INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESES

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSIONS

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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APPENDIX/ANNEXURE

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A STUDY ON CUSTOMERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS PURCHASE OF MIDDLE SEGMENT CARS IN VELLORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

Car industry is one of the biggest industries in India. Many of the manufacturers are introducing various models in the middle segment area. Middle segment cars are classified as the cars which cost between Rs. 4,00,000 to Rs. 9,00,000. Therefore, this paper is to study the customer attitude towards the purchase of this segment of cars. This study is also going to reveal the various motivating as well as influencing factors for the customers purchasing decision.

KEYWORDS
middle segment, customers, factors influencing purchase, attitude.

INTRODUCTION

The first motor car on the streets of India was seen in 1898. Mumbai had its first taxicabs in the early 1990. Then for the next fifty years, cars were imported to satisfy domestic demand. Between 1910 and 20's the automobile industry made a humble beginning by setting up assembly plants in Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. The import/assembly of vehicles grew consistently after the 1920's, crossing 30,000 marks in 1930. Despite this, head start, the industry has never quite matched upto the performance of its counterparts in the other parts of the world. The all pervasive atmosphere created by the Government's license is primarily responsible for this situation. The various layers of Acts sheltered the industry from external competition and smothered the development of the Indian Automobile Industry. Moreover, the industry was considered low priority as cars were considered to be an "Unaffordable Luxury".

With the liberalization of the Indian economy, the passenger car industry was finally deregulated in 1993 and many companies, both Indian and foreign, announced their planned to enter the market such as Maruti, Tata, Hyundai. In the last few years companies like Honda, Ford, Skoda, Nissan, Mahindra, Volkswagen, Chevrolet have launched their middle segment cars in India. Nonetheless, the time has changed the significantly the days of customer chasing the dealer to purchase poor quality cars backed by inefficient service are history. Today, the customer dictates the term.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Saikat Banerjee in his "Study on Consumer Buying Behaviour during Purchase of a Second Car", has pointed out that in India, over the last couple of years, the domestic passenger car has witnessed a phenomenal growth. High degree of competition compels players in this industry to understand specific market needs while still providing value, in order to ensure success.

So, for marketers, it is important to understand the variables that influence consumer's decision to purchase a second car. In this backdrop, an attempt has been made to uncover influencing factors behind purchase decision of a second car. From this research, it has been found that the segment who is buying a second car has different priority factors that guide its buying decision. It reveals that there are seven major factors that influence the buying behaviour of a second time car buyer. They are product efficacy, image equalizer, experienced maven, social appreciation, favourite fondness, family first and inclination towards marketing.

Madikonda Kishore Babu and Dr. D. Raghunatha Reddy in their study on "Passenger Car Industry in India", views that ever since India opened its arms to globalization, a host of automobile manufacturers have bee flocking on to Indian roads. A sea change occurred a little over a decade and now, the Indian car industry has more than 69 models to talk about. This gives the customer a vast choice. With the shift towards upper segment, the small car segment will shrink in the future. A large component of passenger car's coat is taxes such as excise duties, central and state sales taxes pushing up the ex-factory price of a car by around 60%. Therefore, demand for cars will grow in the country, if these tax levels are reduced. The exports look good and the trend shows that this will continue in future. Since each customer wants to be unique, mass customization will help the industry in the long run. The industry should convert the opportunities into strengths, reduce weaknesses and seriously consider threats and convert them into opportunities. Further, as the industry is affected by external environmental factors, the industry should atleast be able to predict these uncertainties so that it is not very badly affected.

B S Hundal and Saurabh Grover in their Perceptual Study on "Consumer Behavior Towards Tata Nano", says that the results of factor analysis revealed that motivational variables like enhancement of social status, low maintenance cost, etc., motivates a potential customer to purchase this car. Some persons were disappointed with the working of this car as they considered it risky. They think that Tata Nano is more accident prone as it's a very small car and moreover there were some reports regarding bursting of its rear engine in case of rear collision. There is a performance problem as its pick up is very low and engine is less powerful. It is not suitable to drive on highways as its highest speed limit is only 80 km/h adding to dissatisfaction in customers. It is a less expensive car when compared to other cars. Therefore even low income group can buy it leading to high congestion on roads and adding to parking problems. Promotional strategies also tempted potential customers to buy it. Its low price complemented with the Tata's market penetration strategy as with this low price figure, it can even reach rural areas and capture this untapped market. Some of the customers of Tata Nano were dissatisfied with the car due to bad after-sales service and moreover its noisy engine disturbs the customer. At last, it is recommended that Tata Nano is really a people's car but company needs to work more on its features and safety and enhance its production so that people don't have to wait to purchase it.

OBJECTIVES
1. To study the profile of customers owing middle segment cars.
2. To study the customers attitude and influential factors towards the purchase of middle segment cars.

RESEARCH DESIGN
This study is intended to analyse the customer's attitude towards the purchase of middle segment cars. Hence, this study is descriptive in nature. The data is collected through the well structured closed ended questionnaire. This study consists of sample size of 25 customers in the Vellore city. Primary data is collected

to analyse the motivating and influential factors of the customers. Secondary data are used for review of literature. Statistical tools used in this study are Chi-square and ANOVA.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data was collected through a well-structured questionnaire is analyzed and interpretation made is presented. The profile of the customers taken for the study is given in Table 1.

TABLE 1: PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	24	96.0
Female	1	4.0
Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
1	4	16.0
2	17	68.0
3	1	4.0
4	2	8.0
5	1	4.0
Occupation	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Professional	2	8.0
Business	12	48.0
Govt. Service	3	12.0
Pvt. Service	6	24.0
Student	1	4.0
Retired	1	4.0
Family Size	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Less than 3	0	0
3	2	8.0
4	9	36.0
5	10	40.0
6	4	16.0
More than 6	0	0
Annual Income	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Below Rs. 50,000	1	4.0
Rs. 50,001 – 1,00,000	4	16.0
Rs. 1,00,001 – 2,00,000	17	68.0
Rs. 2,00,001 – 3,00,000	3	12.0
Rs. 3,00,001 – 5,00,000	0	0
Above Rs. 5,00,000	0	0

Source: Primary data

It is inferred from Table 1 that majority of the respondents (96 percent) are male. 48 percent belong to business category. 24 percent are employees from private sectors. 40 percent of the respondents belong to family size of 5 members. 36 percent belong to family of 4 members. Majority of the respondents (68 percent) belong to the income group of Rs 1 lakh to 2 Lakh. 16 percent of respondents belong to income of Rs50,000 to Rs.1 lakh.

Chi square test was conducted to test if occupation of the respondents was related to brand of car purchased.

TABLE 2: CROSS TABULATION OF OCCUPATION AND BRAND OF CAR

Occupation	Car Brands					Statistics
	Hyundai	Maruthi	TATA	Ford	Total	
Professional	1	1	0	0	2	Chi square=
Business	0	12	0	0	12	42.361
Government Service	1	1	0	1	3	df= 15
Private	0	6	0	0	6	Sig:0.000
Students	0	1	0	0	1	
Retired	0	0	1	0	1	
Total	2	21	1	1	25	

Source: Computed data

It is inferred from Table 2 that the chi square value was found to be 42.361 with a significance of 0.000. Since the significance level is less than 0.05 it is concluded that occupation of the respondents has significant relationship between the brands of cars purchased.

Many of the decisions made by the customers were taken within the environment of the family and are affected by the desires, attitudes, and values of the other family members. The family can be 'nuclear' or 'extended'. The size of the family also affects the spending and saving patterns of the customers.

TABLE 3: CROSS TABULATION OF SIZE OF THE FAMILY AND BRAND OF CAR

Family size	Car Brands					Statistics
	Hyundai	Maruthi	TATA	Ford		
> 3	0	1	1	0	2	Chi square=
3	0	8	0	1	9	16.720
4	2	8	0	0	10	df=9
5	0	4	0	0	4	Sig:0.053
< 6	2	21	1	1	25	

Source: Computed data

It is inferred from Table 3 that the chi square value was found to be 16.720 with a significance of 0.053. Since the significance level is more than 0.05 it is concluded that family size of the respondents has no significant relationship between the brands of cars purchased.

TABLE 4: INCOME AND MOTIVATING FACTORS

Income	Motivating factors						Statistics
	Prestige	Status Symbol	Low cost	Speed	Engine capacity	Parking facility	
>Rs50000	0	1	0	0	0	1	Chi square=
Rs50001-1,00,000	0	0	3	0	1	4	8.938
Rs 1lakh- 2Laks	1	3	10	1	2	17	df=12
2-3	0	0	3	0	0	3	Sig:0.708
	1	4	16	1	3	25	

Source: Computed data

It is inferred from Table 4 that the chi square value was found to be 8.938 with a significance of 0.708. Since the significance level is more than 0.05 it is concluded that income of the respondents has no significant relationship between the motivation factors for cars purchased.

TABLE 5: CROSS TABULATION BETWEEN INCOME AND PERSONS INFLUENCING PURCHASE DECISION

Income	Persons influencing decision						Statistics
	Family	Friends	Sales Rep	Self	Celebrity	Total	
>Rs50000	0	0	0	1	0	1	Chi square=
Rs50001-1,00,000	4	0	0	0	0	4	17.211
Rs 1lakh- 2Laks	12	2	0	2	1	17	df=12
2-3	2	0	1	0	0	3	Sig:0.142
Total	18	2	1	3	1	25	

Source: Computed data

It is inferred from Table 5 that the chi square value was found to be 17.211 with a significance of 0.142. Since the significance level is more than 0.05 it is concluded that income of the respondents has no significant relationship between the people influencing purchase decision of cars.

In middle segment cars Maruti alto continues to be the largest selling in India. Fiat's Grande Punto, Honda's Jazz, Chevrolet's Beat, Spark and Ford's Figo are the familiar brands. Hyundai's i20, Santro are rivalry for Maruti Alto. The versatility of Tata Motors is reflected in it is ability to identify the market opportunity in every segment and the need of customers which leads to the launch of Nano, Indica and Indigo. Nissan has launched Micra which is narrower than Swift and more spacious than i10. Volkswagen introduced Polo. Skoda launched Fabia in this segment.

The five attributes of the product described were subject to ANOVA analysis to find the relationship with the income of the respondents as factor. The result is given in Table 6.

TABLE 6: ONE WAY ANOVA OF PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES WITH INCOME AS FACTOR

Product		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Brand	Between Groups	0.301	3	0.1	0.689	0.569
	Within Groups	3.059	21	0.146		
	Total	3.36	24			
Design	Between Groups	0.814	3	0.271	0.637	0.600
	Within Groups	8.946	21	0.426		
	Total	9.76	24			
Repair facility	Between Groups	0.141	3	0.047	0.186	0.905
	Within Groups	5.299	21	0.252		
	Total	5.44	24			
Resale value	Between Groups	0.701	3	0.234	0.926	0.445
	Within Groups	5.299	21	0.252		
	Total	6	24			
Easy availability of spares	Between Groups	0.494	3	0.165	0.498	0.688
	Within Groups	6.946	21	0.331		
	Total	7.44	24			

Source: Computed data

It is inferred from Table 6 that the p value for all the variables are found to be more than the alpha value 0.05. This shows that product attributes such as brand, design, repair facility, resale value and availability of spares are not dependent upon the income of the respondents for purchase decision.

The three attributes of price of the product described were subject to ANOVA analysis to find the relationship with the income of the respondents as factor. The result is given in Table 7.

TABLE 7: ONE WAY ANOVA OF PRICE ATTRIBUTES WITH INCOME AS FACTOR

Price		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Cash discount	Between Groups	1.098	3	0.366	1.114	0.366
	Within Groups	6.902	21	0.329		
	Total	8	24			
Less than competitors	Between Groups	0.408	3	0.136	0.616	0.612
	Within Groups	4.632	21	0.221		
	Total	5.04	24			
Installment	Between Groups	0.508	3	0.169	0.629	0.604
	Within Groups	5.652	21	0.269		
	Total	6.16	24			

Source: Computed data

It is inferred from Table 7 that the p value for all the variables are found to be more than the alpha value 0.05. This shows that price attributes such as cash discount, less than competitors, installments, are not dependent upon the income of the respondents for purchase decision.

Marketing mix is used to describe the combination of four elements- the product, price, place and promotion. One of the elements is place which has sub variables factors of showroom appearance, interior decoration, company price, location and several models.

The three attributes of the place described were subject to ANOVA analysis to find the relationship with the income of the respondents as factor. The result is given in Table 8.

TABLE 8: ONE WAY ANOVA OF PLACE ATTRIBUTES WITH INCOME AS FACTOR

Place		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Dealers show room has company price	Between Groups	1.059	3	0.353	7.875	0.001
	Within Groups	0.941	21	0.045		
	Total	2	24			
Dealers show room located near by	Between Groups	1.303	3	0.434	2.204	0.118
	Within Groups	4.137	21	0.197		
	Total	5.44	24			
Several models are available	Between Groups	0.775	3	0.258	1.088	0.376
	Within Groups	4.985	21	0.237		
	Total	5.76	24			

Source: Computed data

It is inferred from Table 8 that the p value for attribute "Dealers show room has company price" is 0.001 which is found to be less than the alpha value 0.05. Hence this attribute is dependent on the purchase decision with income of the respondents. All the other variables are found to be more than the alpha value 0.05. This shows that place attributes such as location of dealers showroom, and several models available are not dependent upon the income of the respondents for purchase decision.

The four attributes of the promotional described were subject to ANOVA analysis to find the relationship with the income of the respondents as factor. The result is given in Table 9.

TABLE 9: ONE WAY ANOVA OF PROMOTION ATTRIBUTES WITH INCOME AS FACTOR

Opinion		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Celebrity	Between Groups	0.911	3	0.304	0.605	0.619
	Within Groups	10.529	21	0.501		
	Total	11.44	24			
Delivery	Between Groups	0.529	3	0.176	0.677	0.576
	Within Groups	5.471	21	0.261		
	Total	6	24			
After sales	Between Groups	0.494	3	0.165	0.699	
	Within Groups	4.946	21	0.236		0.563
	Total	5.44	24			
Service station	Between Groups	0.209	3	0.07	0.601	0.622
	Within Groups	2.431	21	0.116		
	Total	2.64	24			

Source: Computed data

It is inferred from Table 9 that the p value for all the variables are found to be more than the alpha value 0.05. This shows that promotion attributes such as celebrity, delivery, after sales and service station are not dependent upon the income of the respondents for purchase decision.

FINDINGS

1. 29.6% of the respondents prefer buying the middle segment car for the reason of old car damage and another 29.6% of the respondents are buying the car for the reason of new arrival of models.
2. Majority (64%) of the respondents motivating factor for buying the middle segment car is low maintenance cost.
3. Majority of the respondents (72 %) decision to buy a car is influenced by family members.
4. 40% of the respondents are accompanied by their spouse while purchasing the car.
5. 28% of the respondents are searching information through newspaper before making the buying decision.
6. 84% of the respondents are using the brand Maruti in the middle segment car.
7. 60% of the respondents are willing to pay for car is between Rs. 4,00,000 – Rs. 5,00,000.
8. 52% of the respondents prefer a vehicle with an engine capacity of 1000 – 1500 cc.
9. 100% of the respondents are buying the car in dealer's show room.
10. Most of the respondents prefer an easy availability of spare parts and repair facility as an influencing product factor.
11. Most of the respondents are considering the influencing price factor of same quality but lower than the competitors.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals the customer attitude towards the purchase of middle segment cars. Most of them prefer Maruti and TATA in the middle segment cars. Low maintenance cost, repair facility and easy availability of spare parts were said to be the motivating factors of the customers. Apart from this other factors influencing the purchase is affordable price, quality, several models and after sales service. Customers belonging to different occupation and annual income of Rs. 1,00,000 – 2,00,000 prefer purchasing these brands with an engine capacity between 1000 - 1500cc. Major buying decisions are influenced by their family members. Thus this study reveals the above factors as motivating and influencing factors of the customers for the purchase.

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Sd/-

Co-ordinator

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