize on this base to expand into more complex and competitive markets. What makes BYD's innovation model unique is therefore its systemic nature: technology, processes and marketing do not operate in separate compartments, but support and reinforce each other, with vertical integration acting as the glue that holds these dimensions together.

5.1.1 A SWOT analysis of BYD.

Having defined the innovation model that has distinguished BYD and allowed it to undertake rapid and exemplary growth, it is necessary to expand the perspective and consider not only the factors that have contributed to its success, but also those that highlight its weaknesses. In fact, to get a more comprehensive picture, it is not enough to focus on the strengths, we must also highlight the weaknesses and external

pressures that can influence the company's strategic choices. Only in this way will it be possible to realistically assess its potential positioning in international markets, particularly in Europe, before moving on to the empirical part of our study. To do this, we will use an established strategic analysis tool, the SWOT analysis. This will allow us to summarize the company's internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats arising from the competitive environment. To introduce BYD's strategic analysis, we will take as our starting point a 2021 study by Yundi Gao entitled 'Analysis of BYD's Business Model and Future Development Prospects,'⁶⁶ which examined the company's business model and its prospects for development. This contribution provides us with a useful basis for understanding the factors that have made BYD a prime example of growth and innovation. Starting from that reflection, we will then assess which aspects are still valid, which have undergone further improvements, and which weaknesses emerge more clearly in light of the most recent developments.

The first feature highlighted in the report, and one of BYD's main strengths, is its technological superiority, based on its ability to develop, design and manufacture the key components of its vehicles in-house. This independence not only allows it to reduce costs, but also to maintain strategic control over innovation. Added to this is the introduction of proprietary solutions that have marked an advance over industry standards and the high efficiency achieved in hybrid systems. Confirming this commitment, BYD now holds tens of thousands of patents, ranking first in China in

⁶⁶ Yundi Gao, "Analysis of BYD's Business Model and Future Development Prospects," in *Proceedings of the 2021 3rd International Conference on Economic Management and Cultural Industry (ICEMCI 2021)*, *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, vol. 203 (Paris: Atlantis Press, 2021), 398-403.

terms of the number of registered technologies. Added to this is a clear cost advantage. The decision to focus on lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries, which are less expensive and safer, allows BYD to keep the prices of its vehicles competitive with the competition, offering products with a particularly favorable price-quality ratio. This aspect directly reflects on the ability to attract customers who are sensitive to both price and safety. Another strength is the diversification of its activities. Although its core business is automotive, BYD also operates in related sectors such as photovoltaics, contract electronics and energy storage systems (as evidenced by its innovation model). This diversification ensures financial stability, resilience and the ability to generate revenue from multiple sources, reducing its exclusive dependence on car sales. On the financial front, the company has demonstrated a remarkable ability to raise capital, particularly through financing operations related to its semiconductor division, which have attracted major institutions and industrial investors, further strengthening its competitive position. Finally, another strength highlighted by BYD is its distribution channel network. While the company already had over a thousand sales outlets in China in 2010, adopting a multi-channel strategy that allowed it to strengthen its brand and react quickly to market dynamics, this model has expanded to a fully international perspective since 2021. In Europe, in particular, growth has been surprising: in Germany, one of the most competitive and strategic markets, BYD recorded a 750% increase⁶⁷ in sales in April 2025 compared to the same month last year, establishing itself as one of the main players in the electric sector in the country. At the same time, the sales network in the United Kingdom is expanding rapidly, with the number of dealers expected to almost double

⁶⁷ Jameson Dow, "BYD Takes Spotlight in Germany as Sales Surge 750% in April," *Electrek*, May 6, 2025, <https://electrek.co/2025/05/06/byd-takes-spotlight-germany-sales-surge-750-april/>

from 67 to 120 by the end of 2025.⁶⁸ Overall, the company has announced its goal of exceeding 2,000 sales outlets across Europe, including approximately 280 in the United Kingdom alone. This development shows how the distribution strategy, which has always been a pillar of the BYD model, has become a key tool for consolidating the brand's presence in international markets and paving the way for a more stable foothold in the European context.

Among the weaknesses identified in the study was BYD's decision to use lithium iron phosphate batteries, which are considered to be less efficient than international standards due to their low energy density and limited capacity. However, this assessment is no longer valid: with the introduction of the Blade Battery and, more recently, the Blade 2.0, BYD has significantly improved the energy density, safety and durability of its systems, effectively resolving the technological issues that were previously perceived as a limitation to global competitiveness.⁶⁹ Similarly, the study highlighted how the distribution model could become a weakness, recalling the tensions that emerged with dealers in 2010 and the resulting decline in sales. However, this factor no longer reflects the current situation: between 2021 and 2025, BYD's distribution network has evolved radically, shifting from a model focused almost exclusively on the domestic market to a global expansion strategy, with a particular focus on Europe. Here, for example, the company has taken direct control of distribution activities in the Netherlands, marking a paradigm shift in the

⁶⁸ "BYD Electric Cars UK Dealer Network to Nearly Double by End of 2025," *Total Loss Gap*, April 2025, <https://totallossgap.co.uk/blog/post/byd-electric-cars-uk-dealer-network-to-nearly-double-by-end-of-2025/607>

⁶⁹ "Blade 2.0: BYD's New Battery Technology Changing the EV Landscape," *V2Charge*, August 2023, <https://v2charge.com/blade-2-0-byd-new-battery-electric-cars/>

management of relationships with customers and business partners.⁷⁰ From this perspective, what was once seen as a weakness has become one of the pillars of the company's international growth, playing a key role in the European case we're about to examine.

An important opportunity for BYD lies in national political support. China has included new energy vehicles in its long-term strategies, recognizing them as a key sector for innovation and ecological transition. Government plans, such as the Automobile Industry Development Policy and subsequent five-year programs, encourage the spread of more efficient and environmentally friendly vehicles by setting stricter emission standards and supporting research and industrialization of new electric and hybrid technologies. This institutional framework has provided and continues to provide BYD with a stable and favorable environment in which to consolidate its leadership. Finally, the text analyses the main threats to BYD, identified in three areas: strong competitive pressure from both other emerging Chinese brands and international giants such as Toyota, Honda and General Motors; the risk associated with patent disputes, which has already manifested itself in the past in some disputes with companies such as Foxconn and Sony; and the possibility of innovative weakness, that is to say, the inability to quickly update its models, leaving space for more dynamic competitors.

However, looking at the current situation, as mentioned above, we have seen how, thanks to its innovation model, BYD has overcome the limitations associated with its innovative capacity, demonstrating its ability to introduce proprietary technological

⁷⁰ Steven Schoefs, "BYD Europe Takes Control of Wholesale Distribution in the Netherlands," *Global Fleet*, March 26, 2024, <https://www.globalfleet.com/en/fleet-strategy/global/features/byd-europe-takes-control-wholesale-distribution-netherlands?curl=1>

solutions and frequently renew its range. Today, the real challenges are shifting to other fronts, especially in the European context, where the company intends to further consolidate its presence. The first factor to consider is the perception of products made in China. Although BYD has gained technological credibility, the brand still faces a certain amount of skepticism from European consumers and institutions, who often associate Chinese products with inferior quality or industrial dumping practices. This perception risks limiting its penetration in the premium segment and affecting the brand's long-term acceptance, despite the technological validity of its products. A second factor concerns dependence on global supply chains. BYD is highly vertically integrated and produces most of its key components in-place, but it remains exposed to external vulnerabilities related to supply chains. In this sense, while some historical threats have lost relevance, new challenges related to brand perception and the vulnerability of global supply chains now stand as the real obstacles to BYD's growth.

<p>S</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technological superiority 2. Price advantage 3. A wide range of business 4. Appropriate forms of financing 5. Abundant sales channels 	<p>W</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technological disadvantage 2. Disadvantage of distribution sales method 3. Difficult to specialize
<p>O</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National favorable policy 2. National planning 	<p>T</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Threats from competitors 2. Patent disputes 3. The lack of motivation

Figure 4: SWOT Analysis for BYD.

Source: Yundi Gao, “Analysis of BYD’s Business Model and Future Development Prospects” *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, vol. 203 (Paris: Atlantis Press, 2021), 398-403.

<p>S</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technological superiority 2. Price advantage 3. A wide range of business 4. Appropriate forms of financing 5. Expanded and globalized sales channels (Europe, UK, Germany) 	<p>W</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Difficult to specialize (dispersion of resources across multiple businesses)
<p>O</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supportive national policy and long-term strategic planning in China 	<p>T</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Threats from global competitors 2. Perception of 'Made in China' in European markets 3. Dependence on global supply chains

Figure 5: SWOT Analysis for BYD (Updated 2025).

Source: Author’s elaboration based on Yundi Gao, “Analysis of BYD’s Business Model and Future Development Prospects” *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, vol. 203 (Paris: Atlantis Press, 2021), 398-403.

5.2 BYD in Europe: analytical framework.

Having analyzed the company in detail, looking back over its origins, development and main strategies and offering a critical assessment through SWOT analysis, it is now time to move on to a more analytical phase. The objective is to examine BYD's entry into the European market in greater depth, looking at the dynamics from different perspectives and assessing the extent to which the Global Account Management (GAM) model can be a useful tool for understanding and guiding this process. Our analysis will be divided into three areas. The first, qualitative dimension will focus on the regulatory and strategic aspects of the European context, looking at regulatory constraints, barriers to entry and the distribution choices made by BYD. The second, quantitative dimension will provide a numerical overview based on data on sales, distribution and performance in key markets, thus providing an objective basis for understanding the impact of European expansion. Finally, the third dimension, which is empirical, will be constructed on the basis of interviews and testimonials collected, with the aim of providing a more direct and concrete picture of perceptions and strategies adopted. As already highlighted in the introductory sections of this work, the focus will be on Europe, a choice made on the basis that it represents one of the most complex and competitive markets in the world, characterized by a stringent regulatory framework, a strong presence of established competitors and particularly demanding consumers. Analyzing BYD's progress in this context therefore means observing how a Chinese company of global dimensions chooses to face the challenges and opportunities of a mature market, adapting its distribution and commercial strategies.

5.2.1 Analytical Overview of the European Market.

As already highlighted in the literature review (see paragraph 2.5), the electric vehicle market has been the subject of a preliminary analysis with particular focus on the European context. This analysis showed that the continent's automotive market, and in particular the electric vehicle market, is the most competitive globally. The long-standing and well-established presence of numerous European brands, combined with a strong industrial tradition, means that the sector is characterized by high quality standards and highly aware consumers. European consumers in particular stand out for their growing interest in sustainable mobility: according to a recent McKinsey survey, over 70% of them are in favor of a transition to electric vehicles and more than 40% consider sustainability to be a key factor in their car purchasing decisions.⁷¹

In such a context, car sales cannot be reduced to a simple commercial transaction, but involve the need to establish long-term relationships of trust with a complex, regulated and highly competitive market. In light of this, the crucial point is not only to understand why BYD has chosen to expand into Europe, but rather to assess whether the strategy it is adopting is truly optimal for the characteristics of the European context. It is in this perspective that our analysis aims to test the logic of Global Account Management, to verify whether, and to what extent, it can represent a more effective or complementary alternative to the strategies currently undertaken by the Chinese company. The following analysis is therefore divided into two complementary dimensions. On the one hand, there is the qualitative dimension, which examines the regulatory, competitive and consumer characteristics of the

⁷¹ Philipp Kampshoff, Patrick Schaufuss, and Timo Möller, "How European Consumers Perceive Electric Vehicles," *McKinsey & Company*, March 1, 2023, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/automotive-and-assembly/our-insights/how-european-consumers-perceive-electric-vehicles>

European context; on the other hand, there is the quantitative dimension, which uses data on sales, market share and investments to objectively assess the impact of BYD's strategies. Finally, this picture will be completed by an empirical perspective, based on evidence collected from industry experts and market sources, in order to provide a more concrete and realistic view of the dynamics at work.

As noted above, BYD has embarked on a path of expansion into the European market, a decision that responds to a number of reasons that will be explored in this section. However, it is worth noting that the company's rapid growth in China has been driven not only by its capacity for innovation, but also by significant government support. Over the last two decades, Beijing has supported the new energy vehicle sector through substantial direct and indirect subsidies, favorable tax policies, investments in charging infrastructure and a clear strategic orientation that has made the electric car industry a national priority.⁷² This framework has allowed BYD not only to consolidate its position in the domestic market, but also to build a global competitive advantage that is difficult to replicate. It is therefore crucial to analyze the European regulatory framework in order to understand how it affects not only the automotive sector as a whole, but also how BYD can approach this context. In particular, the European Union has set very challenging targets for reducing emissions. The 2019 European Regulation, updated with targets for 2025 and 2030, sets increasingly stringent limits for CO₂ emissions from new cars, with a 15% reduction by 2025 and a 55% reduction by 2030 compared to 2021 levels.⁷³ This regulatory framework is

⁷² Rhodium Group. *Pole Position: Chinese EV Investments Boom amid Growing Political Backlash*. January 25, 2024. <https://rhg.com/research/pole-position-chinese-ev-investments-boom-amid-growing-political-backlash/>

⁷³ José Suarez, Dimitrios Komnos, Michail A. Ktistakis, and Georgios Fontaras, "2025 and 2030 CO₂ Emission Targets for Light Duty Vehicles," *Transportation Research Procedia* (2023).

putting increasing pressure on traditional European manufacturers, while it may be a strength for operators such as BYD, which already specialize in electric vehicles and are therefore better positioned to meet these requirements. Within this scenario, the European Green Deal represents the broadest strategic framework. It aims to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 and promotes a coordinated set of measures aimed at reducing emissions and supporting the energy transition.⁷⁴ For a company like BYD, this represents a twofold opportunity: on the one hand, to enter a market that recognizes at a supranational level the need to accelerate the transition from traditional to electric cars (as has happened in their “home” market); on the other hand, to identify a demand that, as recent studies have shown, is already strongly oriented in this direction. According to a McKinsey survey, over 70% of European consumers say they are in favor of the transition to electric vehicles, and more than 40% consider sustainability to be a key criterion in their purchasing decisions.⁷⁵

Alongside this, however, it is necessary to consider the defensive measures adopted by the European Union against imports from China. In October 2024, the Commission imposed anti-subsidy duties on Chinese BEVs (“Battery Electric Vehicles”), justifying them on the grounds of government support practices that distorted competition. For BYD, this translates into a total rate of 27%, which is the sum of the standard automotive duty (10%) and the extra anti-subsidy duty (17%).⁷⁶

⁷⁴ “The European Green Deal (EGD),” *Knowledge Brief: EU Green Deal Policies and Their Relevance in Asia-Pacific*, Webinar Series (2023).

⁷⁵ Philipp Kampshoff, Patrick Schaufuss, and Timo Möller, “How European Consumers Perceive Electric Vehicles,” *McKinsey & Company*, March 1, 2023, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/automotive-and-assembly/our-insights/how-european-consumers-perceive-electric-vehicles>

⁷⁶ European Commission, “EU Commission Imposes Countervailing Duties on Imports of Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) from China,” October 30, 2024, <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/news/eu-commission-imposes-countervailing-duties-imports-battery-electric-vehicles-bevs-china>

An analysis by Uri Dadush and Conor McCaffrey⁷⁷ highlights how these tariffs have a dual nature. On the one hand, they represent a trade defense tool to protect European manufacturers from distortions resulting from massive Chinese subsidies, which are estimated to be worth several billion dollars and are capable of artificially lowering the prices of exported vehicles. On the other hand, however, such measures entail significant geopolitical and economic risks: China has already demonstrated its willingness to retaliate, targeting sectors that are sensitive for Europe, such as agri-food and aviation. Furthermore, although tariffs may offer temporary relief to local manufacturers, they do not eliminate the structural challenge posed by the arrival of operators such as BYD, which are able to compete not only on price but also on technological innovation and vertical integration. Faced with this situation, BYD responded with a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, it focused strongly on the commercialization of PHEVs (plug-in hybrid electric vehicles), which integrate an electric motor with a combustion engine and, unlike BEVs, are not subject to the new anti-subsidy duties, remaining subject to only a 10% tariff.⁷⁸ This choice allowed the group to remain competitive in the short term, partially compensating for the price gap with local competitors. On the other hand, BYD has embarked on a process of capacity globalization⁷⁹, that is, the construction of production capacity directly in target markets. In December 2023, the start of construction of a large plant in Szeged, Hungary, was announced. This is the first European plant dedicated to the production

⁷⁷ Uri Dadush and Conor McCaffrey, “The EU Proposed Duties on Chinese Electric Vehicles and Their Implications,” *Bruegel*, July 17, 2024.

⁷⁸ Rhodium Group, *Pole Position: Chinese EV Investments Boom amid Growing Political Backlash*, January 25, 2024, <https://rhg.com/research/pole-position-chinese-ev-investments-boom-amid-growing-political-backlash/>

⁷⁹ Jialin Liu, Hongmin Liu, and Haiming Yu, “From Product Globalization to Capacity Globalization: BYD’s Comprehensive Overseas Expansion Strategy,” *Global Sustainability Research* 4, no. 2 (2024), 10-16.

of passenger vehicles, with the aim of reducing the impact of tariff barriers while at the same time establishing deeper roots in the local context.

One final consideration when comparing markets as different as China and Europe concerns the perception of 'Made in China'. As already highlighted, Europe is a saturated, mature and aware market, characterized by highly sensitive consumers and unparalleled competition: over forty car manufacturers operate permanently on the market, offering an extremely diverse range of products. This means that a hypothetical European buyer is faced with a wide range of options, not only in terms of design and price, but also in terms of technical performance, durability, after-sales service reliability, residual value of the vehicle and consistency with sustainability values. In such a demanding context, the choice to purchase a car manufactured in China must therefore be "worth it" in the eyes of the consumer, who must perceive a clear and tangible added value compared to established European and international alternatives. The challenge for BYD is therefore not only regulatory or commercial, but also reputational: winning over a public accustomed to historic brands means demonstrating reliability, innovation and quality that are comparable, if not superior, to those offered by traditional competitors. It is in this space, where brand perception is intertwined with product competitiveness, that a fundamental part of BYD's chances of establishing itself in the European market is to be found.

5.2.2 Quantitative Evidence.

In order to make the analysis as comprehensive and reliable as possible, qualitative considerations must be accompanied by quantitative findings that support their

validity. The objective of this section is therefore to associate concrete and measurable data with each point that emerged in the qualitative analysis, so as to assess its real impact on BYD's strategies and decisions. For this reason, it was decided to focus on a representative sample, the so-called Europe Top 5, namely France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom. According to a report by PwC and Strategy& in May 2025, these five markets are the most relevant in Europe in terms of both size and consumption dynamics, allowing to capture the main trends in the electric automotive sector. The focus on these countries is also justified by the fact that together they account for the majority of total electric vehicle sales in Europe, thus providing a realistic and representative picture of the context in which BYD operates. The graph below clearly shows how sales of electric vehicles are growing in all five markets, although trends are varied.

		Mar-25 YTD	Market share	Mar-24 YTD	YTD YoY	Q1-25	Quarter YoY	Mar-25	Month YoY	Feb-25	Month YoY	Jan-25	Month YoY
	BEV	74,519	18.2%	79,782	-6.6%	74,519	-6.6%	29,261	-13.8%	25,335	-1.9%	19,923	-0.5%
	PHEV	19,592	4.8%	38,574	-49.2%	19,592	-49.2%	8,289	-49.1%	6,451	-45.0%	4,852	-54.0%
	Hybrid	184,267	44.9%	124,938	+47.5%	184,267	+47.5%	70,676	+41.6%	62,144	+50.7%	51,447	+52.3%
	Total EV	278,378	67.9%	243,294	+14.4%	278,378	+14.4%	108,226	+8.1%	93,930	+19.2%	76,222	+18.5%
France	Other	131,707	32.1%	201,612	-34.7%	131,707	-34.7%	45,618	-42.9%	47,638	-25.3%	38,451	-33.6%
	BEV	112,968	17.0%	81,337	+38.9%	112,968	+38.9%	42,521	+35.5%	35,949	+30.8%	34,498	+53.5%
	PHEV	63,799	9.6%	44,985	+41.8%	63,799	+41.8%	26,553	+65.8%	19,534	+34.0%	17,712	+23.1%
	Hybrid	192,265	28.9%	173,927	+10.5%	192,265	+10.5%	74,860	+11.7%	58,153	+6.1%	59,252	+13.7%
	Total EV	369,032	55.5%	300,249	+22.9%	369,032	+22.9%	143,934	+25.8%	113,636	+17.3%	111,462	+25.3%
Germany	Other	295,539	44.5%	394,536	-25.1%	295,539	-25.1%	109,563	-26.7%	89,798	-25.5%	96,178	-22.8%
	BEV	22,993	5.2%	13,330	+72.5%	22,993	+72.5%	9,369	+74.8%	6,922	+38.2%	6,702	+126.3%
	PHEV	18,616	4.2%	14,221	+30.9%	18,616	+30.9%	7,608	+36.0%	6,130	+33.3%	4,878	+21.1%
	Hybrid	198,685	44.7%	172,361	+15.3%	198,685	+15.3%	77,837	+23.8%	61,188	+10.2%	59,660	+10.6%
	Total EV	240,294	54.1%	199,912	+20.2%	240,294	+20.2%	94,814	+28.4%	74,240	+14.0%	71,240	+16.9%
Italy	Other	203,758	45.9%	251,411	-19.0%	203,758	-19.0%	77,489	-12.2%	63,780	-22.3%	62,489	-22.9%
	BEV	19,225	6.9%	11,382	+68.9%	19,225	+68.9%	8,101	+92.7%	6,112	+60.7%	5,012	+48.5%
	PHEV	20,516	7.3%	15,700	+30.7%	20,516	+30.7%	8,373	+50.6%	6,901	+24.1%	5,242	+14.5%
	Hybrid	121,557	43.5%	88,979	+36.6%	121,557	+36.6%	49,093	+44.8%	39,798	+39.0%	32,666	+23.5%
	Total EV	161,298	57.7%	116,061	+39.0%	161,298	+39.0%	65,567	+50.2%	52,811	+39.0%	42,920	+24.8%
Spain	Other	118,076	42.3%	128,812	-8.3%	118,076	-8.3%	51,158	-0.0%	37,516	-13.5%	29,402	-14.2%
	BEV	120,191	20.7%	84,314	+42.6%	120,191	+42.6%	69,313	+43.2%	21,244	+41.7%	29,634	+41.6%
	PHEV	53,686	9.2%	42,559	+26.1%	53,686	+26.1%	33,815	+37.9%	7,273	+19.3%	12,598	+5.5%
	Hybrid	229,565	39.5%	190,239	+20.7%	229,565	+20.7%	147,931	+26.8%	29,849	+14.2%	51,785	+9.2%
	Total EV	403,442	69.5%	317,112	+27.2%	403,442	+27.2%	251,059	+32.4%	58,366	+23.6%	94,017	+17.1%
UK	Other	177,060	30.5%	228,436	-22.5%	177,060	-22.5%	106,044	-17.3%	25,688	-31.8%	45,328	-27.5%
	BEV	349,896	14.7%	270,145	+29.5%	349,896	+29.5%	158,565	+28.6%	95,562	+23.9%	95,769	+37.3%
	PHEV	176,209	7.4%	156,039	+12.9%	176,209	+12.9%	84,638	+24.5%	46,289	+8.7%	45,282	-0.5%
	Hybrid	926,339	38.9%	750,444	+23.4%	926,339	+23.4%	420,397	+27.2%	251,132	+21.7%	254,810	+19.2%
	Total EV	1,452,444	61.1%	1,176,628	+23.4%	1,452,444	+23.4%	663,600	+27.2%	392,983	+20.5%	395,861	+20.3%
Europe 5	Other	926,140	38.9%	1,204,807	-23.1%	926,140	-23.1%	389,872	-21.5%	264,420	-23.9%	271,848	-24.6%

Figure 6: Electric vehicle sales data. Europe Top 5: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK.

Source: PwC and Strategy&, *Electric Vehicle Sales Review Q1 2025*, May 2025.

In France, for example, there was a 6.6% decline in BEVs compared to the previous year, due to the end of government incentives, while hybrid vehicles grew by 47.5%. Germany remains a leading market with a 38.9% increase in BEV sales, accompanied by sustained growth in PHEVs (+41.8%). Italy and Spain, on the other hand, show even more impressive growth rates: +68.9% and +42.6% in BEVs respectively, albeit starting from a lower base. Finally, the United Kingdom stands out as the strongest market, with 29.5% growth in BEVs and a market share of 21%, the highest among the Top 5. The data confirms what was predicted in the qualitative analysis: Europe is a mature and highly competitive market, but at the same time open to rapid penetration by electric vehicles. However, internal differences between countries highlight that there is no single strategy for approaching this market. For example, while the BEV segment dominates in Germany and the United Kingdom, in countries such as Italy and Spain, the potential is high but still in the consolidation phase. This implies that BYD, in defining its entry strategies, must consider a differentiated approach for each country, taking into account the different levels of demand maturity, the stability of incentives and local competition.

As confirmed by the report from the European Commission's Joint Research Centre⁸⁰, a few countries account for around 80% of total electric vehicle sales on the continent, demonstrating how the European market is highly polarized and driven by a limited number of Member States. This implies that a manufacturer wishing to strengthen its presence in Europe cannot have a uniform strategy, but must rather focus on the most mature and dynamic markets, calibrating its resources and investments accordingly.

⁸⁰ European Commission Joint Research Centre, *Electrification of the Transport System: EV/PHEV Registrations and Infrastructure Report* (2018).

It is in this context that BYD has decided to strengthen its production capacity on the continent by opening a new production facility in Hungary. The plant, announced at the end of 2023, involves an initial investment of around €250 million⁸¹ and is BYD's first European passenger vehicle production center. The initiative responds to a twofold need: on the one hand, to mitigate the impact of European tariffs on BEV imports from China, and on the other, to become more deeply integrated into the local economy, ensuring proximity to customers and integration into continental supply chains.

Among the priority markets identified by the company, Germany plays a central role, both in terms of size and symbolic value, as it is the heart of the European automotive industry. The latest data confirm the extent of this expansion, in April 2025 in fact, BYD sales in Germany increased by 750% compared to the previous year.⁸² Despite intense competition from established brands such as Volkswagen, BMW, Audi and Mercedes, BYD has begun to increasingly establish itself in the German market. In the first four months of 2025, the company delivered 2,791 vehicles, an annual increase of 385%, rapidly approaching Tesla's results and demonstrating a surprising ability to penetrate a market traditionally dominated by national brands. This success is no casualty, but part of a well-defined strategy that combines product and distribution policies. On the one hand, BYD has chosen to expand its offering with the introduction of two new plug-in hybrid (PHEV) models, which will complement the current Seal DM-i, thus reaching those consumers who are still hesitant to switch

⁸¹ “BYD, from China to Europe: 250 Million for the Hungarian Plant,” *Il Sole 24 Ore*, December 23, 2023, <https://en.ilsole24ore.com/art/byd-china-to-european-250-million-hungarian-office-AHrgn7m>

⁸² Jameson Dow, “BYD Takes Spotlight in Germany as Sales Surge 750% in April,” *Electrek*, May 6, 2025, <https://electrek.co/2025/05/06/byd-takes-spotlight-germany-sales-surge-750-april/>

to 100% electric and prefer intermediate solutions.⁸³ On the other hand, the company has invested significantly in strengthening its sales network, carrying out a reorganization of its European operations that has involved the opening of new national entities, the recruitment of managers from established automotive groups such as Stellantis, and, above all, the expansion of its dealer network in Germany from 27 to around 120 sales outlets.⁸⁴

5.2.3 Empirical data.

After theoretically analyzing the Global Account Management (GAM) model and evaluating its strengths and limitations, the next step was to compare these reflections with reality. A model cannot be applied automatically considering that to understand whether it is really suitable for a company like BYD, we need to examine the European context and listen directly to those working in the sector. For this reason, after the qualitative and quantitative analysis developed in the previous paragraphs, an empirical phase was added based on questionnaires and interviews with fleet managers, dealers, long-term rental operators, managers of other car's brand managers, and consultants. This part represents the final touch to the analysis, completing it and giving it greater concreteness. Thanks to these testimonials, it becomes clearer what the main difficulties are today in managing multinational suppliers and what advantages operators expect from a GAM system. At the same

⁸³ *Reuters*, “BYD to introduce two plug-in hybrid models in Germany this year,” April 29, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/byd-bring-two-more-plug-in-hybrid-models-germany-this-year-2025-04-29/>

⁸⁴ *Reuters*, “China EV giant BYD reboots Europe operations after strategic stumbles,” April 23, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/china-ev-giant-byd-reboots-europe-operations-after-strategic-stumbles-sources-2025-04-23/>

time, perceptions, expectations and possible cultural resistance to a brand such as BYD also emerge. In this way, the empirical data does not merely add information, but completes the picture outlined above and allows us to understand whether the introduction of GAM could really be a winning choice for BYD in the European market.

The questionnaire used for this research was designed to collect opinions and evaluations from professionals directly involved in the automotive sector and, in particular, in the field of electric mobility. It consisted of ten multiple-choice questions and was conducted online to ensure quick and easy completion. The questions aimed to better understand perceptions, needs, and expectations regarding the adoption of a Global Account Management model by BYD. Participants were chosen from different categories of professionals in order to obtain as comprehensive a view as possible: corporate fleet managers, long-term rental operators, dealers, BYD managers, and managers from other car manufacturers. This mix of profiles made it possible to gather diverse and comparable opinions from those already working with BYD and those working for competitors or complementary companies. The questions combined both direct choices (selection of one or more options, Single/multiple choices to map preferences and Likert scales (e.g., 1–4/ 1–5) to measure the intensity of agreement/assessments on expected effectiveness of the GAM, perception of Made in China/BYD, operational criticalities (procurement, after-sales, IT integration), and willingness to enter into framework agreements.

In this way, the questionnaire proved to be a useful tool not only for obtaining specific answers, but also for highlighting similarities and differences between the various groups of professionals involved, providing a concrete basis for the subsequent

analysis of individual questions. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and the data was used exclusively for academic purposes. The study collected 34 responses validated by automotive professionals who work daily in B2B, such as corporate fleet managers, long-term rental operators, dealers, and managers from both BYD and other car manufacturers. The sample was chosen intentionally: we wanted to hear from those who are closely involved in the introduction and management of electric vehicles in the main commercial supply chains. The anonymous questionnaire was administered online and sent by email to encourage free and informed responses. Although not statistically representative of the entire European population, the sample is relevant and diverse in terms of role, and the evidence that emerges is solid on an exploratory level and is cross-checked with the qualitative and quantitative analyses developed in the previous chapters.

After describing the structure of the questionnaire and the profile of the participants, we will now move on to analyzing the individual questions. The results will be presented with graphs and tables to clarify the distribution of responses and will be accompanied by a comment explaining their meaning and connection to the thesis. This will provide a better understanding of how the various professional groups involved view the opportunities and critical issues of a possible GAM in the market.

Question number 1: *What is your main role in the company?*

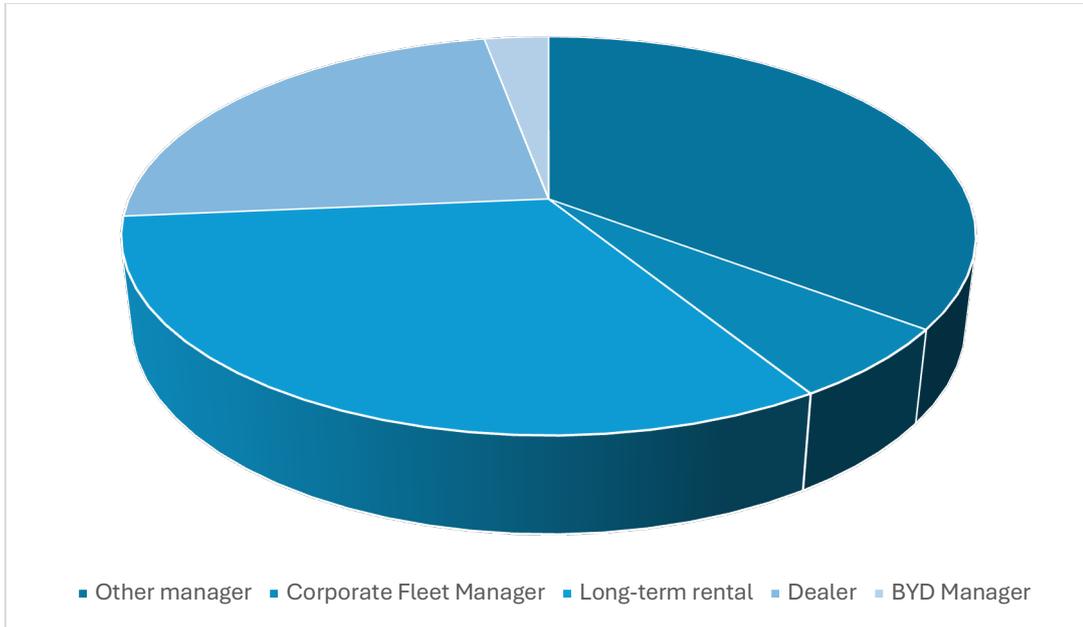


Figure 7: Distribution of respondents by professional role

Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data.

The graph shows the composition of the sample based on the main role held in the company. Most respondents belong to the category of managers of other car manufacturers (35.3%), followed by long-term rental operators (32.4%) and dealers (23.5%). The share of corporate fleet managers (5.9%) and BYD managers (2.9%) is more modest. This distribution provides a diversified view, including both potential direct partners of BYD and representatives of competing companies. The prevalence of managers from other car manufacturers makes the sample particularly interesting, as it allows us to understand the external perception of the Global Account Management model by comparing internal and external points of view on the Chinese brand.

Question number 2: *How many years have you been working in the automotive/mobility/company fleet sector?*

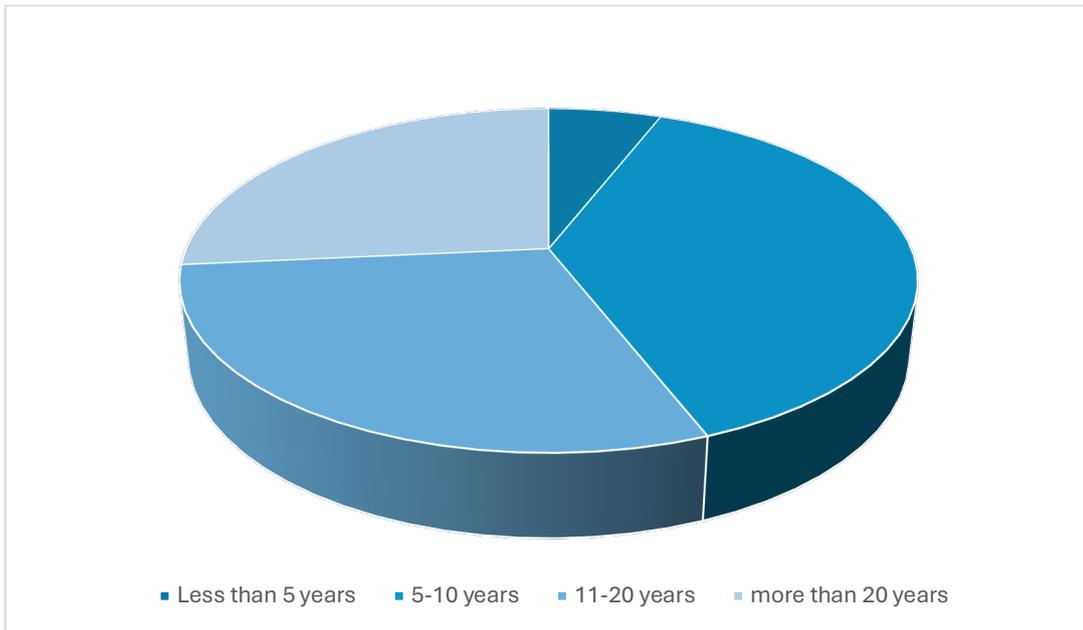


Figure 8: Years of experience in the automotive and mobility sector
Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data.

The graph highlights the level of experience of respondents in the automotive and mobility sector. The most represented group is professionals with 5-10 years of experience (38.2%), followed by those who have been working for 11 to 20 years (29.4%) and those with over 20 years of experience (26.5%). Only a small portion of the sample, 5.9%, reported having less than five years of experience. This data shows that the majority of respondents have a solid knowledge of the sector, which makes the responses collected particularly reliable and useful for assessing perceptions and prospects related to the adoption of a Global Account Management model.

Question number 3: *How familiar are you with BYD as an electric vehicle manufacturer?*

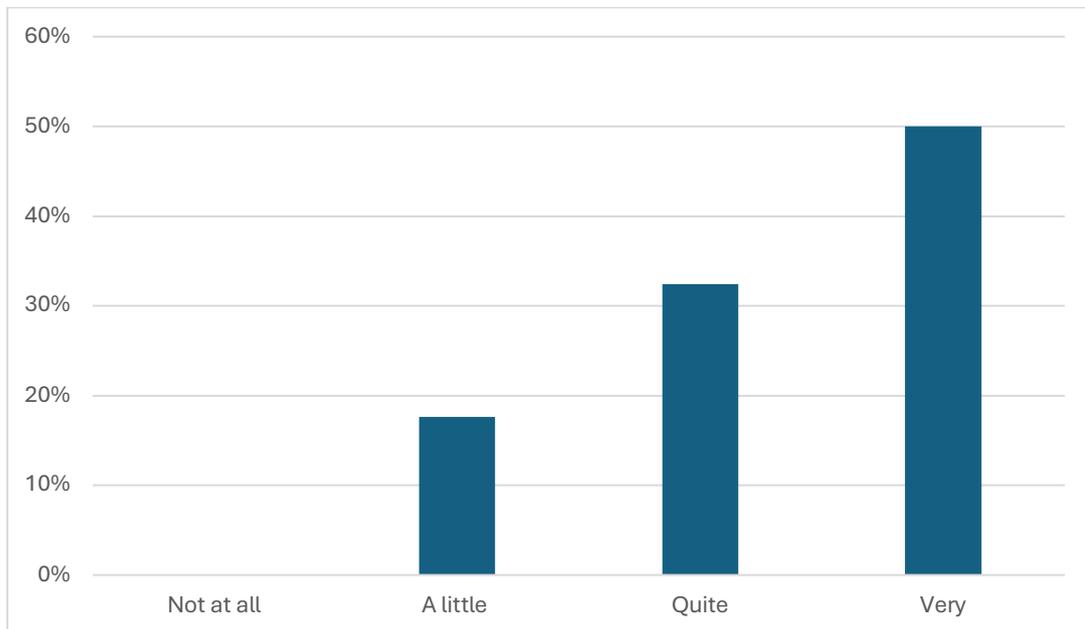


Figure 9: Level of knowledge of BYD as an electric vehicle manufacturer

Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data

The graph shows that half of the sample (50%) says they are very familiar with BYD as an electric vehicle manufacturer, while 32.4% say they have moderate familiarity and 17.6% say they have limited familiarity. No respondents indicated that they were completely unfamiliar with the company. This highlights that BYD is already a well-known brand among industry professionals, although there is still room to further strengthen its visibility and reputation.

Question number 4: *How important do you think it is to have a single global contact person (GLOBAL ACCOUNT MANAGER) who coordinates relations with partner customers at European level?*

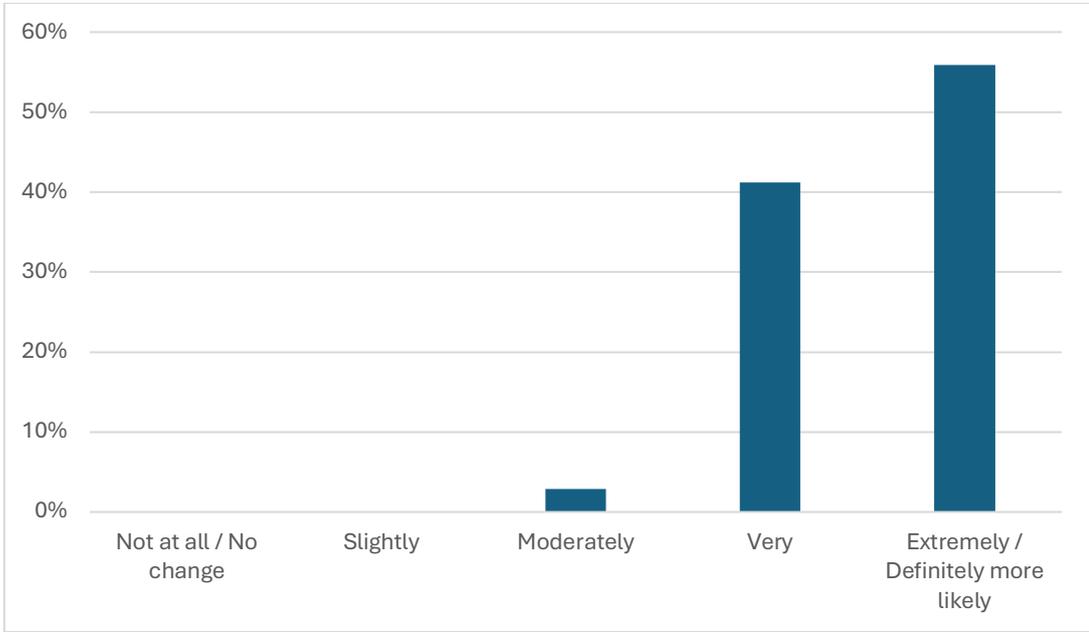


Figure 10: Importance of having a single Global Account Manager coordinating client and partner relations at the European level.

Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data.

The graph highlights that almost all respondents consider it important to have a single global contact person. Specifically, 55.9% attribute the highest level of importance to this, and 41.2% attribute a high level of importance, while only 2.9% attribute an intermediate level of importance. No one expressed a negative opinion. This result confirms that the presence of a dedicated Global Account Manager would be seen as a strong added value in managing relationships at the European level.

Question number 5: *What factors have the greatest influence on your choice of electric vehicle supplier (select exactly 3 alternatives)?*

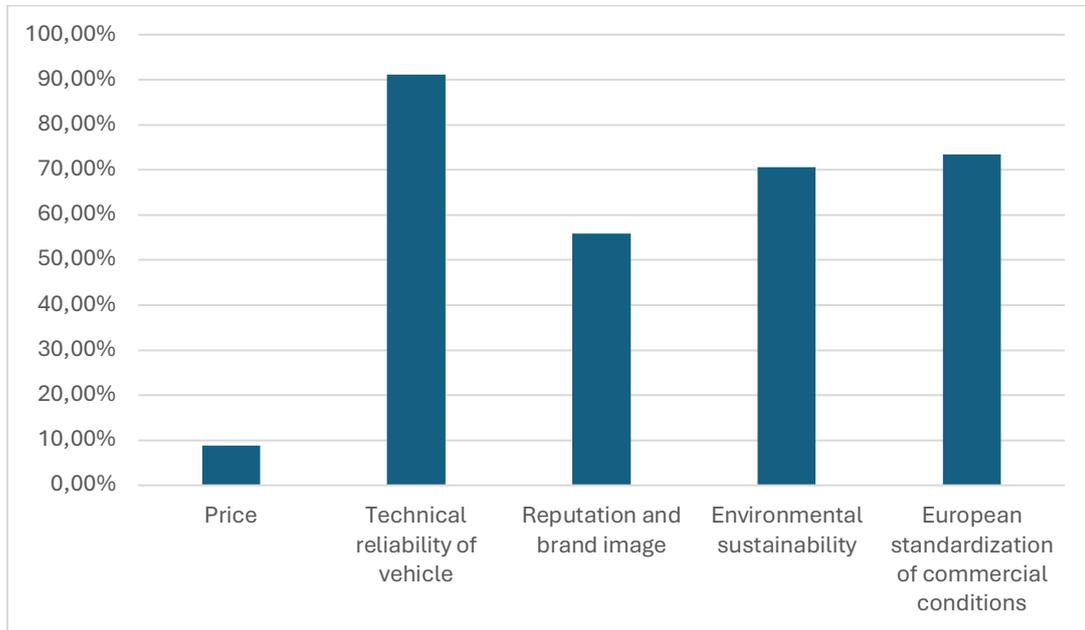


Figure 11: Key factors influencing the choice of an electric vehicle supplier.
Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data.

The graph shows that the most decisive factor in choosing a supplier is the technical reliability of the vehicle, indicated by 91.2% of respondents. This is followed by the European standardization of commercial conditions (73.5%) and environmental sustainability (70.6%). Less importance is attributed to reputation and brand image (55.9%), while price is considered relevant only by a minority (8.8%). This indicates that, for the professionals interviewed, technical solidity and commercial consistency at European level count much more than the simple economic factor.

Question number 6: *What advantages do you think a global account management system could bring?*

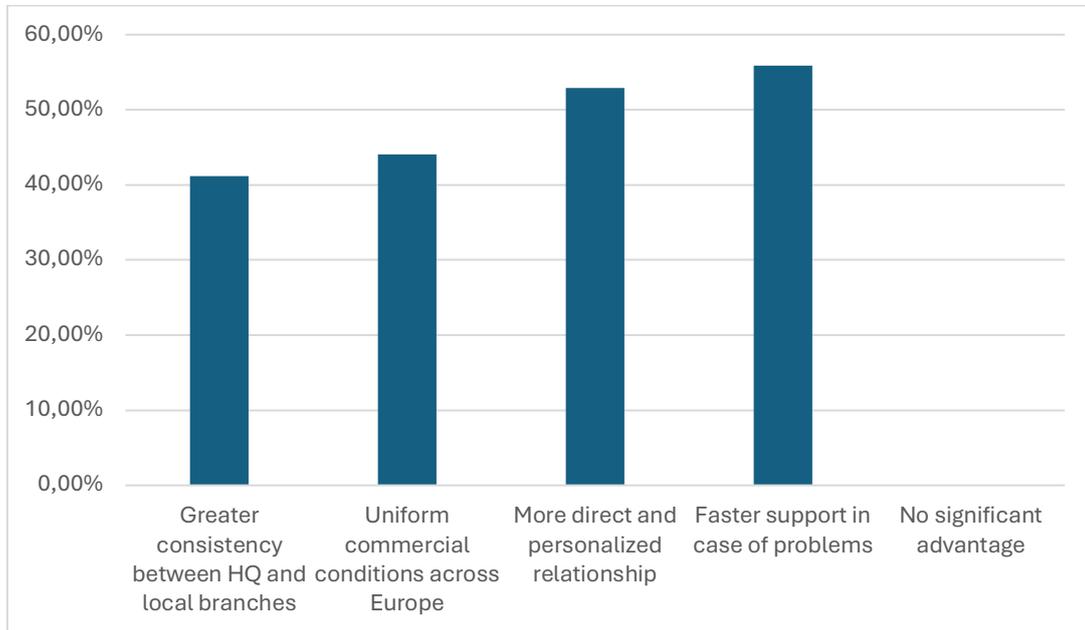


Figure 12: Expected advantages from the implementation of a Global Account Management system.

Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data.

The graph demonstrates that the most anticipated advantages of introducing a Global Account Management system are faster support in case of problems (55.9%) and the possibility of having more direct and personalized relationships (52.9%). This is followed by uniform commercial conditions at the European level (44.1%) and greater consistency between HQ and local branches (41.2%). No participant believed that a GAM would not bring benefits. These results confirm that the model is seen as a tool capable of increasing efficiency and coordination, but above all of strengthening the relationship of trust and continuity between BYD and its stakeholders, in line with our thesis on the need to adopt GAM in order to compete effectively in Europe.

Question number 7: *What are the biggest challenges today in managing multinational EV fleet suppliers?*

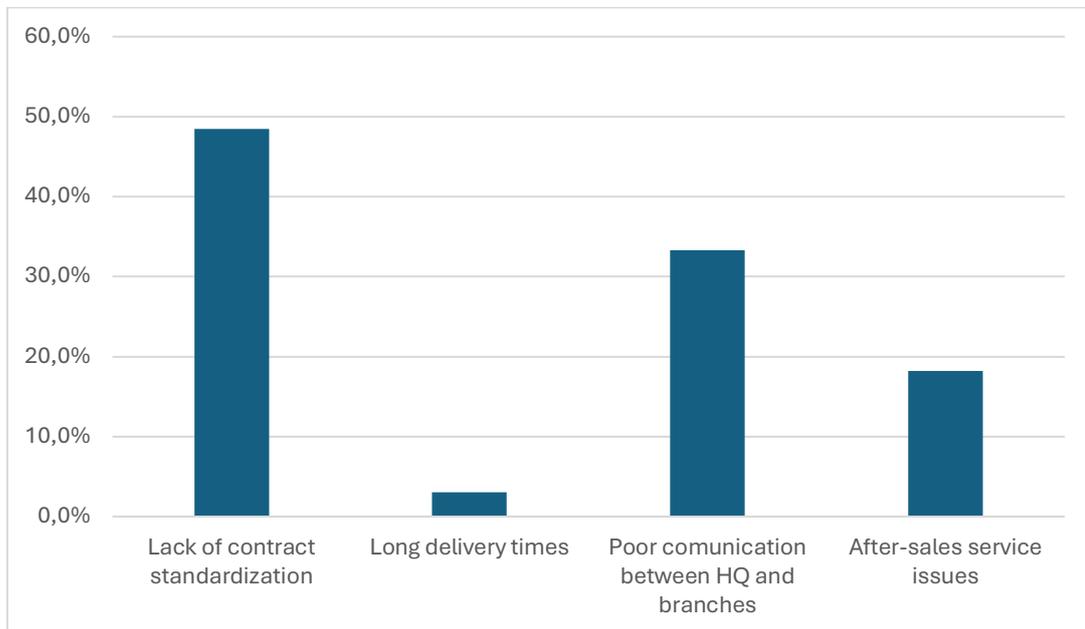


Figure 13: Main challenges in managing multinational EV fleet suppliers.

Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data.

The graph illustrates that the main critical issue perceived by operators is the lack of standardization of contracts (48.5%), followed by poor communication between HQ and branches (33.3%) and after-sales service problems (18.2%). Long delivery times, on the other hand, are considered a minor obstacle (3%). These figures confirm the importance of a Global Account Management system capable of ensuring more uniform and coordinated processes at European level, reducing fragmentation and inefficiencies that currently limit competitiveness.

Question number 8: *In general, how much do you think the introduction of a Global Account Management model could facilitate the expansion of an electric vehicle manufacturer such as BYD in Europe?*

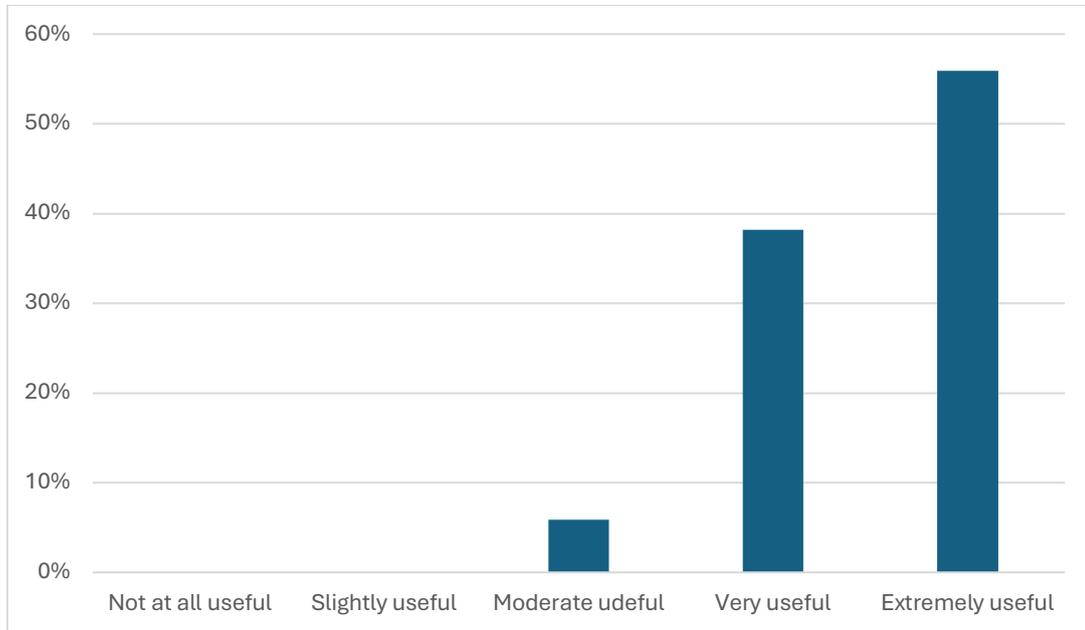


Figure 14: Perceived impact of Global Account Management on BYD's expansion in Europe.

Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data.

The graph demonstrates that the large majority of respondents believe that the introduction of a Global Account Management model would significantly facilitate BYD's expansion in Europe. 55.9% assigned the highest importance rating and 38.2% assigned a high rating, while only 5.9% assigned an intermediate rating. No respondents expressed negative opinions. These data confirm the consistency with our thesis: GAM is perceived as a valid tool that would allow BYD to overcome cultural and organizational barriers and consolidate its position in the European market.

Question number 9: *If BYD adopted a Global Account Management system, how much would this increase the likelihood of your organization considering it a long-term strategic partner?*

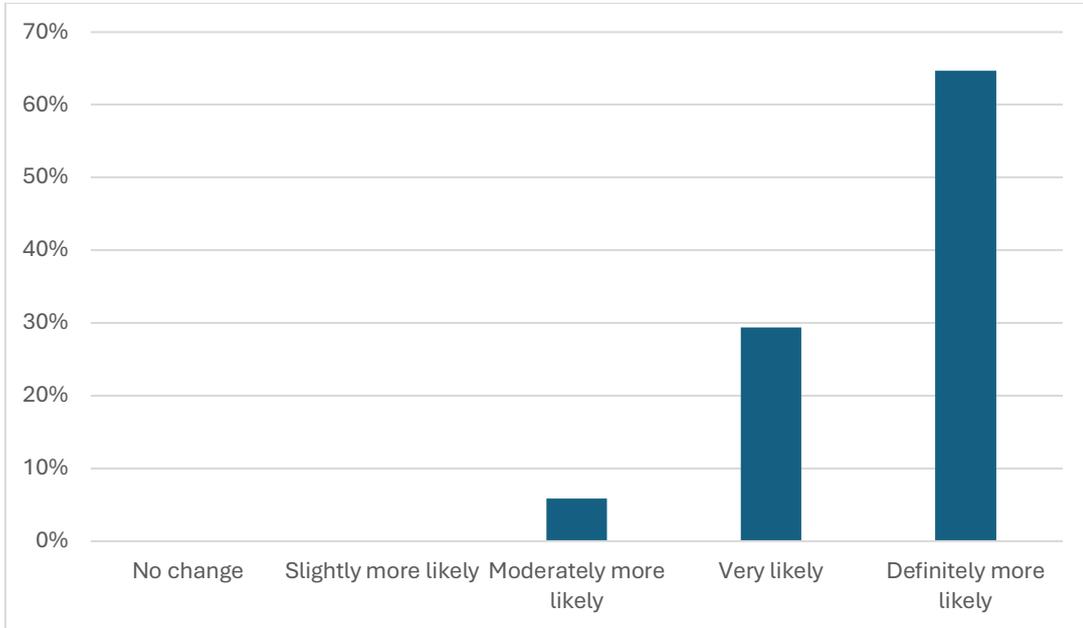


Figure 15: Impact of Global Account Management on the likelihood of considering BYD a long-term strategic partner.

Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data.

The graph shows that the vast majority of respondents believe that the introduction of a Global Account Management system could have a positive impact on the possibility of considering BYD a long-term strategic partner. In particular, 64.7% expressed the highest level of agreement, while 29.4% expressed a high level of agreement. Only a small proportion, 5.9%, gave an intermediate rating, and no one expressed a negative opinion. These data suggest that the adoption of a structured organizational model can be a strengthening factor in building long-term relationships with industry players.

Question number 10: *In your opinion, does the stereotype still exist in the automotive sector that Chinese brands are less reliable/of lower quality than European or American brands?*

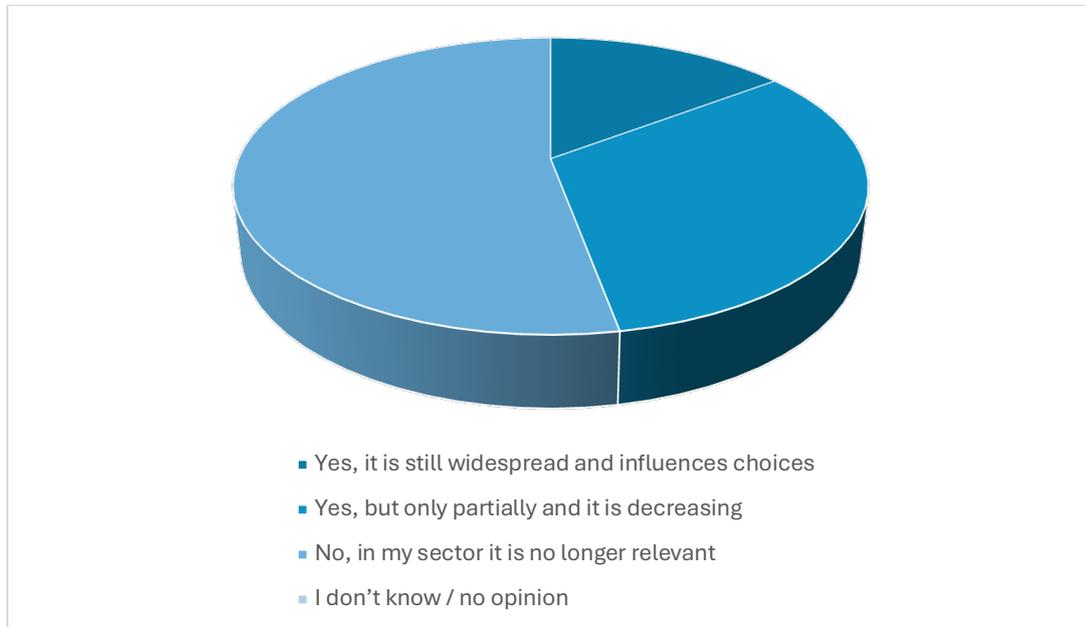


Figure 16: Persistence of the stereotype regarding Chinese automotive brands.
Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data.

The graph above indicates that for over half of the respondents (52.9%), the stereotype of Chinese brands as less reliable or of lower quality than European or American brands is no longer relevant in their sector. On the other hand, 32.4% believe that the stereotype still exists but is diminishing, while only 14.7% consider it to be widespread and capable of influencing choices. No participants stated that they had no opinion. The data suggest that, although some cultural resistance remains, the perception of Chinese brands is changing significantly, opening up opportunities for strategies to strengthen their reputation.

6. Results and Discussion.

The literature on Global Account Management (GAM) highlights how this model represents a response to the challenges of market globalization, but at the same time is difficult to be applied. While GAM allows for the consistent coordination of relationships with multinational clients, it also carries the risk of conflicts between headquarters and branches, internal resistance and complexities related to the integration of different processes and cultures. In other words, GAM is not a model that can be applied automatically: it only works if the organization is ready to support it and if there is a concrete demand from customers for unified solutions at an international level. Despite these critical issues, the strategic value of GAM remains clear. It not only ensures uniform sales across multiple markets but also makes it possible to build long-term relationships with global customers based on trust, transparency and co-creation of value. It is precisely this relational dimension that makes it a sustainable and difficult-to-imitate competitive advantage, because it arises from the intertwining of processes, resources and organizational capabilities that consolidate over time. If we apply these concepts to the BYD case, it becomes clear that the company's desire to expand into Europe fits almost perfectly into the theoretical “scope of application” for GAM. Europe is, in fact, a hyper-competitive market, characterized by specific demand, stringent regulation and corporate and institutional customers operating on a transnational scale (leasing companies, fleet managers, utilities, public administrations). In addition, BYD's growth in China has been greatly facilitated by government support, which has guaranteed resources and financial stability, but cannot be replicated in Europe. Here, success will depend on the company's ability to build structured and lasting relationships with key partners,

going beyond simple price advantages. That is where a GAM model can make a real difference, letting BYD coordinate its activities in the most important European markets, avoid fragmentation in commercial policies, and present itself as a credible partner for multinational customers.

Qualitative and quantitative analyses have shown that this complexity is amplified by structural variables specific to Europe. On the one hand, environmental regulations and emission reduction targets are pushing strongly towards electric mobility, creating a framework that apparently favors a manufacturer such as BYD, which already specializes in BEVs and PHEVs. The figures confirm that in 2025, sales of electric vehicles grew by an average of 25% in the five main markets, with peaks of 35% in Germany and the UK and 84% in Spain. On the other hand, however, the same regulations are accompanied by protective measures such as anti-subsidy duties that penalize vehicles imported from China, forcing BYD to diversify its offering with PHEVs and to start direct production in Europe, as in the case of the new plant in Hungary. These, show that BYD is already demonstrating remarkable adaptability: record growth in Germany (+750% in April 2025), expansion of the dealer network from 27 to around 120, and the planned doubling of dealers in the UK are all signs of an aggressive and well-calibrated strategy. However, the vast scale and speed of these moves carry a real risk of fragmentation, with the danger that each market will be managed independently and with little coordination. This is where adopting a Global Account Management approach can make a difference, not so much as a formal label, but as an approach that can ensure consistency, avoid differences between countries, and build a unified brand image. Another aspect that should not be overlooked is the concentration of sales in the main markets. The top five European markets (Germany,

the UK, France, Italy and Spain) account for almost 80% of the total electric vehicle market. This means that BYD must not spread its energies too thinly but rather concentrate its resources and establish solid relationships with European players operating across these markets, such as large leasing groups, rental companies, corporate fleets and utilities. A fragmented management model would risk becoming a problem, while centralized and coordinated governance would allow for a better response to these needs. Then there is the crucial issue of brand perception. “Made in China” that is not yet on the same level with European brands, especially in a segment such as the automotive industry, which is strongly identified with Europe. Despite the rapid growth in sales, there is a risk that BYD will be perceived as a cheap alternative, but not yet as a trusted brand in the long term. For this very reason, strengthening transnational institutional and commercial relations is not an optional extra, but a necessary tool for building legitimacy and overcoming reputational barriers. The survey data provide further empirical confirmation and, in some cases, additional insight to support the findings of the qualitative and quantitative analysis. They show that European operators' perceptions not only align with the regulatory and competitive dynamics already discussed but also introduce concrete elements that reinforce the relevance of the Global Account Management model for BYD. Let's see how.

Almost all respondents (over 97%) consider it essential to have a single Global Account Manager to coordinate relations with partners and customers. This result directly corresponds to the qualitative evidence on the risk of fragmentation of the European market, characterized by different regulations and an inconsistent competitive framework. The literature on GAM emphasizes that the absence of a

coordination point weakens the ability to create relational value and increases the risk of contractual inconsistencies. Therefore, empirical data confirm that industry players perceive centralization as a practical, rather than theoretical, necessity, an essential condition for overcoming multi-market complexity. While quantitative analysis had already highlighted how the main European markets show differences in EV sales adoption rates but converge towards a strengthening of the corporate segment, the survey reveals that the criteria for selecting suppliers by B2B operators clearly favor technical reliability (91.2%), standardization of commercial conditions at EU level (73.5%), and sustainability (70.6%), relegating price to a marginal role (8.8%). This data confirms what emerged from the qualitative analysis, namely that in European B2B, it is not cost that determines choice, but rather the ability to offer consistency and solidity. For BYD, this implies that competitive advantage cannot be built solely on price differentials compared to European brands, but must be based on a system, in our case a GAM that translates vertical integration into replicable and reliable service standards. The questionnaire shows that the most anticipated benefits are rapid response to problems (55.9%) and the possibility of building more direct and personalized relationships (52.9%), followed by uniformity of contractual conditions (44.1%) and consistency between HQ and branches (41.2%). These data confirm the dual nature of GAM, which has already emerged in the literature: not only an organizational tool to ensure uniformity, but also a relational lever capable of strengthening trust and continuity. The convergence between the operational and cultural dimensions is also found in the qualitative analysis, which highlighted the need for BYD to create a “bridge” between Chinese managerial logic and European expectations. The survey shows that operators themselves see global management not

as simple bureaucratic coordination, but as a catalyst for relational closeness and operational speed.

Furthermore, over 94% of the sample believes that the introduction of the GAM would significantly facilitate BYD's expansion in Europe, and 95% sees it as a condition that would increase the likelihood of considering the company a long-term strategic partner. This data ties in with the quantitative component, in the sense that, given that the market is polarized in the top five countries (which account for about 80% of EV sales), the ability to build stable transnational relationships is crucial to winning multinational customers such as leasing companies, fleet managers, and utilities. This is consistent with the theory of “dyadic competitive advantage” and, taking this as a given, a GAM not only coordinates but also consolidates the partnership, transforming the relationship itself into a competitive asset that is difficult to replicate. Last but not least, 53% of respondents say that negative stereotypes about Chinese brands are no longer relevant, while a further 32% consider them to be diminishing. This result, in line with qualitative data, shows that reputational barriers, while still present, are diminishing (especially for industry specialists). This is a decisive point because it confirms that credibility depends not only on the product but also on the quality of the relationship. In our case, this translates into the assertion that a well-structured GAM, based on contractual transparency and after-sales support, can accelerate the legitimization of the brand in the European corporate world, where the weight of purely cultural narratives is mitigated by the concrete experience of the service.

6.1 Beyond GAM: a model for electric vehicles in Europe.

After analyzing the basics of Global Account Management (GAM) and the specific case of BYD, one thing became clear: GAM is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Its effectiveness depends on the company's objectives, structure, and life cycle. For this reason, when attempting to apply it in a generic way, implementation often becomes difficult and requires a high degree of customization before stable results can be seen over time. If we add to this, the European framework characterized by the stringent rules of the Green Deal, increasingly aware customers in a saturated market, protective measures on imports, risks of fragmentation between countries and cities, and brand images that are not always aligned, it is easy to understand how trying to apply a standard model is complicated, while custom design is a necessity. This gave rise to the proposal to imagine a model that takes the best of GAM and adapts it to the electric automotive sector, incorporating the megatrends that are reshaping the industry such as smart and connected vehicles, agency models, OTA updates with physical support networks, charging alliances, traceable sustainability and so on. The idea is as simple as it is ambitious: to build an ad hoc EV framework that, when applied to BYD, will enable the company to enter and remain in the European market on a continuous basis, exploiting all its strengths (vertical integration, software speed) and anticipating the risks that have already emerged in our work, providing a solution in advance. In other words, moving from “GAM in theory” to an operating model for Europe, capable of bringing together brands, contracts, software, charging, and support under a single strategy. The following pages will present and outline its principles, processes, and managerial implications.

From the market analysis and as also highlighted in paragraph 2.5, the European electric vehicle market is one of the most competitive globally, characterized by a strong industrial tradition and consumers who are particularly attentive to quality and sustainability. In this context, the adoption of the European Green Deal and the introduction of stringent emission reduction targets have accelerated the spread of EVs, albeit with significant differences between Member States. The quantitative data shown in paragraph 5.2.2 confirm sustained growth in mature markets such as Germany and the United Kingdom, while in countries such as Italy and Spain, the potential is still in the consolidation phase. This polarization means that it is not possible to adopt a uniform strategy, but that companies must calibrate their moves based on national specificities. In terms of competition, as discussed in detail in section 5.2.1, the main competitors in Europe are long-established companies such as Volkswagen, BMW, Mercedes, and Stellantis, which leverage their well-established industrial presence and strong connection to domestic markets, but also international players such as Tesla, which has built its position on innovation and brand value. Another element that emerged clearly from our empirical survey concerns the selection criteria of European B2B customers, the decision to adopt a supplier in fact, is not driven by price, but rather by factors such as technical reliability, standardization of contracts at the European level, and environmental sustainability. This evidence confirms that competing in the European market requires much more than a cost advantage, it requires structures capable of coordinating complex relationships, offering uniformity and rapid response times. In this sense, as discussed in chapter 6, competition is not only about the product, but above all about the ability to build trust and stable partnerships with large institutional and corporate customers,

making models such as Global Account Management a decisive lever for transforming the difficulties of the European context into a sustainable competitive advantage. Analyzing internal resources, as discussed in section 5.1 and further explored in the SWOT analysis (see section 5.1.1), BYD's main internal resource is its vertical integration, which allows it to independently design, develop, and manufacture approximately 70% of the components needed for its vehicles. This characteristic, combined with control of the battery supply chain, the technological heart of the electric car, gives the company a competitive advantage that is difficult for its European or American competitors, who are often more dependent on external suppliers, to replicate. The decision to focus on LFP batteries and, more recently, on the Blade Battery and Blade 2.0 has also allowed BYD to combine safety, durability, and efficiency with cost containment, strengthening its ability to offer a product with a favorable price-quality ratio. Another distinctive feature is the Innovation Model (section 5.1), which combines technological, process, and marketing innovation. In technological terms, the centrality of R&D and the extensive patent portfolio consolidate BYD's reputation as a leader in electrification. In terms of processes, the ability to adapt production through semi-automatic lines has allowed the company to maintain flexibility and efficiency, reducing fixed costs compared to Western multinationals traditionally linked to complex plants. Added to this there is the ability to dominate the market with a multi-channel distribution strategy, as highlighted in section 5.1.1, the company has managed to rapidly expand its commercial network, reaching hundreds of sales points in Europe and an expansion plan that includes over 2,000 dealers in total, with particular dynamism in Germany and the United Kingdom.

In defining our strategy, we will take into account four megatrends that are reshaping the automotive industry, with particularly effects on the European market.

1. **Smart vehicles:** Cars are no longer simply vehicles for transportation but are becoming true hubs of a digital ecosystem capable of communicating with other vehicles, infrastructure, and even the electrical network. This transition, known as vehicle-to-everything (V2X)⁸⁵, opens up scenarios in which safety, efficiency, and sustainability are enhanced thanks to the vehicle's ability to collect data, exchange it, and adapt its driving in real time. This is no longer a distant prospect considering that the European Commission has already outlined strategies and action plans for Cooperative, Connected and Automated Mobility (CCAM), with the aim of making European transport safer, smarter, and more sustainable.⁸⁶ In this context, CCAM pilot projects are promoting large-scale testing of autonomous and connected vehicles, laying the foundations for ever deeper integration between cars, road infrastructure, and digital systems.⁸⁷ In a regulated and attentive market such as Europe, this means that manufacturers will no longer be able to limit themselves to producing high-performance cars, but will have to offer integrated, connected mobility experiences in line with the interoperability standards set at EU level.

⁸⁵ BlackBerry QNX, “What Is Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X)?” in *The Ultimate Guide to the Software-Defined Vehicle*, <https://blackberry.qnx.com/en/ultimate-guides/software-defined-vehicle/vehicle-to-everything>

⁸⁶ European Commission, *Cooperative, Connected and Automated Mobility (CCAM): Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2024) 92*, April 12 2024, https://www.ccam.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/swd_2024_92-compressed_1.pdf.

⁸⁷ European Commission, *Communication — Action Plan on Automated and Connected Mobility*, March 5 2025, https://transport.ec.europa.eu/document/download/89b3143e-09b6-4ae6-a826-932b90ed0816_en

2. ***Agency model:*** This model significantly changes the relationship between manufacturers, dealers, and customers. In practice, the car manufacturer becomes solely responsible for sales and the final price, while dealers no longer buy cars to resell them but act as agents: they receive a commission for each vehicle sold and focus primarily on customer service and experience. According to KPMG's 24th Annual Global Automotive Executive Survey, this model is spreading rapidly because it ensures greater price transparency and strengthens the direct link between OEMs and consumers, thanks in part to digital channels.⁸⁸ Of course, the transition is not easy and some large groups have encountered technical difficulties and delays in implementation, but the direction is now clear. The agency model is becoming a key element in managing relationships with European customers, who are increasingly aware of price consistency and service quality.
3. ***Software-Defined Vehicles (SDV):*** Unlike traditional cars, where performance and services remained essentially unchanged throughout the vehicle's lifetime, today's software-defined cars can improve over time thanks to OTA (over-the-air) updates. This means, for example, receiving new safety features, more advanced driver assistance systems, or even updates for infotainment and navigation, simply by connecting the car to the network. As highlighted by Automotive World in their Software-Defined Vehicle Magazine, more and more manufacturers see vehicles as “computers on wheels,” capable of adding services and generating value over time. For consumers, this translates into greater customization and safety and a car that

⁸⁸ KPMG, *24th Annual Global Automotive Executive Survey: Automakers Getting Real about the Future of Mobility – A European Perspective* (2024), 26–28.

remains updated and competitive. For manufacturers, it opens up new business opportunities: subscriptions to premium features, advanced voice assistants, or autonomous driving packages that can be activated when the customer wants.

4. ***Sustainability and traceability of batteries:*** The European Union has introduced the new Battery Regulation (2023/1542), which sets stringent standards in terms of recycled content, carbon footprint, and responsibility throughout the value chain. Starting in 2027, every electric vehicle battery placed on the European market will have to be accompanied by a digital battery passport, accessible via QR code, which will serve as a veritable electronic “identity card” for the product.⁸⁹ In practice, this tool will enable key information about the battery's life cycle to be tracked: material composition, raw material origin, recycled content, but also dynamic data such as State of Health (SOH) and number of recharge cycles. This means that not only manufacturers, but also operators such as recyclers, repairers, and second-life companies will have access to useful information for the safe and sustainable management of used batteries. As highlighted by the CEPS analysis, the battery passport is the world's first example of a mandatory digital product passport, a step that goes beyond traditional regulation and opens the way to circular economy models.⁹⁰ This tool will make it possible to break down the current information barriers between the various players in

⁸⁹ Regulation (EU) 2023/1542 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2023 concerning batteries and waste batteries, OJ L 191, 28 July 2023, pp. 1–117.

⁹⁰ Vasileios Rizos e Patricia Urban, *Implementing the EU Digital Battery Passport: Opportunities and Challenges for Battery Circularity*, CEPS In-Depth Analysis, March 2024, 5.

the supply chain, making processes more transparent and increasing consumer confidence.

6.1.1 EV-GAM.

Global Account Management, in its original meaning, was created as a coordinated and comprehensive approach to managing strategic customers. This very purpose makes it the ideal model for a company like BYD: the capacity to build stable, consistent, and long-term structures, aligned with the group's declared objective of establishing lasting partnerships and retaining key corporate clients. Without this alignment, examining its application throughout this study would not have been meaningful. However, while GAM is an essential starting point, its pure application is not enough when entering a complex and highly competitive context such as the European electric mobility market. Here, the unwritten rules of the market, differences between countries, regulatory pressure, and the presence of established competitors require a further step: taking the characteristics of the GAM, those that have made it a successful and globally recognized model and transforming them into a more personalized design capable of integrating the major megatrends that are shaping the electric automotive industry. This means that our proposal does not intend to replace the GAM, but to reinterpret it in light of current challenges, taking full advantage of both BYD's unique characteristics and the conditions of the European market. The actions are therefore not limited to addressing the GAM's original target audience (corporate fleets, leasing companies, and large public customers) but seek to capitalize on the transformations currently underway, turning every megatrend into a strategic opportunity. In other words, the model we propose is an "EV-GAM" that

keeps the key principles of global coordination, contractual standardization, and centralized management of large accounts intact, but enriches them with innovative content designed specifically for the electric sector. The operational implementation of this vision is based on four major guidelines, corresponding to the megatrends identified, each accompanied by a practical initiative.

The first initiative concerns smart and connected vehicles, a transformation that in Europe is accompanied by plans and regulations such as the CCAM. In this area, thanks to its vertical integration and ability to develop software and hardware internally, BYD can make a leap forward compared to other manufacturers, not just selling connected cars, but becoming the player that provides integrated mobility platforms for fleets and public administrations. Let's imagine, for example, that every BYD vehicle sold to a corporate customer is part of a digital ecosystem, capable of communicating not only with other vehicles, but also with charging infrastructure, city energy systems, and even local government environmental management systems. In practical terms, BYD could launch a service, or rather a platform, that allows public or private companies, and possibly even private customers, to monitor the impact of their cars in real time: emissions saved, charging efficiency, battery usage, and energy costs. For customers, this translates into tangible savings and greater security, and for companies, it also provides an immediate tool for ESG reporting, which is now required by investors and regulators. For BYD, it means consolidating a long-term relationship, considering that the customer is not just buying a car, but relying on a partner that simplifies management and helps them achieve environmental and financial goals. It is a strategy that, if applied on a large scale, could truly redefine the concept of automotive supplier in Europe.

The second element is the agency model, which is already transforming the relationship between manufacturers, dealers, and customers. In this context, BYD could leverage the GAM to develop a distinctive sales and service network: no longer relying on fragmented dealers as intermediaries, but rather on a 'European Alliance' where each point of sale operates as part of a centralized ecosystem. In concrete terms, this means that European fleet managers would have access to a single digital portal, with transparent price lists and uniform contractual conditions, drastically reducing negotiation times and the uncertainties typical of national markets that are often regulated differently. At the same time, local dealers would be transformed into experiential and consulting hubs, where customers would not only find a car to buy, but also charging services, sustainability advice, and driver training. In this way, BYD combines the principles of GAM uniformity with an innovative approach to retail, capable of building trust and consolidating the brand's penetration in historically distrustful markets.

The third megatrend, that is software-defined vehicles and OTA updates, offers an opportunity for an even more targeted strategy. Today, most European manufacturers struggle to integrate rapid, customized software changes, while BYD, thanks to China's renowned speed of innovation, has the opportunity to offer new solutions. The strategic proposal consists of offering B2B customers evolutionary digital packages that go far beyond technical updates: advanced safety systems, autonomous driving modules, energy fleet management tools, and even premium infotainment or voice assistance services. All of these can be activated and deactivated on demand, depending on the customer's needs. This model could transform car sales into a continuous subscription, where the customer does not simply buy a vehicle but

invests in a constantly updated platform. In terms of market penetration, this means building long-term customer loyalty, considering that, for example, a fleet that has already adopted BYD digital services is unlikely to change suppliers, as this would mean losing data, habits and personalized services. If implemented well, this strategy could revolutionize the way fleets perceive cars, moving from a static asset to a dynamic service.

Finally, the fourth megatrend, that of battery sustainability and traceability, is probably the most challenging but also the one that could have the greatest impact in Europe. Here, BYD has a unique advantage considering that it controls almost the entire battery supply chain and has advanced technological solutions such as the Blade Battery. The proposed strategy consists of anticipating the 2027 European regulation on digital battery passports and turning it into an immediate competitive factor. BYD could introduce a system similar to a digital passport but accessible via QR code or app that not only shows the battery's health status but also includes detailed information on materials, resource origin, charging cycles and emissions saved. For corporate customers and public administrations, having this data available not only ensures transparency, but also facilitates access to public incentives and improves their "green image". Furthermore, for private customers who are increasingly sensitive to sustainability issues, this system would become a real awareness tool as they could clearly see how much they have contributed to reducing CO2 emissions compared to the use of traditional vehicles, turning their choice of BYD into a source of personal pride and positive communication. For BYD, on the other hand, it means transforming a regulatory obligation into a perceived innovation, which strengthens confidence in the brand and positions it as a leader in sustainability.

Such a move, if communicated correctly, could have a huge impact, with BYD no longer seen as a “Chinese brand to be verified” but as a player that sets the standards for transparency in Europe.

7. Conclusion.

This research began with a theoretical analysis aimed at tracing the evolution of strategic customer management models, starting with Key Account Management (KAM), considered the precursor, and moving on to the more advanced Global Account Management (GAM). The original goal was to clearly identify the differences between the two approaches, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses, in order to build as comprehensive an understanding of the subject as possible. While KAM represented a historic shift in key account management at the national or regional level, GAM was created in response to the need for coordination of multinational customers, with the aim of ensuring uniformity, continuity, and consistency in commercial relationships on a global scale. Precisely because it is an ambitious and complex model, it was clear from the outset that it could not be reduced to a set of operational techniques, but that it was also necessary to understand the difficulties, limitations, and prerequisites that affect its effectiveness. The theoretical analysis therefore highlighted how GAM requires specific conditions to be implemented successfully and, at the same time, demonstrated its weaknesses. In particular, it revealed the difficulties of coordinating headquarters and local branches simultaneously, with inevitable conflicts of autonomy and slowdowns in decision-making processes; cultural complexity, which often impede communication and alignment between actors from different countries; the constant tension between global standardization and local adaptation, which is one of the most frequent challenges for global account managers; the need for significant investment in technological systems and information-sharing platforms, without which the model remains without foundations; and finally, the crucial role of top management, whose

constant support is essential to ensure that GAM does not become a mere structural exercise but a real competitive advantage. Having outlined this theoretical framework, the research took a step forward towards practical application through a case study dedicated to BYD, one of China's leading manufacturers of electric vehicles, currently expanding rapidly in Europe. The aim was to hypothesize how the GAM model could be applied to such a unique business, trying to verify whether the conditions identified in the literature could be confirmed in practice. The choice of BYD proved particularly significant, not only because it represents one of the most interesting cases in the contemporary automotive landscape, but also because it allowed us to compare a theoretical model that requires planning, customization, and clarity of objectives from its inception with a Chinese management approach based on determination, speed, and total dedication to achieving results. This contrast highlighted a possibility for synthesis: on the one hand, the need for a formal structure that makes expansion more orderly and replicable; on the other, the typically Chinese ability to push beyond any obstacle in order to achieve the goal. BYD, in its growth, embodies exactly this dual vision.

With the case study done, the focus shifted to the more experimental and empirical side of the research. Alongside the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the European regulatory context, a questionnaire was sent out to industry professionals, including fleet managers, dealers, rental operators, and managers from other car companies. The aim was to verify whether the theoretical hypotheses could be validated from the point of view of those who experience the dynamics of the market on a daily basis. The results of the questionnaire partly confirmed our assumptions. First of all, there was widespread awareness that the lack of standardization and poor

communication between headquarters and branches are real problems for companies operating on an international scale. Almost all respondents recognized that a Global Account Management model would overcome these obstacles, ensuring greater consistency in relationships and faster support. It also became clear that the determining factors in choosing an electric vehicle supplier are not so much price as technical reliability, reputation, and the ability to offer uniform conditions throughout Europe. These elements, together with the growing importance of environmental sustainability, showed that operators' priorities converge with the areas where a well-structured GAM can make a real difference. Finally, the vast majority of respondents said that adopting a GAM would significantly increase the likelihood of considering BYD a reliable and strategic partner for the long term. The picture that emerges from this analysis is therefore consistent with what has been stated previously, despite all its complexities, the GAM is perceived not as a bureaucratic obstacle, but as a concrete lever for competitiveness and a way to build trust and stability in business relationships. BYD's experience shows how this model can become a tool for bridging the gap between different cultures and management styles, transforming what initially appears to be a distance into an opportunity for integration. Ultimately, the research conducted has shown that BYD's adoption of a Global Account Management model would not only be an organizational choice, but a real strategic and cultural bridge between China and Europe. On the one hand, it would ensure efficiency, standardization, and reliability, and on the other, it would enhance the determination and speed of execution that have made the extraordinary growth of Chinese companies possible in recent years. From this perspective, GAM is an approach capable of translating complexity and differences into a sustainable

competitive advantage, positioning itself as a key tool for addressing the challenges of the electric transition and market globalization.

7.1 Contribution.

This work offers a twofold contribution. On a theoretical level, it explores the transition from KAM to GAM and analyzes the surrounding conditions, clarifying why the global model is not a simple “scale” extension of key account management but a different relational, organizational, and informational architecture. The discussion on tensions between the center and the periphery, cultural frictions, and the balance between standardization and adaptation has been illustrated with concrete examples of decision-making mechanisms (role of top management, formal power of the global account manager), thus transforming often abstract categories into operational criteria that can be evaluated over time. In this way, the literature on GAM has been reinterpreted as a diagnostic framework to be applied to real contexts, rather than as a repertoire of “best practices” detached from implementation. In terms of application, analysis of the BYD case in Europe has shown how an asset-based, vertically integrated manufacturer can use GAM to transform fragmentation risks (regulations, channels, brand perceptions) into a coherent relationship system capable of ensuring contractual uniformity, service continuity, and rapid response times to multinational partners. The empirical evidence collected through the questionnaire reinforces this thesis: the presence of a single Global Account Manager at the European level is considered important by almost all respondents, the selection of an EV supplier is mainly influenced by technical reliability (91.2%), European standardization of conditions (73.5%), and sustainability (70.6%), while price

remains marginal (8.8%); the benefits expected from the GAM focus on rapid support (55.9%) and a more direct and personalized relationship (52.9%); the most critical issues currently experienced with multinational suppliers are the lack of standardization of contracts (48.5%) and communication between HQ and branches (33.3%). These results, consistent with the theoretical framework, offer a series of priorities for action that make GAM a concrete lever.

7.2 Limitation and Future Research.

Despite the results obtained, the limitations of the research must be taken into account. First of all, the empirical design is based on a voluntary and anonymous questionnaire addressed to professionals in the sector. The opinions collected, although valuable because they reflect the experience of those who work daily in the market, are predominantly perspectives of Italian companies and operators active in nearby European contexts, with a small number and a prevalence of commercial and channel figures. It is therefore an informed sample consistent with the research objective, but not representative of the entire European population. Furthermore, a self-selection effect by individuals who are more interested or sensitive to the organizational issues addressed cannot be ruled out. For this reason, the results should be understood as solid but still exploratory indications, to be verified on a larger scale.

A second limitation concerns the focus of the case, as BYD is a manufacturer with very specific characteristics, such as vertical integration, speed of execution, and a reputation that is still evolving. These traits make the company a privileged observation point but limit the application of the conclusions to other brands, Chinese

or non-Chinese, that operate with different industrial models and commercial networks. A further constraint arises from the nature of the sector analyzed. The electric vehicle industry in Europe is undergoing rapid and constant transformation, influenced by regulations, tariff policies, the evolution of the technological mix between BEVs and PHEVs, and continuous changes in distribution and service networks. In such a dynamic context, the inferences are valid within the time frame of the analysis, but require constant updates to incorporate regulatory and market shocks that can rapidly change the balance.

It is precisely these limitations that open up the possibility for new future research. A first step could be to expand the empirical base, extending the questionnaires and interviews to a larger number of European operators, so as to obtain more representative results that are less influenced by a specific geographical area. A second useful development would be a comparative analysis with other manufacturers, both Chinese and non-Chinese, to verify the extent to which the dynamics observed in the BYD case can be generalized or whether they are instead the result of the company's specific characteristics. Finally, a different line of research could focus on monitoring the evolution of the GAM over time, tracking how regulatory and market changes affect the model's effectiveness and whether today's organizational choices will still be valid in the future. In this way, the weaknesses identified in the research become starting points for further developments, confirming that the study, in addition to answering questions, has the potential to raise new ones.

List of Figures

Figure 1: Relationship Issues in the New Millennium. *Source:* Adapted from Sheena Leek, Peter Naudé, and Peter W. Turnbull, “Interactions, Relationships and Networks in a Changing World,” *Industrial Marketing Management* 32, no. 2 (2003): 89.

Figure 2: A Conceptual Model of GAM Capabilities and Performance. *Source:* Linda Hui Shi, Shaoming Zou, and S. Tamer Cavusgil, “A Conceptual Framework of Global Account Management Capabilities and Firm Performance,” *International Business Review* 13, no. 5 (2004): 544.

Figure 3: A Scorecard for Selecting Global Accounts. *Source:* George S. Yip and Audrey J.M. Bink, “Managing Global Accounts,” *Harvard Business Review*, September 2007.

Figure 4: SWOT Analysis for BYD. *Source:* Yundi Gao, “Analysis of BYD’s Business Model and Future Development Prospects” *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, vol. 203 (Paris: Atlantis Press, 2021), 398-403.

Figure 5: SWOT Analysis for BYD (Updated 2025). *Source:* Author’s elaboration based on Yundi Gao, “Analysis of BYD’s Business Model and Future Development Prospects” *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, vol. 203 (Paris: Atlantis Press, 2021), 398-403.

Figure 6: Electric vehicle sales data. Europe Top 5: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK. *Source:* PwC and Strategy&, *Electric Vehicle Sales Review Q1 2025*, May 2025.

Figure 7: Distribution of respondents by professional role. *Source:* Author’s elaboration based on survey data.

Figure 8: Years of experience in the automotive and mobility sector. *Source:* Author’s elaboration based on survey data.

Figure 9: Level of knowledge of BYD as an electric vehicle manufacturer. *Source:* Author’s elaboration based on survey data.

Figure 10 : Importance of having a single Global Account Manager coordinating client and partner relations at the European level. *Source:* Author’s elaboration based on survey data.

Figure 11: Key factors influencing the choice of an electric vehicle supplier. *Source:* Author’s elaboration based on survey data.

Figure 12: Expected advantages from the implementation of a Global Account Management system. *Source:* Author’s elaboration based on survey data.

Figure 13: Main challenges in managing multinational EV fleet suppliers. *Source:* Author’s elaboration based on survey data.

Figure 14: Perceived impact of Global Account Management on BYD's expansion in Europe. Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data.

Figure 15: Impact of Global Account Management on the likelihood of considering BYD a long-term strategic partner. Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data.

List of abbreviations.

BEV – Battery Electric Vehicle

B2B – Business-to-Business

BYD – Build Your Dreams

CCAM – Cooperative, Connected and Automated Mobility

EGD – European Green Deal

ERP – Enterprise Resource Planning

EV – Electric Vehicle

GAM – Global Account Management

HQ – Headquarters

IOS – Inter-Organizational Systems

KAM – Key Account Management

LFP – Lithium Iron Phosphate (battery type)

MRP – Material Requirements Planning

OTA – Over-the-air

PHEV – Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle

R&D – Research and Development

RBV – Resource-Based View

ROI – Return on Investment

SDV – Software-Defined Vehicles

SME – Small and Medium-sized Enterprise

SOH – State of Health

SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (analysis framework)

V2X – Vehicle-to-everything

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