

Situation Analysis

Falcon Ride



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Brand/Product Analysis

Falcon Ride W.L.L. is a micro-mobility company, established in Qatar in 2020, with operations in Qatar and Malaysia with a plan to expand in the Middle East and Southeast Asia markets.

The company has partnered with leading international players in fleet design and manufacturing, IoT hardware and software, as well as advanced docking stations. The fleet consists of e-scooters, e-bikes, e-mopeds, autonomous three-wheel scooters, and other vehicles.

The hi-tech, app-enabled e-scooters are available for visitors and residents of Qatar mostly in West Bay, The Pearl, Lusail, and Education City as a practical means of transport.

Users will have to download the Falcon Ride app to unlock the scooters and they will be charged QR2 for unlocking and QAR0.75 riyals for every minute of use. The new service is in collaboration with Falcon Ride and is supported by the United Development Company (UDC). “We have partnered with this great sustainable initiative as part of our strategy of connecting people with convenient transport solutions throughout Qatar” (Khafoud, 2020)

“We constantly embrace more future-oriented solutions to make our services easily and safely available for all. In a nutshell – we are confident to soon make Mowasalat (Karwa) part of everyone’s everyday life,” he added.

“This launch with Mowasalat (Karwa) demonstrates the viability of collaborating with property owners and the public sector to provide electronic micro mobility transportation. We will look to engage with other corporates to advance our aim to provide last-mile connectivity solutions which will support Qatar in meeting its FIFA World Cup 2022 and Qatar Vision 2030 goals,” (Hussain Abdulla, 2020).

Electric bikes and scooters powered by Falcon Ride, the Qatari tech and micro-mobility startup, are being deployed in the Malaysian city of Cyberjaya. This kicks off the second pilot program of the city that includes e-bikes and e-scooters. TRYKE started deploying the e-bikes and e-scooters in March and will plan to officially launch a full rollout of Falcon’s vehicles by April.

The newly deployed e-scooters have a battery that can be swapped without having to bring the entire scooter to the charging station. There's also an integrated geolocation system that allows it to get live updates of the location, battery levels, and vehicle statuses.

"The SEA region is still highly reliant on traditional and personal modes of transportation despite boasting some of the worst traffic congestion statistics in the world. We strongly believe that micro-mobility can help shift transportation habits in the region while creating value for investors, communities, and cities alike. We are excited to tackle this massive problem with Falcon Ride and this fleet launch is only the first step of many" (Tim Wong, 2021).

Falcon Ride has said this collaboration will assist the company's ambitions to provide innovative and eco-friendly micro-mobility solutions, whether that's with a bike or a scooter.

While expanding its micro-mobility business, Mowasalat (Karwa) has launched e-scooters at Education City in cooperation with Falcon Ride and Qatar Foundation (QF). "We are super thrilled to announce that we have launched our e-scooters in Education City. As part of a pilot program with Qatar Foundation and Falcon, we will continue to support and contribute towards a cleaner, brighter future for our country," Mowasalat tweeted.

The hi-tech, app-enabled e-scooters have been enabled as part of Mowasalat's efforts to ensure "safe, sustainable, tech-enabled micro-mobility services" in various parts of the country and its strategy of connecting people with convenient transport solutions throughout Qatar. The e-scooters are available for visitors and those who work in Education City.

"Users will have to download the Falcon Ride application," Mowasalat explained while suggesting safety measures. Users must be 18 and above to use the e-scooters. Only solo rides will be allowed with one person per scooter. Park safely in a non-obstructing area or dedicated Falcon parking nest" the tweet added while asking users to always follow helmet laws. Falcon has urged all the riders to follow the same rules in support of maintaining public safety and cleanliness while adhering to the Covid-19 precautionary measures.

Users can ride in three easy steps to use the product:

- Locate - Through the Loop app, you'll be able to locate the nearest scooters available through GPS technology.
- Scan - Once you reach the scooter, just scan the QR code and pay through the app to be able to use it.
- Ride - You can then hop on the scooter, put on your helmet, and ride to your destination.

How much to ride?

There are three plans that users can choose from the Basic plan priced at QR 25, the Advanced at QR 50, and the Pro plan at QR 100 (with QR 10 free).

It costs QR 2 per unlock and per minute is QR 0.75. Loop users can pay using their debit or credit card.

Who can use it? Users must be at least 18 years old and have QID.

Safety:

E-scooters available in Qatar run at speeds ranging from 15 km/h to 30 km/h. The use of safety gear and following road safety rules should always be done to avoid any accident. Aside from wearing a helmet, you can also use knee pads and elbow pads when riding your e-scooter. According to Loop Mobility, users can't ride e-scooters on vehicle roads. Racing and stunts while riding is also not allowed. Loop Mobility also advises the user to refrain from any distracting activities like using mobile phones while riding the e-scooter. According to the company's Terms and Conditions, the e-scooter user must "obey street signs, signals, rights-of-way, road markings and to avoid blocking sidewalks, elevated ramps, bus stops or landscaped areas" (FalconRide, n.d.)

Company Analysis

Introduction

Falcon Ride has not exceeded operation for longer than 2 years, and has yet propelled to large success, and capitalized on an emerging market: Micro mobility in the Middle East. Falcon accumulated a fleet of 1,500+ vehicles that come in 3 models and 10,000+ customers (Falcon, About Us, 2022)

The company's vision strives to provide the world with the safest mobile-based micro-mobility products to the region, while also promoting the reduction of carbon footprints in addition to sustainable electric transportation. The company's goal is to use their fleet of electric scooters, mopeds and autonomous vehicles to help improve the sustainability of cities and destinations by providing last-mile connectivity between destinations and major transport hubs such as bus-stops, metro stations or even private vehicles.

History and Timeline

Falcon Ride was founded and incorporated in Qatar in July of 2020 by Sheikh Abdul Rahman bin Fahad al-Thani, Nasser al-Mahmoud and Hussain Abdulla (Gulf Times, 2020).

Falcon Ride's first exclusive partnership was signed in September 2020 with Swiftmile, a US based company that develops light EV charging systems (Marhaba, 2020). The deal was focused on providing Falcon Ride with charging and docking stations for their roll-out product of E-scooters. "This deal represents a key milestone of Falcon's plan to bring latest technologies and solutions to help the last mile connectivity, what we call micro mobility, in cities and destinations throughout the region" - (Hussain Abdulla, Falcon Co-founder).

Falcon Ride launched their rollout product of e-scooters in partnership with Karwa on December 6, 2020. (Newspaper, 2020)

Falcon Ride notably signed a deal in March 2021 with TRYKE, a Malaysian transportation company which specializes in ride-sharing products. (Gulf Times, 2021) This partnership allowed them to expand their reach to the Southeast Asian market. "We strongly believe that micro-mobility can help shift transportation habits in the region while creating value for investors, communities and cities alike" (Tim Wong, TRYKE founder). This expansion to Malaysia also allowed Falcon Ride to roll out their newly developed e-bicycles.

On October 20, 2021, Ooredoo announced their sponsorship deal which would sponsor Falcon's e-bicycle initiative for its launch in Qatar. In exchange, Falcon's

e-bicycles, which are powered by clean energy, would sport Ooredoo's distinct red logo. (Qatar Tribune, 2021)

Core Values

Falcon Ride has a set of values and ideals that they hold to a standard, and use as a metric to uphold their company. The company attempts to represent “reliability: in transparency and accountability, community: to deliver the best customer experience, flexibility: to continue to develop our technology to better serve our customer needs, trustworthiness: deliver a safe and sustainable experience”(FalconRide, n.d.)

Mission Statement

“Our mission is to drive people to think out of the box. To inspire greener and healthier communities by connecting people using sustainable solutions. To develop first and last mile solutions by giving new eco-friendly ideas and reducing traffic in short distance travel.”(Falcon, About Us, 2022)

Falcon Ride is partnered with international operators of fleet-design, docking stations, and telecom companies such as Mowasalat(Karwa), Swiftmile, TRYKE and Ooredoo. The scooters were made available in The Pearl and metro stations in West Bay, Doha Exhibition and Conference Center, Al Qassar, Katara and Legtaifiya. They have since expanded the availability of their scooters to Education City and the premises of various malls.

Falcon Ride believes in the progress and innovation of safe and sustainable energy technologies. In addition to that, Falcon actively and heavily invests in their R&D department, which primarily focuses on renewable energy. Falcon's active projects include having their charging docks being primarily solar powered, the repair and storage facility that incorporates an AI-driven control center, which is also entirely solar powered.

Financials

Across their almost 2 years of operation, Falcon Ride WLL hired 70 total employees across all of its locations and generates an annual \$8.09 million in sales (Dun and Bradstreet, 2022) (Crunchbase, 2022)

Falcon Closed their first and last funding seed round March 1st of 2020, from self-funding. However, in their Education City integration, due to the change of environment, altered nature of usage, and stricter perimeter, Education City and Qatar Foundation provide support to falcon similarly to all other institutions.

Target Audience and Consumer Analysis

There are many reasons why Falcon scooters have become such a success – one reason would be because of how they target their audience. Since its beginning, Falcon scooters have increasingly expanded their target audiences. Their target audience is very diverse, and it includes anyone who prefers not to use a car. One of the major occasions that the Falcon usage increases exponentially is when there's a 'car free day' at EC, which usually falls on Thursdays as people are banned from driving in Education City and hence resort to the use of the Education City Trams and the Falcon scooters. On any other days, the Falcon scooters fall as an alternative to private cars and the Trams.

Selecting the right audience is one of the most important marketing techniques for any company. It enables the identification of the most valuable clients who are most likely to be interested in the product or service being offered or given. Not only do you need to locate the right target audience, but you also need to communicate with them effectively in order to obtain the best outcomes. Falcon Scooter's approach is to focus on the demographic where the ads are specifically created for people who would have a want or need for their service. Although the company rarely uses ads to reach and expand to its target audience, however "the company doesn't position itself to one particular demographic. Rather, it utilizes its ability to be used by any audience within any demography as the main form of competitive advantage.

Falcon Ride operations in Education City primarily target University students. Education City is a 12 square kilometer complex housing multiple educational and research institutes.

Falcon ride translates its public sector service of work commuters, to university campus commuters. It's integrated into the premises of Education City to replace existing student transportation methods of the shuttle bus, tram, and Uber taxi services. Students demand transportation from and in between their student housing, university campus, other campuses, research institutions, recreational facilities, student center complex, and more. Falcon implements strategic areas of parking to cater towards their international student customers, for example, a parking zone closely outside student housing, and university campus entrances.

Also the service caters for visitors wanting easier mobility within Education City premises, any visitor wishing transport from and between recreational facilities (Awsaj recreation, Qatar Foundation Recreation Center), Student Center, Qatar National Library, Education City Mosque.

The customers of Education City, are a very concentrated target audience in the sense of their potential of becoming loyal customers to falcon. The familiarity with the brand in education city translates to resident customers commuting in the city of Doha, and University students dealing with falcons partnership software program (FalconRide, n.d.), this service of Falcon Company targets entrepreneurs and existing tech businesses in the. Their business management software offers security, tech support, and custom development to manufacturers.

Competitive Analysis

Direct and Indirect Competitors

- Education City Tram
- Education City Shuttle
- Uber

Education City Tram

The Education City tram was opened in 2019. It was built with the purpose of supporting Qatar's sustainability goals and it allows for QF to become a more environmentally-friendly, accessible, and interconnected environment. It also provides a travel option that will help reduce the need for vehicles and emissions inside the Education City. It has a total of 24 stations, and it connects QF's universities, schools, centers and facilities. It's an electrically powered tram system that uses a groundbreaking form of battery charging technology (Modular on board energy storage unit). It connects the entire Academic Loop of Education City. Each tram comes with air conditioning and 64 seats, including those available for people with disabilities. The tram will also play a crucial role during the FIFA World Cup 2022 as it will aid football fans in their transportation throughout Education City and towards the Education City Stadium (Qatar Foundation, 2019).

Education City Shuttle

The shuttle service is one of the main forms of transportation for students within Education City. It was the primary transportation service that was available to residents up until the tram service was made available. The shuttle provided a great travel option for those who did not have other vehicles to use to get around the Education City area. It was also a free option which was convenient to the majority of the students that inhabit the area. The shuttle has designated routes that provide the most convenient access to main points within the area. It also operates at specific times running every 15 minutes from 06:15 hrs until 22:00 hrs and on-call basis for later times. The shuttle is advantageous as it provides cost efficiency and time-efficient and many prefer it over other forms of transportation. However, there have also been several complaints about the shuttle service as well. Some users found that the shuttles would not come at specific times and especially so when it was on-call service. There were also issues with some of the route changes made which put users at an inconvenience. Additionally, since the introduction of the tram and the wider availability of the scooters, there has been a decline in the use of the shuttle service.

Uber

In January 2014, Doha introduced a new mode of transportation and welcomed Uber on its roads (“Uber Doha Signs,” 2022). Uber Technologies, Inc. is a mobility service provider based in San Francisco with operations in approximately 72 countries and 10,500 cities (“United States Securities,” 2021). What consumers value the most in Uber is its safety because the app provides full transparency of the price, pick-up and drop-off locations, arrival time, and driving rating. Along with that, they also get to choose whether they want the basic UberX, Uber Comfort, UberXL, or UberX by the hour. The minimum fare in Doha accounts for 8 riyals, which also happens to be the average price within Education City.

Comparing Competitors

When looking into Education City alone, Falcon’s main competitors would be the shuttle, the tram and the uber/careem. All of these are methods of transportation that people in EC tend to use to move around the area. The tram has the same goal as Falcon which is to create a more sustainable way of transportation. On the other hand, Uber and the shuttle share with Falcon the precision of location start and drop off, which is something that the tram lacks since you can only use the tram from certain stations and most of the times you will have to also walk to reach your desired destination.

Falcon has a competitive advantage over the other modes of transportation in the area because of its emotional benefits since it’s a product whose main use is not only for transportation but also for fun and enjoyment (T. Kazim, personal interview, April 1, 2022). It allows the consumer to experience pleasure. As a functional benefit, this mode of transportation can be perceived as more convenient in certain situations since it can be used at any time. Additionally, certain routes will be completed faster using the Falcon scooter over any of its other competitors. As a contrast, the tram and shuttle comes with set hours it can be used, and the uber tends to take some time to pick its users up when it is first ordered.

Nonetheless, the level of involvement people may have when it comes to choosing Falcon can be threatened by the fact that users need to pay in order to use this product. On the other hand, the tram and shuttle are free (C. An, personal Interview,

April 1, 2022). This can negatively affect their student's target market since this is a segment that tends to go for the cheaper option. To counteract this issue, Falcon releases promotions and sales where the user can have rides for cheaper, or sometimes even use the product during a whole day for free as a differentiation strategy to set itself apart from its competitors (FalconRide, n.d.). This is used specifically to target the variety seekers target market.

Competitive Positioning

One of the promotional communication strategies employed by Falcon is its collaboration with the largest corporate institutions such as Ooredoo, Qatar Foundation, Karwa, UDC, and GWC Logistics. "Our strategy for Qatar is B2B; we work closely with government-related entities, corporates, and private companies to provide them with micro-mobility solutions. Internationally, we look at business collaboration with B2C strategy," explains Falcon (QT-Online, 2022). The most prominent advantage of such collaborations is certainly the fact that in Education City sponsored by Qatar Foundation, for example, Falcon happens to be the only scooter service available.

According to some of the students in Education City, their familiarity with Falcon influences their choice of scooter not only within Education City but outside as well (Y. Taki, personal interview, April 2, 2022). Relying on internal search solely confined to Falcon allows the customer to jump over the stage of evaluation of other alternatives and make the decision right on the spot, ultimately developing a habitual approach toward renting a scooter. Such a deep understanding of customer behavior definitely has a role to play in placing Falcon to be the most viable and the only option in the scooter market for their target segment – adolescents in the 18-25 age group.

In order to differentiate the company from its other competitors in Education City, Falcon strives to reposition itself by placing emphasis on its other values. Not only does it promote itself as "fast and easy" – which assuredly attracts the students who frequently travel for short distances in Education City, but also as "the healthiest way to travel" to people who are to choose between a scooter and another vehicle such as Uber, tram, or shuttle (Falcon Ride, 2022). This way Falcon has expanded its services to people who share healthy lifestyle goals all over Education City.

On top of that, Falcon scooters are the only vehicle available 24/7 at every corner of Education City. Scooters usually get recharged throughout the day, once the Falcon team notices the battery is low; thus, they can also be used at night time. Besides, it is easy to find a parking space for a scooter – they can literally be left anywhere within Education City. “I wouldn’t need to walk another two hundred meters to reach my school as I would have to do when I use the tram,” comments one of the students at Northwestern University in Qatar (T. Kazim, personal interview, April 1, 2022). Their portability makes them the perfect option for short distances.

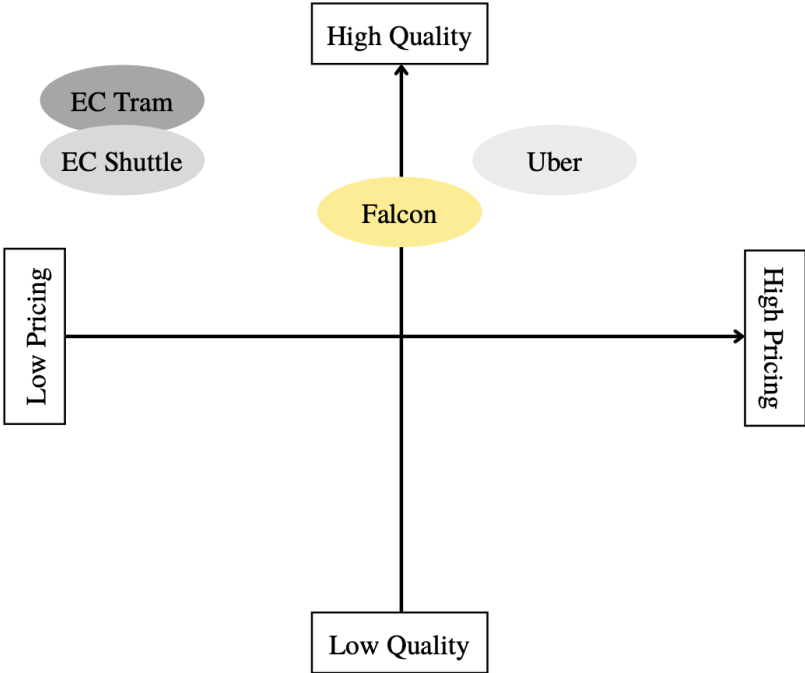
However, it is fair to say that there is still much progress to be made by Falcon to overtake its competitors in terms of convenience. Some of the students in Education City admit that they often choose not to ride Falcon mainly due to two reasons. First, Falcon scooters do not have any air conditioning system which is a must during hot seasons in Doha (Y. Taki, personal interview, April 2, 2022). Second, it is quite troublesome to carry a laptop and other school appliances while trying to keep the scooter in balance (Y. Taki, personal interview, April 2, 2022). Perhaps, a small basket attached to the scooter might be a solution to the latter one.

Competitive Grid

Variable	Competitors			
	Falcon	EC Tram	EC Shuttle	Uber
Pricing	7/10	10/10 (Free)	10/10 (Free)	5/10
Product Quality	8/10	10/10	9/10	9/10
Availability	10/10	8/10	5/10	9/10
Advertising	7/10	8/10	3/10	5/10
Convenience	6/10	8/10	10/10	10/10

Perceptual Map

Perceptual maps are charts used to visualize and articulate brand differentiation based on how target customers perceive the given product or service. They serve as a tool to analyze the industry and implement changes within the product functionality to make its distinct features more compelling, relevant, and efficient. Below is the perceptual map of Falcon scooters and its main competitors in Education City in terms of the product quality and pricing.



Market Analysis

Competitors: EC Tram – EC Shuttle – Uber

Trends in the Industry

As one of the four pillars of Qatar's National Vision 2030, Qatar has emphasized the need to accelerate efforts toward environmental sustainability and create an “environmentally aware population” in the state (Lodhi, 2022). With Education City as

one of Qatar's largest initiatives, the trend for eco-friendly transportation has emerged across the campus and its sister universities. On February 8 of 2022, Qatar Foundation announced its first car-free day when every individual making their way to Education City has to walk or use one of the alternate modes of transport such as e-scooters and the trams ("QF's Education City," 2022). It was later confirmed that car-free days in Education City will be a recurring event, meaning the demand for eco-friendly transportation will only grow in the future.

Past and Present Communications

As part of their communication and advertising campaigns, it is evident that Falcon puts heavy emphasis on the use of multiple social media channels as their chosen platforms. Falcon communicates its brand on social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Its use of these different platforms shows the attempt to engage with a wide range of audiences of multiple age groups, nationalities, etc. A breakdown of the types of communication between the different platforms, however, will give us different results. For example, Instagram seems to be a platform where Falcon has more engagement and interactivity. There are posts of images and videos showing the Falcon scooters and the electric bike (Figure 1). The promotional images show what seem to be everyday people. The individuals pictured in the posts are of different ages, genders, and races which represents the company's mission in creating a brand that is for all types of users. The posts also contain different locations showing the versatility of the vehicles and the ability to use them on the go whenever needed. There is also a lot of user engagement seen on Falcon's Instagram platform where people may tag the page in their daily pursuits using the Falcon vehicles. The engagement seen on Falcon's Instagram page shows that the company is using Instagram as a significant communication channel in comparison to the other channels available.

Similarly, the company also communicates its products on Twitter and Facebook, but with engagement to a lesser extent than that of Instagram. Additionally, it is common to see billboards and other physical public advertisements of the Falcon vehicles placed around the city.



Insights and Recommendations

The company's use of social media as a primary source of communication, however, may limit its potential reach. The Media Use in the Middle East Survey shows that for residents between the ages of 18-24, TV is the most used platform for accessing news and information (Everrette et al., 2019). For the ages 18-34, the survey shows that 45% of the users prefer to use social media as their chosen platform for access to news and information while TV stands at 44% (Everrette et al., 2019). The data shows the importance of TV as a point of access for information and so Falcon would benefit from producing more advertisements to be placed on this platform. Using a media mix of both TV and social media for promotional services would provide better reach. Additionally, the same survey shows that among the respondents, 65% choose Facebook as their preferred platform while 21% choose Instagram and 9% choose Twitter (Everrette et al., 2019). The high usage of Facebook shows that the company's advertisements and engagement with users should be more focused on this platform. Falcon would greatly benefit from using Facebook as its primary mode of engagement and social media platform for promoting its products.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is a scalable, efficient, sustainable, smart and micro-mobility business. ● Partnered with leading international players in manufacturing, fleet design, IoT hardware and software as well as docking stations. ● Eco-friendly mode of transportation. ● Possibility of building partnerships and expanding their business. ● Have a variety of products such as e-scooters, e-mopeds, autonomous three-wheel scooters and other vehicles that can be made available in EC too. ● Tend to look for local partners when starting in a new location to ensure they understand the market better. ● Work closely with their clients and value their opinions. <p>(FalconRide, n.d.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have a lot of international and national competition which leads them to have higher expenses because of the increase in marketing and the promotional cost is likely to hurt the company. ● Because of their B2B business strategy, they have a limited market and a much smaller buying pool. It also involves a complicated set of factors that involve having many stakeholders and decision makers with total decision times that can stretch out for months. ● Not the cheapest transportation option available. <p>(FalconRide, n.d.)</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expanding into new markets and new locations ● Their goals is to become a scalable, efficient, smart, sustainable micro-mobility business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Because of their location and target locations which is the Middle East, they are prone to have many regulations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● With the constant environmental issues that the world is going through, people are already opting to choose environmentally friendly options for transportation which will allow for falcons scooters to keep increasing in popularity.● A lot of growth is available in the technological area. Opportunities for technological advancements.● More products available that can be implemented in EC. <p>(FalconRide, n.d.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Competition due to the growing popularity and growing market of electric battery vehicles.● Safety issues since people could be afraid to use them in roads because of the instability of these vehicles. <p>(International Trade Administration, 2021)</p>
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