THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORD OF MOUTH IN AUTOMOBILE MARKETING IN NAIROBI

BY

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UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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A Project Report Submitted to the Chandaria School of Business in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Masters in Business Administration (MBA)

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SUMMER 2018
STUDENT’S DECLARATION
I the undersigned declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, institution or university other than the United States International University in Nairobi for the academic credit.

Signed: __________________________ Date: __________________________
Mbagara Karita (634922)

This project has been presented for examination with my approval as the appointed supervisor.

Signed: __________________________ Date: __________________________
Dr. Scott Bellows

Signed: __________________________ Date: __________________________
Dean, Chandaria School of Business
ABSTRACT

The general objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of word of mouth marketing in the decision to purchase a motor vehicle in Nairobi. The study was guided by the following research objectives: determine the effectiveness of informational influence of the source of information for the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi, determine the effectiveness of similarity between the seeker and source of information for the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi, and determine the effectiveness of expertise of the source of information for the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi.

A causal/explanatory study was carried out on a population consisting of residents of Nairobi that had purchased automobiles any time in the last 5 years as at April 2017. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. A total of 251 valid and complete responses were received providing primary data for the study. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program and presented using tables, and figures to present the research findings.

The study presented the following findings. The effectiveness of informational influence of the source of information for the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi was found to have a positive influence on the decision to purchase an automobile. This proposed that the need to gather information from various sources and internalise it in order to make a decision to purchase an automobile is significant. The effectiveness of similarity between the seeker and source of information for the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi was revealed to have a negative influence on their purchase decision. The effectiveness of expertise of the source of information for the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi was revealed to have a strong positive influence on the decision to purchase an automobile.

The study concludes that informational influence and expertise of the source of information are successful in influencing the purchase decision of automobile buyers and are viable going forward. On the contrary, the similarity between the source and seeker of information has been unsuccessful in positively influencing purchase decisions.

The study recommended that marketers utilise informational influence and source expertise in developing their marketing plans in order to drive the sales of automobiles. As automobiles become more complex, these two factors will gain more prominence. This will
be due to the creation of a large knowledge gap that will have most buyers of automobiles rely on information received as reality (informational influence) and look to experts in the automobile space to recommend their purchase decisions. The study also proposes the carrying out of further study on all three factors to determine: what kind of information affects informational influence, whether negative effects of similarity emanate from demographic or perceptual similarity, and to carry out further study on why expertise as a factor in decision-making is stronger than the other factors.
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Chapter One

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

In today’s market, where consumers are not only spoilt for choice, but are also bombarded with an overload of information, the need for marketers to be effective in getting their message out is more important than ever. The advent of the internet and its proliferation have been key drivers for the wide availability of information. Further, today’s media is affecting the way people communicate, make decisions, socialise, learn, entertain themselves, interact with each other or even do their shopping (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). While consuming media, it is very possible that most people zone out during the advertising marathons on TV or radio. However, chances are that you’ll remember—and believe—what your friends tell you (Barber & Wallace, 2009). Marketers have long held the belief that birds of a feather flock together. Consumers are more susceptible to influence from sources that are similar to themselves and that, to an extent, this influence may be greater than expert sources. This is because of the belief that they are more likely to have similar needs and wants and therefore are likely to empathise with the consumer who seeks information.

The automobile industry like any other industry today is beset with complexity. Vehicles are no longer four wheels, a steering while, a set of pedals, and a couple of seats. For example, today’s average Toyota is made up of 30,000 parts (Toyota, 2018). In addition to the complexity of the product, the choice of which car to buy is as complicated as the engines that run them today. To make that decision, consumers are increasingly using the internet with greater regularity to gain information about vehicle purchases (Smith, 2009). This points to more savvy consumers and in turn poses significant challenges for automobile marketers. Given that a vehicle purchase is likely to be more involving, research is expected. However, while consumers do take research into consideration, it is an arduous task and so they often revert to heritage brands due to the association of depth, authenticity, and credibility to the brand’s perceived value. This was even more pronounced during tough economic times many people went through post the global financial crisis of 2008 (Wiedmann, Hennings, Schmidt, & Wuestefeld, 2011).

According to a study by the research firm Nielsen titled “Secure Tomorrow’s Car Buyers Today”, automotive marketers need to consider four emerging trends in their growth strategy. These are: First, creating a fluid approach for marketing new and used cars; second, focus more
on the emotional connection as the why to buy; third, investing in online assets for maximum impact; and fourth, Drive impact on TV by aligning creative and media approaches (Nielsen, 2014). The third and fourth trends are interesting as they touch on a potential link between WOMM and the automobile industry through online marketing, a trend that has changed the landscape of marketing as we know it. Automobile marketers have been linked to demonstrating likeability to enhance their credibility. This is seen on YouTube, where ads may sometimes be “skipped” if they are lengthy, and viewers only need to watch 5-14 seconds of it in order to continue on to their desired video. Automakers have done an incredible job in engaging their audience in those first few seconds, leading to more ‘click-throughs’ and full viewing of the video (Olenksi, 2014). With the introduction of the internet as a means of communication and the many tools it offers to marketers, the effectiveness of WOMM is not in question.

According to a 2018 report by Deloitte, Kenya is estimated to have about 1,300,000 cars on its roads. 80% of these vehicles are used imports. Of the 20% new vehicles, 86% of them are commercial vehicles (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, 2018). The same report identifies the motorisation rate of the country as 28 vehicles per 1,000 people. The import of vehicles in Kenya has been on the rise and this has attracted several car makers to set up shop in the country. These include, Peugeot and Volkswagen, and there are confirmed plans that Volvo intends to set up shop before the end of 2018 (The Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis, 2017). It should also be noted that the Kenyan government has provided incentives for these manufacturers to set up shop. For example, CKD kits are waived from the 25% import duty and 20% excise levy that applies to fully built imports, meaning that locally manufactured cars have a strong price advantage (Oxford Business Group, 2017). In addition to this, the growth in high net worth individuals in the country has also attracted luxury brands such as Porsche, Jaguar and Bentley to set ups sales shops in Kenya (Nairobi Business Monthly, 2017).

1.2 Statement of the problem

With the growing complexity of WOMM, one of its emerging issues today is the ability of the marketer to measure its return. To demonstrate this, the following illustration was given. In the 1995 Wayne Wang film “Smoke”, William Hurt’s writer character tells a possibly apocryphal story about how legendary English explorer Sir Walter Raleigh once made a bet with Queen Elizabeth I that he could weigh the smoke from a cigar. First, Sir Walter placed an unsmoked cigar on a scale and weighed it. Then he lit up and smoked the cigar, carefully tapping the ashes
into the scale pan. When he was finished, he placed the butt into the pan along with the ashes and weighed what was there. Then he subtracted that number from the original weight of the unsmoked cigar. The difference was the weight of the smoke. Elizabethan bar bets aside, weighing smoke is problematic, if not an exercise in futility – and viral marketers face a similar problem in measuring the return on investment (ROI) of WOM (Ferguson, 2008). Over the years the ability to track and monitor online behaviour has helped marketers to begin to understand WOMM, however a lot still remains unknown about why it is such an effective method (Strategic Direction, 2015).

This gap is further exposed where little information exists about marketing of automobiles, in Africa and more specifically Kenya. While a lot of the studies on the auto industry have been carried out in more advanced economies in Europe, North America and Asia, few have been done in Africa. This is unsurprising as Africa is a small automotive market. The entire continent only has a motorisation rate of 44 cars per 1,000 people which is well below the global average of 180 cars per 1,000 people (Deloitte, 2016). The same report from Deloitte however foresees significant growth in the Africa automobile market. There are knowledge gaps that still exist in the automobile marketing sphere. In a study titled ‘The use of internet marketing by firms in the motor industry in Kenya’ the author recommends that studies should be made on the second hand car market in Kenya (Ntara, 2007). There exists a significant knowledge gap as the second hand market consists of about 80% of all vehicle purchases in Kenya (Deloitte, 2016). Yet another study recommends that a marketing study be done on retail consumers in Kenya to understand the influence of marketing strategies on the popularity of the two most popular car brands in Kenya, Toyota and Nissan (Bahati, 2009). Other studies have focused on the characteristics and behaviour of consumers, but not necessarily looked at the effectiveness of different promotional methods in influencing purchase decisions (Nitin, 2015). Given various studies on marketing in the automobile industry there appears to be a definite knowledge gap as regards marketing in the automobile industry in Kenya. This study will aim to go some way in filling this gap.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of word of mouth marketing in the decision to purchase a motor vehicle in Nairobi.

1.4 Specific objectives

The three specific objectives of the study are as follows:
1. Determine the effectiveness of informational influence of the source of information for the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi.
2. Determine the effectiveness of similarity between the seeker and source of information for the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi.
3. Determine the effectiveness of expertise of the source of information for the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi.

1.5 Significance of the study
This study will offer value to academia, the marketing fraternity as well as automobile marketers. This study will add to the existing body of academic knowledge and offer academicians a basis for further study. The study will present further knowledge to the marketing fraternity to enable them to tailor its findings to develop better marketing strategies. This study will also inform automobile marketers on how they can use word-of-mouth marketing more effectively to grow their businesses.

1.6 Scope of the study
The study will be limited to current and former owners of motor vehicles in Nairobi. The limitation of the scope to Nairobi is intentional. The city comprises the most significant automobile market in Kenya. The study will be carried out between January and April 2017.

1.7 Definition of terms
1. Automobiles
   A wheeled, self-powered motor vehicle used for transportation (for the purpose of this study this is restricted to one purchased for personal use). (Fowler & Fowler, 1976)
2. Consumer
   A person who purchases a product for personal use. (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2018)
3. Electronic Word of Mouth
   Any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet (Hennig-Thurau, Qwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004).
4. Marketer
   One that deals in a market; specifically : one that promotes or sells a product or service. (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2018)
5. Word of mouth
Orally communicated or generated from or reliant on oral publicity (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2018).

6. Word of mouth marketing
   A marketing method that relies on casual social interactions to promote a product.
   (Marketing Terms.com, 2018)

1.8 Chapter summary
This chapter provides a brief background of the study. In addition, the chapter provides the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, with specific objectives. The chapter provides the significance and scope of the study before concluding with the definition of some key terms.
Chapter Two

2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The recollection of what we hear from individuals is what is commonly referred to as Word-of-Mouth (WOM). Within the spheres of marketing, Word-of-Mouth-Marketing (WOMM) is the intentional influencing of consumer-to-consumer communications by professional marketing techniques (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). One of the earliest authors on WOMM, George Silverman, recognised its existence before it was named. In his first publication, he predicted the birth of WOMM industry. Over the course of 40 years he carried out over 8000 focus groups sessions, teleconferences and expert sessions to accumulate the early knowledge on the subject (Silverman, 2011). In recent years, promotional methods have been forced to evolve in order to meet the complexity of the market place today. This complexity has made the work of marketers harder in choosing the right promotional mix to select in order to carry out an effective marketing campaign that correctly communicates to consumers and gets the desired action out of them.

Much has been written about WOMM spanning back several decades. This literature review section seeks to look into some of these studies and help bring out some of the concepts that have been discussed over the years on this subject. The section is broken down into the specific objectives of the study with an aim of further exploiting the purpose of this study which is to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of the use of word of mouth marketing as a promotional method in automobile marketing in Nairobi. Despite being in existence for many years as one of the oldest marketing promotional methods, WOMM marketing still remains a phenomenon to many marketers. This is likely due to the ways in which WOMM has evolved over the years. The relatively recent addition of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp into the marketing space has served to make the marketing world much more dynamic. For a long time it has been believed that small businesses had an advantage over larger ones when it came to WOMM (Grauer, 2014). This is belief was so because of their perceived ability to be fast and agile in their marketing efforts as well as the closeness of everyone in the organisation to the final customer. However, technology and data analytics has changed that and tilted the playing field to again favour the larger, richer, organisations. Technology has helped companies to collect information that helps them to better understand their market so that they can now place specific messages that target key
people in the audience pool that then carry the message for them across a local and global audience. Messages that would have taken days if not weeks to travel to their intended audiences now take minutes to travel across the entire world (Ferguson, 2008). As WOMM has evolved over the years, the ways in which marketers have applied it has evolved as well. Over the years this has also led to the emergence of models of WOM. Three of these stand out and shall be discussed as part of this chapter. These models are; the organic inter-consumer influence model, the linear marketer influence model and the network co-production model (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010).

The emergence of buzz marketing, a trend in Word-of-Mouth (WOM), in the mid 2000’s is evidence of this growing complexity. During this period companies were created to enlist ‘ordinary people’ to talk about specific brands (Percy, 2008). The appeal of WOM as a promotional method is so because it combines the prospect of overcoming consumer resistance with significantly lower costs and fast delivery especially through technology, such as the Internet (Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009). Further research has demonstrated that a source’s credibility is crucial to a message’s acceptance, with the most often identified source of credibility being expertise, trustworthiness and likeability (Kotler & Keller, 2016). WOM benefits from these three sources of credibility making it an especially powerful promotional method for marketers.

Despite the increased use of research by would-be-buyers of vehicles, the case for WOMM in the automobile industry is however still alive. In a study titled “Branding the business marketing offer: exploring brand attributes in business markets” the authors looked at key attributes that marketers could use to build strong brand identity. It was found that one of the key components to the business-marketing offer was advice (Beverland & Yakimova, 2007). “Advice helps decrease customer uncertainties, and may identify new opportunities, the real source of a customer’s problem, or new ways of doing things” (p. 397).

2.2 The effectiveness of informational influence

Deutsch & Gerard, (1955) defined informational social influence as an influence to accept information obtained from another as evidence about reality. Their study found that the more uncertain the individual is about the correctness of his judgment, the more likely he is to be susceptible to both normative and informational social influences in making his judgment. This was also supported by Cohen & Golden, (1972). They posited that the lack information, an ambiguous situation, or premature demands for action or decision lead the person to substitute
seemingly competent information from others for his own search for direct evidence, therefore differing from normative social influence, which brings about conformity. In their study, Cohen & Golden, (1972) requested subject groups to carry out evaluations to predict the likely success of a new coffee product recently introduced in the area. It proposed that, consumers might tend to rely on specific information aggregation schemes such as a modal evaluation or some other simplifying rule of thumb in dealing with the results of diversity in product ratings. The results demonstrated that informational social influence was operative in the experiment. This was further supported by the strong correlation obtained between coffee evaluation and the degree to which subjects believed prior evaluators of the coffee evaluated it accurately. The authors proposed that apparently, people in product evaluation situations use the ratings of others as evidence about the true nature of the product. They view the others as mediators of fact. In addition, the uniformity, or consistency, of the information did not significantly affect subjects' evaluations of coffee.

Pincus & Waters, (1977) carried out a similar experiment to Cohen & Golden (1972) where eight groups of 15 college females each rated the quality of one paper plate while exposed to simulated quality evaluations of other raters. The results of the study, using a different product line, were consistent with those of Cohen & Golden (1972) in providing support for the hypothesis that informational social influence in the form of others' evaluations does operate in judgments of product quality. Later, Bearden & Etzel (1982) came up with an interesting finding on informational influence. They found that brand decisions for public necessities involved less informational influences than private luxuries. This may be attributable to the fact that because necessity ownership is so common, less information seeking is necessary. In an examination of how others' opinions can influence a consumer's evaluation of a product Wooten & Reed (1998) carried out experiments that found that consumers who accept an informational social influence do so by anchoring on initially considered information and adjusting to account for additional inputs. When consumers evaluate a product online, they are expected to weight others' feedback about the product more heavily when the feedback is given before they have had an opportunity to experience the product than they would when the feedback occurs after product. According to Kropp, Lavack, & Silvera (2005) informational influence affected consumers opinion seeking while engaging in eWOM via social network sites. It was found that if consumers have little experience with a product, they often ask and consult friends to help choose the best alternative available from a product class before purchasing a product. They would feel more comfortable choosing products after receiving
fruitful opinions from their social network sites contacts. This is consistent with a more recent study by Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn (2008) that found that information usefulness (its relevance, comprehensiveness, accuracy, timeliness and the credibility of the source) had a strong and significant impact on consumer decision to adopt information within online communities. Relevance and Comprehensiveness exhibited significant impacts on perceived Information usefulness among other antecedents.

2.2.1 The effectiveness of informational influence effect on purchase decisions

The Merriam Webster Learner’s online dictionary defines influence as the power to change or affect someone or something: the power to cause changes without directly forcing them to happen (Merriam-Webster, 2016). The presence of influencers in any purchase process is always a given. Influencers play several significant roles in during the purchase process. These include the creation of the need, identification and selection of choices, or even financing purchases among others. This happens with both individuals and organisations (Crosby, Evans, & Cowles, 1990). From a Marketing context Phil Barden put it best when he said, “In marketing our goal is to influence purchase decisions” (Barden, 2013). This is because the decision making process for buyers of products has never been a straightforward activity. This is even less so today as a result of the volume of information and choice available to consumers today. However, when it comes to the role of influencers in the purchase decision process, trends have been fairly consistent over the past decades.

Price & Feick (1984) advanced that, informational social influence is not true conformity. It is motivated not solely by the desire to behave in a socially correct or appropriate way, but by the complexity of product evaluation and the problems of resolving informational uncertainties. In addition various authors propose that interpersonal influence is not only an important determinant of an individual’s behaviour, but that it increases in importance with the complexity of the decision or the uncertainty of the choice that the individual has to make (Kropp, Lavack, & Silvera, 2005). For example, the complexity of the decision and the uncertainty of the choice are significantly less when deciding to purchase a box of matches as opposed to where to take children to school; it follows that the importance of influence in the first decision is significantly less than in the latter decision. The latter, more complex, decision would therefore prompt the buyer or consumer to seek more information in order to make a good purchase decision. To quote Bansal & Voyer (2000) “the greater the perceived risk, the more active the search for WOM information.”
However, seeking information is not purely about making a purchase decision, but is a multi-dimensional construct. According to Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel (1989) consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence is defined as the need to identify or enhance one's image with significant others through, among others, the tendency to learn about products and services by observing others and/or seeking information from others. The same study noted that seekers of information exhibited behaviour that included discussing products with friends or relatives, asking advice of others prior to making a purchase, avoiding a purchase because others said it was unsatisfactory, and having asked an "expert" about a contemplated purchase.

It is also interesting to note through the seeking of approval, in as much as people are willing to seek out information in order to make a purchase decision, they are more willing to accept and trust information that is similar to their own. This is supported by a study on the credibility of electronic Word of Mouth (Cheung, Luo, Sia, & Chen, 2009) where it was found that if an on-line recommendation is inconsistent with the receiver's prior beliefs, the receiver will tend to suspect its credibility.

Informational Influence is also supported by the ‘Network coproduction model’ of word of mouth marketing (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). This model has two main characteristics, first is the marketer's use of tactics and metrics to deliberately and directly target and influence the consumer or opinion leader. Second is the acknowledgment that market messages and meanings (information) do not flow uni-directionally but rather, are exchanged among members of the consumer network. In this approach, marketers lead the trail of information by releasing information about their product publicly, even going as far as getting targeted consumer groups sample them. The success of this approach, like the first, is also backed by market research. According to a recent Global Trust in Advertising Report by Nielsen (2015), “Eighty-three percent of online respondents in 60 countries say they trust the recommendations of friends and family.” More significantly, “Owned (brand-managed) online channels are also among the most trusted advertising formats. Trust in advertising on branded websites increased one percentage point to 70% in 2015 as the second-most-trusted format, remaining in second place from 2013.” Owned online channels here refer to channels that belong to the brand owners or marketing organisations. This positive shift in brand trust has allowed organisations to use seeding campaigns to help push their messages to consumers (Koeck & Marshall, 2015). This hybrid gives companies the ability to craft the message about their products and therefore get the message out to consumers. However, this is not without the slight loss in credibility as consumers are aware of the source of the message and therefore its
probable bias towards its strengths. Indeed, in some cases as Koeck & Marshall (2015) point out, the credibility of the intermediary who receives the initial seed message can come into question due to perceived conflicts of interest.

Finally, when considering the strength of the message, rational and emotional WOM message characteristics have important impacts on message acceptance and subsequent behaviour. Sweeney et al (2012) examined found that a message’s cognitive content, richness, and delivery power affect whether a message appears effective, credible, and convincing, for both positive and negative WOM. Specifically, “WOM content and delivery offered by positive WOM givers became more extreme in terms of cognitive content, richness of content, and strength of delivery as the service quality, value and satisfaction that led to the WOM increased. Similarly, WOM content and delivery aspects related to giving negative messages increase as the experience that led to the WOM becomes more intense” Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn (2008) found comprehensiveness and relevance to be the key influencers of information adoption these were ranked above timeliness and accuracy. In a way relevance covered for time as most users considered that they would not have to carry out extensive research when they found relevant information. Despite the use of different terminologies, the two authors speak of more or less the same issues as regards message strength.

2.2.2 The role of interpersonal relationships in informational influence

According to Mourali, Laroche, & Pons (2005) Interpersonal influence also has a cultural dimension to it. It changes depending on individual differences as well as differences in culture with varying levels of individualism and collectivism. The same research further deduced that individualistic orientation had a significant negative effect on both the utilitarian and the value-expressive dimensions of consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. This suggests that word-of-mouth communications and the use of interpersonal sources of information are equally important across the two groups. In individualistic groups, the pursuit of self-esteem plays an important role in consumer choice. This choice is not just in what they select, but more so in what they choose to reject in order to stand out. In the fashion industry, for example, consumer choice is a deeply personal choice that is deemed to be an expression of oneself. However, even where consumers claim to dress purely for themselves, they experience some situations where they became more likely to conform to the expectations of others for one reason or the other (Banister & Hogg, 2004).
An area where individualism and collectivism can easily be evidenced is the work place. The presence of influencers is stronger in organisations as a result of the way organisations are set up. A key component of interpersonal influence is negotiation which is viewed as a process of compromise, involving parties with different sets of objectives and values, based on their different vested interests (Manning & Robertson, 2003). It is in the process of negotiation that people seek to influence each other into their way of seeing a certain topic. Manning & Robertson, (2003) identified six ways in which influencing takes place in the work place. The first of this is reason, where one uses reason, information and logic to justify a request. The second is assertion, where one makes a direct request for what they want and expresses how they feel about the given situation, including persisting with requests. The third is exchange. Working together for the best overall result, offering an exchange of benefits, and being prepared to compromise. The fourth is courting favour. Bringing oneself into favour with the other person by being friendly to them or positive about them. The fifth is coercion. Here the influencer, threatens to use, or actually uses, some kind of sanction, including being uncooperative and doing as you wish. The sixth and final is partnership. Getting the support of others at all levels both within and outside the immediate situation.

2.3 The effectiveness of the similarity between the source and seeker of information

Non-Marketing sources of influence (sources that are not working for a marketing company), such as family and friends, are rated as having the highest credibility, highest two way communication when delivering information about a product to a potential buyer or consumer. (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2010) This is further supported by research. According to a recent report by Nielsen, 83% of consumers believe in recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising (Nielsen, 2015). This ranked well above television (63%) newspapers (60%) and magazines (58%). The importance of WOMM in marketing communications is well established. Word of mouth as a source of influence is both powerful and credible due to its informal and personal nature (Sweeney, Soutar, & Mazzarol 2012) In addition there is a preference by consumers on informal sources of information over the formal ones. It is presumed that the presenter of information has nothing to gain from it (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). This power that WOM has to influence purchase behaviour can either be positive or negative. There are various factors that can affect this, from interpersonal influences, to message factors to the actual product. Sweeney, Soutar, & Mazzarol (2014) identified three factors that were likely to impact the influence of WOM, these were, interpersonal, message, and service product factors. Interpersonal factors focus on the perceived expertise of the sender or receiver. Expert
WOM sources are likely to be more highly regarded, but expert WOM recipients are less likely to seek out information and therefore WOM has a lower impact on them. (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). The personal relationship between the parties influenced WOM acceptance while their similarity influenced its effectiveness. The key aspect in this context was the closeness of a sender and a receiver. While there is evidence that WOM is not always dependent on strong ties, most people prefer to be familiar with the messenger Sweeney et al (2008).

2.3.1 The effect of similarity between the seeker and source of information for the purchase decisions

In the 1960’s a study looked at the similarity between new residents seeking physicians and the personal sources they used in their search. They found that only 15 percent of the sample turned to a personal source who exhibited expertise in the medical field. Most respondents turned to friends, neighbours, and co-workers for a referral. Most interestingly, couples with children usually relied on other couples with children for physician referral, whereas childless couples tended to rely on other childless couples, demonstrating a high likelihood of turning to homophilous sources instead of turning to product experts (Feldman, Spencer, & Bennet, 1965). Interestingly information from non-commercial, personal sources has consistently been found to be particularly influential in consumer decision-making (Gilly, Graham, Wolfinbarger, & Yale, 1998), (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2010) and (Nielsen, 2015). Later studies on the influence exerted by sources with strong ties to the seekers of information identified that information from more similar (homophilous) referral sources is perceived to be more influential in receivers’ decision-making than information obtained from less similar referral sources (Brown & Reingen, 1987). The same study went further to conclude two things regarding homophily and its influence on decision-making. The first was that, “of an individual's potential personal sources of information, the more homophilous the tie, the more likely it is activated for the flow of referral. The second was that “as the homophily of a tie increases, information provided by an activated tie is perceived by receivers as more influential in decision-making.” However, the authors only employed demographic measures in the testing of the homophily hypotheses.

Later studies observed that the similarity between the source and seeker of information might either be demographic, where gender, education, and age were found to be alike; or perceptual, where the values and experiences between the source and seeker of information were found to be aligned. According to Gilly, Graham, Wolfinbarger, & Yale (1998) “the greater the similarity of the Seeker and the Source is, the greater will be the influence of the Source on the
Seeker’s decision”. This is even more evident in perceptual similarity than it is for demographic similarity. More recent studies examined the effect interpersonal factors have on positive and negative word of mouth’s (WOM) influence. It was found that perceptual similarity have stronger impacts on message influence when the WOM message is negative than when it is positive (Sweeney, Soutar, & Mazzarol, 2014). This finding reinforced an earlier study on word of mouth electronic referrals, where it was found that characteristics of the social tie influenced recipients’ behaviours, but had different effects at different stages. Tie strength exclusively facilitated awareness, perceptual affinity triggered recipients’ interest, and demographic similarity had a negative influence on each stage of the decision-making process (De Bruyn & Lilien, 2008).

The influence of the similarity of the source of information to the seeker of information can also be demonstrated through the organic inter-consumer influence model (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). In this model organisations have no direct input into what is being said and done. They instead leave the conversation to take place between consumers and potential consumers of their product(s). As the name suggests, this being is organic, it is considered to be the most authentic and trusted means of communication. This is well demonstrated through market research data. In a 2012 report, Nielsen reported that “Ninety-two percent of consumers around the world say they trust earned media, such as word-of-mouth and recommendations from friends and family, above all other forms of advertising—an increase of 18 percent since 2007”. The same report went further to say “Although television advertising will remain a primary way marketers connect with audiences due to its unmatched reach compared to other media, consumers around the world continue to see recommendations from friends and online consumer opinions as by far the most credible. As a result, successful brand advertisers will seek ways to better connect with consumers and leverage their goodwill in the form of consumer feedback and experiences.” The evidence of this exists all across marketing spheres. Online social platforms such as Facebook and YouTube as well as online businesses such as Trip Advisor, e-Bay and Amazon have been built based on this very trust. However there does exist a challenge. By excluding themselves or being left out of the conversation organisations do not get an opportunity to clarify or correct any misconceptions that may arise in the conversation. While this leaves conversations authentic, it risks having misconceptions and misinformation carried out in an uninhibited manner that could quickly erode the value of brands.
Service product factors come into play based on the prior experience of the consumer as well as the current brand equity. Today, it is impossible to divorce services and goods. The sale of something as generic as a loaf of bread is weighed heavily on the service experience that customers receive. Prior experience comes into play depending on the person sending the message is a source of information given the high authenticity this gives them (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The likelihood of being influenced also comes into play where the recipient is a prior user of the product and their ability to be swayed by cultural factors is high (Mourali et al., 2005). Brand equity acts as a shield, as stronger brands have an incremental utility on positive WOM and at the same time mitigate any negative WOM (Sweeney et al. 2014). Ha (2002) supported this when he noted that “With respect to brand information, customers who were recognizing a specific brand or brand reputation showed a decreased concern with time-loss risk and product performance risk when purchasing a product.” In a study titled “Measurement of Consumer Susceptibility” Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel (1989) set out to develop a scale to assess consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence, which is assumed to be a general trait that varies across individuals and that a person’s relative influenceability in one situation tends to have a significant positive relationship to his or her influenceability in a range of other social situations. The strength of WOM communication depends on the relationship closeness (i.e., social tie strength) between information seekers and sources. Individuals with a strong tie relationship are more likely to exchange information than those who are in a weak tie relationship (Shih, Lai, & Cheng, 2013). This is why the ability of the sales person to reduce existing uncertainty in the sales process is influenced by the trust of the buyer and their dependence on the salesperson. This is supported by an earlier study by Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990) who found that customers’ perceptions of salesperson similarity and expertise influence the sales success. The influence that one person has on another can be seen in the relationship between a salesperson and a potential customer. This is particularly evident in the sale of services that require a relationship building to occur.

2.3.2 Electronic word of mouth marketing effect on similarity between the seeker and source of information

It is important to note that WOM plays a significant role in building brand equity and information technology advances have enhanced the power of consumers to build brands. A study on new product adoption discovered that customers are more likely to recall products and brands when introduced to them through WOM rather than advertising. Further, over 60 percent of the individuals introduced to the product via WOM were more likely to share it with
others as opposed to less than 25 percent of the individuals that were introduced via advertising (Lopez & Sicilia, 2013). Electronic word of mouth follows the same definition as word of mouth with the addition of disseminating the information through electronic means e.g. email, social media, instant messaging etc. As with a lot of things in the marketing field, the eventual digitisation of WOM has been a near certainty. Advances in Information Technology and internet proliferation has allowed a lot of processes in marketing to be automated, not least the collection of customer data and its immediate use to improve a product. There is a huge attraction for marketers to revert to electronic means of data collection which allows them to reach nearly their entire audience instantly (Lonergan, 2015). This wave of digitisation is not only taking place in the marketing field, but it is probably most evident there. According to Statista, (2016) approximately 2 billion internet users are using social networks globally. The number of active users on different social media platforms are illustrated below.

![Social media users globally 2016](image)

**Figure 2.1 Social media users globally 2016**

Source: Statista (2016)

To further highlight the importance of electronic marketing we must consider what the Kenyan landscape looks like. In Kenya, internet penetration is estimated to be 85.3 percent with most of it coming from mobile whose penetration has grown remarkably by 35.0 percent between June 2015 and June 2016. Mobile penetration itself is at 90.0 percent. There was a growth of 6.1 percentage points in mobile penetration over the 12 months between June 2015 and June 2016 (Communications Authority of Kenya, 2016). A recent report by the Bloggers
Association of Kenya (2016) identifies that there are 6.1 million Kenyans on Facebook, 2.2 million active monthly Twitter users in Kenya and over 10 million WhatsApp users. The sheer size of the number of users on social media platforms indicates that there is a huge marketing channel that cannot be ignored. In a report by Ernst and Young, (2011) digitisation is making it essential for businesses to pursue innovation and disrupt their own models before competitors do the same to them. For example, in assessing the impact of microblogging-word-of-mouth on consumers’ adoption of new movies, the authors, Henning-Thurau et al. (2014) look at the Twitter effect,” which postulates that microblogging word of mouth (MWOM) shared through Twitter and similar services affects early product adoption behaviors by immediately disseminating consumers’ post-purchase quality evaluations. Previously this would probably have been done using surveys and drawing insights from movie attendance over few weeks, both of with are either too slow or don’t offer consumer sentiment respectively.

Studies by Henning-Thurau et al. (2014) and Jalilvand & Samiei, (2012) among others, show that customers are increasingly using social media channels to talk about brands and products that they like and use on a regular basis. The power of the internet means a good or bad experience with a brand can go viral, be disseminated around the world in minutes, and be seen by millions if not billions of people. Probably one of the most powerful examples of viral potential of social media is Park Jae-Sang’s (aka Psy) popular music video, Gangnam style. This video garnered over 2 billion views on YouTube within two years of upload. This set a record for most views and ‘broke’ the YouTube views-counter at the time that had a limit of 999,999 views. In that period, it earned the artist over USD 8 million (Papineni, 2014). The combination of the trust that people have in WOM as well as the speed of electronic networks makes this a powerful marketing tool. Technology allows consumers to share their thoughts with a wider audience, Meuter, McCabe, & Curran (2013) found that recommendations from acquaintances on social media site, Facebook, ranked higher than that of the reviews in the company website. However, their study also revealed that electronic WOM does not appear to be as influential as traditional WOM.

The higher ranking of friends and acquaintances over company portals can somewhat be attributed to social media engagement behaviour and the uses and gratifications theory as studied by Dolan et al. (2016) The gratifications theory approach considers the active role of the audience in media choice, suggesting that individuals actively search for, identify with and employ media to fulfil specific gratification needs. The authors posited that social media content could be categorised into 4 main groups informational, entertainment, remunerative or
relational. This supported an earlier finding by Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, (2004) who identified five drivers for consumer engagement in electronic marketing. The first of this was Focus-related utility, which is the utility the consumer receives when adding value to the community through his or her contributions. Second was, Consumption utility, which refers to consumers obtaining value through “direct consumption of the contributions of other community constituents. Thirdly, Approval utility, which is concerned with a consumer’s satisfaction that comes when other constituents consume and approve of the constituent’s own contributions. Fourthly, Moderator-related utility is derived when a third party makes the compliant act easier for the community member. The final driver they identified was Homeostase Utility. This is based on the notion that people have a basic desire for balance in their lives by expressing positive emotions or venting negative feelings.

2.4 The effectiveness of the expertise of the source of information

In a study titled, “Word-of-Mouth Processes within a Services Purchase Decision Context”, Bansal & Voyer (2000) hypothesised that the greater the sender’s expertise, the greater the influence of the sender’s WOM on the receiver’s purchase decision; and the greater the sender’s expertise, the more actively sought the WOM information. Their study found that “When a sender is perceived to possess a high level of expertise, the receiver is likely to attend closely to the incoming WOM information. Furthermore, because the sender is perceived as knowledgeable, there is motivation for the receiver to actively seek information from him or her.” Buyers seek both user knowledge and expert knowledge. User knowledge conveys information about the solution in use and acquired value-in-use, and expert knowledge conveys information about the problem solving situation and the solution (Aarikka-Stenroos & Makkonen, 2014). In both of these cases, persons in proximity to the potential consumer such as friends and family, are able to be viable sources of information with a higher likelihood of the former (user knowledge) rather than the latter. This is further supported by Procter & Richards (2002) who identify that marketers alone do not influence product popularity and consequent purchases. For example, the resurrection of the yo-yo in America in the 1990’s was not brought on by any sustained marketing campaign, but rather by the populace. In fact, marketers followed the trend. User knowledge can best be seen by the rise of user generated content websites such as TripAdvisor. These websites provide a platform for users to provide information and reviews on places to visit based on their experience there. This can be viewed from the two dimensions of trustworthiness and expertise. In a study of the influence of user generated content website TripAdvisor, trustworthiness was found to be more influential than
expertise in affecting attitude and behavioural intention of users of the website (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013). This is recognises that the source of influence as a user of the service, is important in providing information about their user experience, but is not necessarily seen as an expert on the problem solving nature of a product.

2.4.1 The effectiveness of expertise of the source of information on purchase decisions
When seeking expert information about a purchase, consumers are willing to go out of the sphere of family and friends because experts have a broader knowledge base than non-experts. In a study, Sweeney, Soutar, & Mazzarol, (2012) posited that the greater the positive differential between a sender’s and a receiver’s expertise, the greater the receiver’s perception of WOM message influence. This was supported by the results of their study where the more the sender knew about the service, compared to the receiver, the more effective the receiver perceived the message to be. An earlier study had proposed that “The greater the perceived expertise attached to the salesman, the greater the likelihood of purchase by the customer” (Woodside & Davenport Jr., 1974). The authors found that over 66% of the customers hearing the expert treatment purchased the product regardless of any similarity the customer had with the salesman. In an interesting research finding, Thomas (1982) found that, decision-makers were found to be sensitive to others with expertise and authority, but were sensitive to neither factor alone.

It is important to distinguish between opinion leadership and expertise. While opinion leaders appear to have more knowledge on an area, they should not be confused to be experts. True expertise is the knowledge a Source possesses, whereas opinion leadership is the ability and motivation to share information. The results of a study by Gilly et al (1998) had several conclusions among them that; the higher perceived expertise of the source of information, the more likely they are to be viewed as an opinion leader; and Sources’ expertise would positively affect Sources’ influence on the Seekers’ purchase decision. Kozinets et al (2010) brought to the fore the linear marketer influence model which emphasises the importance of key influencers. It emerged from the risks of having misconceptions and misinformation carried out in an uninhibited manner in the inter-consumer influence model, that could quickly erode the value of brands. It suggests that rather than try to convince the entire market, marketers should focus on individuals who are considered opinion leaders and who hold significant sway over other consumers. The commercial value of these opinion leaders has been widely recognised by marketers over the past century. This is clearly seen in the media and entertainment sector and most visibly in the performing arts. Here, marketing has been centred
on lead actors or performers respectively (Hackley & Hackley, 2015). This ability to influence people to pay for a movie or play based on the lead performer is recognised by marketers and has allowed them to develop personas around which they can market their products. Today, marketers can use targeted campaigns with credible sources, such as celebrities, to recommend the product to the masses.

This model of celebrity endorsements has spread across different industries, from sports, to fashion, to food and even politics (Bradic, 2015). Over time these opinion leaders and celebrity influencers have built up large social media audiences and now get companies to pay them to promote their products or offer their services to certain charities by advocating for certain causes. A good example is the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR has adopted the use of celebrities acting as goodwill ambassadors to help the organisation push out messages geared towards aiding it achieve its various goals (United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2016). This model’s success has been recognised by marketers to the point that the stakes for celebrity endorsements keep going higher and higher each successful year. For example in November 2016 Nike announced a USD 1 billion deal with football player Cristiano Ronaldo. This followed reports of USD 474 million in value for Nike from Ronaldo’s massive social media presence in the year 2016 from only 329 social media posts. (Badenhausen, 2016)

2.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has explored what different scholars have written about WOMM. Specifically this has included the different models of WOM that are used, the extent to which it is used in electronic form, the role of influencers in purchase decisions and the effect it has on purchase decision making. The researcher has also examined, in depth, what different scholars have written on interpersonal influence with a focus on source expertise, source similarity and informational influence.
Chapter Three

3 Research methodology

3.1 Introduction
The purpose of this study we shall examine effectiveness of word of mouth marketing in automobile marketing. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the research methodology that will be used in this study. The researcher will begin by addressing the research design of the study, followed by the population and sample design. The research procedure will also be discussed. As part of the research procedure, it will review the method of pre-testing adopted. This chapter will also discuss the data collection instruments and data analysis methods to be used.

3.2 Research design
David J Luck and Ronald S Rubin define research design as, “A research design is the determination and statement of the general research approach or strategy adopted for the particular project.” (Luck & Rubin, 2010) Research design can also be defined as a detailed outline of how an investigation will take place. It typically includes how data is to be collected, what instruments will be employed, how the instruments will be used and the intended means for analysing data collected (BusinessDictionary, 2016). At the heart of it research design provides the structural framework that a researcher uses in carrying out their research.

In this case, this is a causal/explanatory study where the researcher shall be examining the effectiveness of word of mouth marketing on automobile marketing. This will be through examining the different models of WOM are in use in marketing of automobiles in Nairobi; the extent to which electronic WOM is used in the marketing of automobiles in Nairobi; evaluating the strength of interpersonal influencers in word-of-mouth marketing of automobiles in Nairobi; and finally, determining the effect of word-of-mouth marketing on automobile purchase decisions.

3.3 Population and sampling design
The population can be defined as the total collection of elements which inferences are made (Cooper & Schilder, 2008). For the purpose of this study, the population consists of residents of Nairobi that have purchased automobiles any time in the last 5 years.
3.3.1 Sampling design
Sampling design is defined as the procedure by which a particular sample is drawn from a population (Cooper & Schilder, 2008). It is a selection of individuals from the population that are a representation of the entire population. For the purpose of this study the researcher shall use Stratified Random Sampling technique where every individual has an equal chance to be the selected. Due to the estimated large number of car owners in the city, we would only restrict our sample to not less than 50 respondents.

3.3.1.1 Sampling frame
A sampling frame can be defined as the listing of all units in the population from which a sample is selected (Byrman & Bell, 2011). The sampling frame for this study was limited to residents of Nairobi. The entire sampling frame was made up of Nairobi residents. According to The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Nairobi’s population stood at over 4 million residents (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015). The rationale for basing the sample frame on the entire population of the city is because there were no records available from Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) and the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) which would point the researcher to actual vehicle owners within Nairobi City. The total sample frame was therefore 4 million Nairobi residents.

3.3.1.2 Sampling technique
The Sampling technique that the researcher intends to use the convenience sampling technique due to the relatively low cost and the ease of sampling. Further, the researcher will validate the data based on the sampling frame as well as how recently the purchase was made so as to ensure that the sample represents the desired population.

3.4 Data collection method
Data collection is the gathering of information from the sample in order to carry out analysis and eventually draw conclusions. In the intended research, data shall be drawn from the primary source, the buyers of the vehicles.

The data shall be collected using a questionnaire that will be developed in line with the research questions of the study. It shall consist of both open ended and closed ended questions to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

Closed-ended questions shall be particularly useful to lock out any external influences that may exist in the mind of the respondent. The open-ended questions will give the respondents to
express their opinions and views freely, while this may difficult to measure empirically, it will give the researcher the opportunity to get some insights on the empirical data and understand the data better.

The questionnaire shall be administered via an online questionnaire as the primary data collection method. Where this falls short, physical questionnaires shall be distributed to collect data.

3.5 Research procedures
To determine the sample size the researcher shall use Cochran’s sample size formula as indicated below:

\[ n_0 = \frac{Z^2pq}{e^2} \]

Where:

- \( n_0 \) is the sample size
- \( Z \) is the z-value is found in a Z table for the desired level of confidence
- \( p \) is the (estimated) proportion of the population which has the attribute in question.
- \( q \) is \( 1 - p \).
- \( e \) is the desired level of precision (i.e. the margin of error)

The calculation of the ideal sample size is as follows:

\[
\text{Sample size} = \frac{(1.96^2)(0.0585)(0.9415)}{0.05^2} = 85
\]

For the purpose of the study, the desired level of confidence is 95% giving a Z value of 1.96. The estimated proportion of the population that owns a motor vehicle was determined using various sources. First, according to the 2015 Socio-economic Atlas of Kenya only 11.7 percent of Nairobi households own a car (Wiesmann, Kiteme, & Mwangi, 2016). Second, according to the Deloitte Africa Automotive Insights, the average age of motor vehicles is 15 years (Deloitte, 2016). With most used imports coming into the country at an age of 8 years, only half are likely to have been bought in the last 5 years. This brings our probability to 5.85%. The application of the formula gives us a sample size of 85.
As per the research design, the researcher intends to use a questionnaire to collect data from the 85 would-be respondents. The data collection shall be done through an online portal.

Once the data is collected, it shall be edited appropriately to correct errors and ensure completeness. Then it shall be coded and input into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to enable the researcher to begin the analysis of the data.

3.6 Data analysis methods

Data analysis is the science of collecting, exploring and presenting large amounts of data to discover underlying patterns and trends (SAS, 2016). The analysis process will involve inspecting, transforming, cleaning and modelling data with the objective of bringing out useful information, supporting a decision and suggesting a conclusion from a research. The researcher will use both quantitative and qualitative analysis for closed-ended and open-ended questions respectively.

The researcher intends to use descriptive statistics, computation of measures of central tendencies and dispersion they shall use regression analysis to determine the relationship between the various variables available variables observed and collected. Once the analysis is complete, the results shall be presented in tables and charts with supporting prose to explain it to the intended readers.

3.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter the researcher has discussed the research methodology that is to be used in this study. This is a causal/explanatory study. The research was carried to residents of Nairobi via an online questionnaire. A required sample size of 85 respondents was calculated using Cochran’s sample size formula. On collection of data, the researcher will involve comprehensive analysis of the data to determine the relationship between the different variables.
4 Research findings

4.1 Introduction
This section covers the summaries of the research findings and their possible interpretations as based on the analysis of the data collected. The chapter includes a summary of important elements such as the purpose of the study and the research questions. The first part of the chapter gives a summary of the study and the response rate. The second part of the chapter discusses the demographic information of the respondents and then proceeds to discuss the statistical information.

4.2 Summary
The questionnaire was distributed electronically via an online form. The distribution of the link on the form was via social media channels, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. Overall, 251 valid and complete responses were received exceeding the minimum set target of 50 responses. The questionnaire was made available for responses over a period of two weeks from 21 March 2017 to 3 April 2017.

4.3 Demographic characteristics
4.3.1 Gender

![Gender of Respondents](image)

Figure 4.1 Gender of Respondents
Figure 4.1 was used to show the gender representation of the study. Slightly over 65 percent of respondents were female and only 34.66 percent were male.
4.3.2 Age

The vast majority of respondents were aged between 26 and 35 years old. This is followed by the 46-55 age group and 36-45 age group. Eleven respondents were aged 18-25 and 56-65. This is likely due to their active use of social media platforms where the questionnaire was distributed as well as well as ownership of motor vehicles.

Figure 4.2 Age of respondents

4.3.3 Occupation

The majority of respondents were employed and stood at 67.73 percent. Self-employed respondents were second at 28.69 percent and finally 3.59 percent of respondents were either students or unemployed.

Figure 4.3 Occupation of respondents
4.3.4 Purchased an automobile in the past 5 years

Figure 4.4 Respondents that have purchased a vehicle within the last 5 years

Most of the respondents, 76.89 percent, had bought a vehicle within the last five years. Only 23.11 percent had bought a vehicle over 5 years ago. This makes the responses more reliable as the respondents are likely to recall their purchase decision more readily.

4.3.5 Number of cars owned in one’s lifetime

Figure 4.5 Number of cars owned over one’s lifetime

Over 50 percent of the respondents had owned 2 cars or less in their lifetime. As the number of cars owned increased, the number of people who had owned multiple cars decreased.
However, more people indicated to having owned over 5 cars than those that owned 5 cars only.

4.3.6 Age of the most recent motor vehicle when it was bought

![Pie chart showing age of the most recent motor vehicle when it was bought]

Figure 4.6 Age of the most recent motor vehicle when it was bought

As would be expected, 94.82 percent of respondents had bought a used car as their most recent vehicle. Only 5.18 percent had bought a new car as their most recent purchase.

4.4 Statistical information

4.4.1 Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
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<td>1.11651</td>
<td>251</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informational influence</td>
<td>3.8003</td>
<td>1.00655</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar</td>
<td>4.5060</td>
<td>1.43700</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>4.8578</td>
<td>.86647</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The dependent variable, (Decision) has a mean of 4.9940 and a standard deviation of 1.11651 among the 251 sample. The first independent variable informational influence has a mean of 3.8003 and a standard deviation of 1.00655. The second independent variable, similar, has a mean of 4.5060 and a standard deviation of 1.43700. The third independent variable, expert has a mean of 4.8578 and a standard deviation of .86647.
4.4.2 Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Informational influence</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>similar</td>
<td>.291**</td>
<td>.853</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>.077</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>.877</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>decision</td>
<td>.151*</td>
<td>-.055</td>
<td>.395**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.2 Correlations

Correlation is a statistical technique that is used to measure and describe the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. It is represented by the following formula:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (x_i - \bar{x})^2} \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (y_i - \bar{y})^2}}$$

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency. It shows how closely related a given set of items are as a group. The Cronbach alpha for informational influence is 0.794. The Cronbach alpha for similar is 0.853. The Cronbach alpha for expert is 0.877. Finally the Cronbach alpha for the decision is 0.853. All alpha figures fall within the acceptable range between 0.70 and 0.95 making them internally consistent.

An examination of reliability statistics indicates that all the variables had a high Cronbach Alpha score indicating a high level of internal consistency for the Likert scales used in the collection of data.

Informational influence and similar correlate with each other with $b = .291$ and is significant with a $p<.01$. Informational influence and Expertise correlate with each other with $b = .077$. Informational influence and Decision correlate with each other with $b = .151$ and is significant with a $p < .05$. Similar and Expert correlate with each other with $b = -.010$. Similar and Decision correlate with each other with $b = -.055$. Expert and Decision correlate with each other with $b = .395$ and is significant with a $p < .05$. 

29
4.4.3 Model Summary

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>.422</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>1.01809</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), expert, similar, informational influence

Table 4.3 Model Summary

The model summary resulted in \( R = .422, R^2 = .178 \), Adjusted \( R^2 = .169 \), and the standard error of the estimate as 1.01809. The independent variables, expert, similar and informational influence, explain 16.9\% of the variance of the dependent variable, decision.

4.4.4 ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
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<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>256.019</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>1.037</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>311.647</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: decision

Table 4.4 ANOVA

The ANOVA table presents the F value of 17.889 which is significant (\( p < .001 \)). The independent variables (expert, similar, informational influence) statistically significantly predict the dependent variable (decision to purchase a vehicle), therefore the model is better at predicting the dependent variable (decision to purchase a vehicle) than using the mean as a best guess. The sum of squares helps to explain the variance of the data to the mean. The total sum of squares for the data is 311.647 with 250 degrees of freedom. The regression sum of squares is 55.628 with 3 degrees of freedom. The residual sum of squares is 256.019 with 247 degrees of freedom.

4.4.5 Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informational influence</td>
<td>.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>similar</td>
<td>-.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expert</td>
<td>.493</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: decision

Table 4.5 Coefficients
Informational influence relates to purchasing decisions $r = 0.165$ and is statistically significant with $p = 0.015$. Expert relates to purchasing decisions $r = 0.493$ and is statistically significant with $p < 0.001$. Similarity relates to purchasing decision with $r = -0.073$ However Similar is not statistically significant with $p = 0.121$ which is greater than $p < 0.05$.

The coefficients table gives us estimates of the beta values ($b$-values) indicating the individual contribution of each predictor to the model holding all other independent variables constant. We can use these estimates to define our model as follows:

$$\text{Decision} = b_0 + b_1\text{informational influence}_i + b_2\text{similarity}_i + b_3\text{expertise}_i$$

$$\text{Decision} = 2.302 + 0.165\text{informational influence}_i - 0.073\text{similarity}_i + 0.493\text{expertise}_i$$

All independent variable coefficients are statistically significantly different from 0 except similarity whose $p$ value is greater than 0.05.

For every increase in a unit of informational influence the decision increases by 0.165, holding all other factors constant. On the contrary, for every increase in a unit of similarity, the decision decreases by 0.073, but is not statistically significant, holding all other factors constant. Finally for every increase in a unit of expertise, the decision increases by 0.493, holding all other factors constant.

### 4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter summarises the results of the findings from the data collected. It is based on the objectives identified in chapter one following the methodology in chapter three. The results presented include demographic characteristics, and the effect of aspects word of mouth marketing on the purchase of motor vehicles. The data collected established that informational influence and expertise had a positive effect on purchase decisions, while similarity had a negative effect.
Chapter Five

5 Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises and discusses the findings of the study as well as the conclusions made from the analysis of the data in chapter four. The chapter is organised into four major sections; the summary of the chapter, the discussion of the findings, the conclusion on the findings and the recommendations.

5.2 Summary

The marketing of motor vehicles still relies heavily on word of mouth marketing rather than advertising and other above the line measures. Therefore the need for accurate information on the right approach to take in marketing is seen as a need by marketers. While not included in the analysis of the findings, it is important to note that a lot of awareness was generated in the course of data collection. Over 50% of respondents expressed their interest in reading the final conclusions of the study. This is a further indicator of the thirst for information on this particular field of knowledge.

The objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of word of mouth marketing in the decision to purchase a motor vehicle in Nairobi. The three specific objectives of the study were as follows: First, to determine the effectiveness of informational influence on the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi. Second, to determine the effectiveness of similarity on the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi. Finally, to determine the effectiveness of expertise on the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi. The responses were collected via an online portal between the dates of 21 March 2017 and 3 April 2017.

The study focused on members of the public that live within Nairobi. The data was collected through a simple random sampling of the target population via online questionnaires. The data was then analysed for descriptive and inferential statistics through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysed data was then presented in figures and tables.

The study found that the informational influence of the source of information related positively and significantly at 0.165 with the decision to purchase an automobile. The perceived expertise by the individual providing the advice related positively and significantly at 0.493 with the decision to purchase an automobile product. However, the similarity between the person
providing advice and related negatively and insignificantly with the decision to purchase and automobile.

5.3 Discussion

5.3.1 The Effect of Informational Influence on Automobile Purchase Decisions

The first objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of informational influence on the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi. The results indicate that informational influence has a positive influence on the decision to purchase an automobile ($B = 0.165, p=0.015$). This posits that the need to gather information from various sources and internalise it in order to make a decision to purchase an automobile is significant. This is similar to findings by Deutsch & Gerard (1955), Cohen & Golden (1972) and Bearden et al (1989). In the case of this study, the informational influence was more or less in line with other studies that discuss its ability to influence a decision. Informational influence relies on the tendency to accept information from others as evidence about reality. It is indicated by the subjects of the study that the information that they receive about an automobile forms their reality about an automobile. This is likely due to the relative low knowledge base that the average purchaser of an automobile would have due to the diversity and complexity of available options. This was unlike Hoffmann & Broekhuizen (2009) who found that susceptibility to informational influence was negatively associated ($B = -0.22, p=0.002$) to the number of investment transactions they make.

According to the results from the first objective of the study informational influence is an essential component of the purchase decision of an automobile. An increase informational influence positively affects the decision to purchase a motor vehicle. Its consistency with previous research and the research results provides marketers with the comfort to use this factor in influencing would-be car buyers in Nairobi and not have to rely on their gut instinct.

5.3.2 The Effect of Similarity between the Source and Seeker of information on Automobile Purchase Decisions

The second objective was to determine the effectiveness of similarity on the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi. After carrying out an analysis of the data collected, it was revealed that the similarity between the decision maker and the source of information had an influence on their purchase decision. However, the effect of similarity was weaker in comparison to the other independent variables in contrast to earlier findings by other researchers (Brown & Reingen, 1987). In addition, the findings reveal that similarity had a negative correlation to the decision to purchase a motor vehicle ($B = -0.073, p= 0.121$). This was similar to De Bruyn &
Lilien, (2008) who found that demographic similarity had a negative influence on each stage of the decision-making process \( (B = -0.279, p < 0.01) \). This is interesting as most people would presume that similarity would not only have a significant influence on the decision, but a positive effect on it as well. However, this was in contrast to the findings from Gilly et al. (1998) who found that the perceptual similarity between the decision maker and their source of information positively \( (B = 0.21, p < 0.05) \) influenced the seeker’s decision to purchase a VCR. The difference in this case may have come from the product in question, but the data does not allow this to be interrogated.

The results of the study indicate that the more similar the source of information is to the buyer of the automobile, the less likely the buyer is to make a purchase. The increase in similarity has a negative effect on purchase decisions for automobiles. This revelation will give pause and caution to marketers. Further, the similarity of results with recent studies means that this factor should either be avoided or cautiously embraced by marketers in their marketing activities when it comes to convincing Nairobi residents to purchase vehicles.

5.3.3 The Effect of the Expertise of the Source Information on Automobile Purchase Decisions

The final objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of expertise on the purchase of automobiles in Nairobi. The analysis of the data revealed that not only did the expertise of the source of information have a positive influence on the purchase decision; it also had the strongest influence on the decision maker \( (B = 0.493) \). This is consistent with findings from Gilly et al (1998) \( (B = 0.59) \) who both found that expertise would positively affect Sources’ influence on the Seekers’ purchase decision. The strength of this influence may come from various factors such as the complexity of the product in question, in this case a car; the significance of the purchase in terms of cash outlay or even the relative knowledge gap between the buyer and their source of information. This is supported by Sweeney, et. al, (2014) who also found that the greater the positive differential between a sender’s and a receiver’s expertise, the greater the receiver’s perception of word of mouth message influence \( (B = 0.12) \).

This expertise of the source of information has been found to be the strongest of the three examined factors when it comes to purchase decisions for automobiles. An increase in the expertise of the source of information increases the chances of a purchase of an automobile being made. This is consistent with older and more recent studies in other areas. It guides
marketers to ensure that they take into consideration the expertise of their sales agents to increase the chances of making a sale.

5.4 Conclusions

5.4.1 The Effect of Informational Influence on Automobile Purchase Decisions
The study shows that informational influence has a positive influence on automobile purchase decisions. The findings indicate that marketers can successfully and viably use informational influence as part of word of mouth marketing to improve the likelihood of a purchase as regards automobiles. The complexity of the product is a likely contributor to this. The more information that the prospective buyer receives about a purchase the more likely they are to make a better informed decision and consequently the more likely they are to decide to make a purchase.

5.4.2 The Effect of Similarity between the Source and Seeker of information on Automobile Purchase Decisions
The study reveals that the similarity between the Source and Seeker of information affects purchase decisions. This relationship has a negative effect on the automobile purchase decision. While this goes against what would be said to be common assumptions, it is possible that the prospective buyer views people who are similar to them to be as misinformed about motor vehicles as they are, therefore, they do not regard them highly as a source of information. It could also be a case similar to what was raised by Banister & Hogg (2004), that their choice is not just in what they select, but more so in what they choose to reject in order to stand out from their peers.

5.4.3 The Effect of the Expertise of the Source information on Automobile Purchase Decisions
According to the study, the expertise of the Source of information has the greatest effects purchase decisions. This is likely to be driven by the significance in complexity and cost of the product in question. The real or perceived knowledge gap that exists between the prospective buyer of the automobile and expert source of advice is likely to be high due to the complexity of the product therefore leading to the reliance of the purchase on the expert for recommendations regarding their purchase. The more knowledgeable the source is about automobiles compared to the recipient, the more effective the message received.
5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Informational influence

The motor industry in Nairobi is a dynamic and vibrant sector in the country. The market is highly competitive forcing dealers to regularly seek any edge they can get over their competitors in order to make a sale. The study recommends that marketers utilise informational influence in developing their marketing plans. This will lead to an increase of sales of automobiles. It will also create a level of credibility with buyers that could lead to repeat sales in the long term. Marketers should work on putting out information about their automobiles that would put their products in the positive light of potential customers. Organisations should look to increasing the influence on the purchase decision by having the right information available at the right place and time for the client’s needs. This information could include the price, the fuel consumption and the availability of service parts and technicians. The increasing complexity of automobiles and the consequent knowledge gap created means that the information received will increasingly be taken to be the reality.

5.5.2 Similarity between the source and seeker of information

The study recommends avoiding the use of people similar to potential automobile buyers given the negative influence of this factor. While this may be good to create a point of interaction with potential buyers, it does the sales process more harm than good. Therefore, marketers should be cautious when using other owners of vehicles as evidence of their reliability and credibility. Instead, marketers should focus on the aspects of the automobile that they are trying to sell.

5.5.3 Expertise of the source of information

This study recommends that the basis of word of mouth marketing be the expertise that their respective organisations can demonstrate to potential buyers of automobiles. Organisations need to harness this factor, which has the greatest influence on the sales pipeline as much as possible due to the pre-existing knowledge gap between themselves and the buyers. As motor vehicles become more complex, this factor will gain prominence in decision making as buyers lean more on the knowledge of experts. Organisations can look to partnerships with independent experts as a way of further building on this credibility. These experts may be journalists or known personalities in the automobile space. Marketers could also focus their efforts in winning over mechanics and car technicians with the aspects of their cars. This is
already successfully used by oil marketers who reach out to mechanics to get customers to use their oils.

5.5.4 Recommendations for further research
The study raises a few questions with regard to the three influences examined and their effect on purchase decisions that could warrant further research by academia. First, further study on what kind of information makes informational influence a positive factor in purchase decision making. Given the complexity of the purchase of an automobile, it is likely that some and not necessarily all purchase information has a positive effect. Second, further study on why similarity does not positively influence purchase decisions will shed light on what many have previously held to be true. I recommend a deeper examination between perceptual and demographic similarity to determine which of the two is negatively influencing purchase decisions for automobiles.

5.6 Chapter Summary
In this chapter the researcher has discussed the findings of the study. This has included the comparison between the findings that both informational influence and expertise have a positive influence on automobile purchase decisions, and that the similarity between the source and recipient of information has a negative effect on automobile purchase decisions. In the discussion, the researcher has compared the findings to similar past studies that have been done by different scholars. The researcher has also made recommendations on the three different findings and based on the findings. The researcher has concluded by making recommendations for further research that can be made.


Ernst and Young. (2011). *The digitisation of everything.* London: Ernst and Young.


Appendices

Appendix 1 Questionnaire

SURVEY TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORD OF MOUTH IN AUTOMOBILE MARKETING IN NAIROBI

Note: All the information obtained from this survey will be used and treated with strict confidentiality and will not be disclosed to any third party without your express consent.

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Please answer all the questions by describing yourself ticking in the boxes provided after each question.

1. Your Age
   - □ Under 18   □ 18 - 25   □ 26 – 35   □ 36 – 45   □ 46 – 55
   - □ 56 – 65   □ Over 65

2. Gender
   - □ Male   □ Female

3. Do you reside in Nairobi?
   - □ Yes
   - □ I frequently visit Nairobi
   - □ I live in the outskirts of Nairobi in surrounding counties
   - □ I live outside Nairobi area

4. Current occupation?
   - □ Employed   □ Self-employed   □ Student/Unemployed

5. Have you purchased an automobile in the past 5 years?
   - □ Yes   □ No

6. How many cars have you owned in your lifetime?
   - □ 0 cars   □ 1 car   □ 2 – 5 cars   □ Over 5 cars
7. What was the age of the most recent motor vehicle when you bought it?
   □ Brand new from the showroom □ Used car (import or second hand)

Section 2
To what extent do YOU agree or disagree with the following statements

8. To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using.

| Disagree | | | | | | Agree |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

9. If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my friends about the product.

| Disagree | | | | | | Agree |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

10. I often consult other people to help choose the best alternative available from a product class.

| Disagree | | | | | | Agree |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

11. I frequently gather information from friends or family about a product before I buy.

| Disagree | | | | | | Agree |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

12. I like to know what brands and products make good impressions on others.

| Disagree | | | | | | Agree |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

13. I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same products and brands that others purchase.

| Disagree | | | | | | Agree |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

14. If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy.

| Disagree | | | | | | Agree |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
15. I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Suppose you want to purchase a vehicle, select a source of information (other than your spouse) whom you would likely contact for information prior to purchase of a car. Kindly describe this OTHER PERSON who you would listen to.

16. What is the gender of the OTHER PERSON who is the source of your information?
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female

17. What is the education level of the OTHER PERSON who is the source of your information?
   - [ ] Primary school
   - [ ] University Graduate degree
   - [ ] High School Graduate diploma
   - [ ] Post Graduate degree
   - [ ] Tertiary diploma
   - [ ] Unknown

18. What is the age of the OTHER PERSON who is the source of your information?
   - [ ] Under 18
   - [ ] 18 – 25
   - [ ] 26 – 35
   - [ ] 36 – 45
   - [ ] 46 – 55
   - [ ] 56 – 65
   - [ ] Over 65

19. What are your ties/relationship of the OTHER PERSON who is the source of your information?
   - a. Friend
   - b. Co-worker
   - c. Boyfriend/girlfriend
   - d. Relative

20. Considering your outlook on life, how similar are you and of the OTHER PERSON who is the source of your information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complete opposites</th>
<th>Very similar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. Considering your likes and dislikes, how similar are you and of the OTHER PERSON who is the source of your information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complete opposites</th>
<th>Very similar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
With regards to the individual whom you would contact as your source of information, describe the following about this OTHER PERSON

22. This OTHER PERSON’S product knowledge as compared to other people: How much knowledge do they have about cars as compared to other people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Little knowledge</th>
<th>High Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. This OTHER PERSON’S product knowledge as compared to you: How much knowledge do they have about cars as compared to you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Little knowledge</th>
<th>High Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. Product ownership: Does this OTHER PERSON currently own a car
   a. Yes   No

25. Product usage experience: How many years since this OTHER PERSON first purchased their first car?
   - Less than 1
   - 1-5
   - 6-10
   - 11-15
   - Over 15

26. Product purchase experience: how frequently does this OTHER PERSON purchase a car relative to other consumers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not frequent</th>
<th>Very frequent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. How would you rate this OTHER PERSON with regards to cars along the following dimensions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not an expert</th>
<th>Expert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28. How would you rate this OTHER PERSON with regards to cars along the following dimensions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inexperienced</th>
<th>Experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
29. How would you rate this OTHER PERSON with regards to cars along the following dimensions?

Unknowledgeable  Knowledgeable
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

30. How would you rate this OTHER PERSON with regards to cars along the following dimensions?

Unqualified  Qualified
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

31. How would you rate this OTHER PERSON with regards to cars along the following dimensions?

Unskilled  Skilled
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Section 3

With regards to the individual whom you would contact as our source of information, please rate this OTHER PERSON along the following parameters.

32. The opinion of this OTHER PERSON will influence my choice about buying the product.

disagree  agree
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

33. This OTHER PERSON will mention some things I had not considered.

disagree  agree
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

34. This OTHER PERSON will provide some different ideas than other sources.

disagree  agree
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

35. This OTHER PERSON will help me make a decision about buying the product.

disagree  agree
1  2  3  4  5  6  7
36. How much influence do you think this **OTHER PERSON** will have on whether or not you purchase the car?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very little influence</th>
<th>Complete influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. How much influence do you think this **OTHER PERSON** will have on the car you actually buy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very little influence</th>
<th>Complete influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

38. How much influence do you think this **OTHER PERSON** will have on the features you look for in this car?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very little influence</th>
<th>Complete influence</th>
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<td>1</td>
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</table>

39. How much influence do you think this **OTHER PERSON** will have on the brand/provider of the car you buy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very little influence</th>
<th>Complete influence</th>
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