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Drivers of Foreign Brand Aspirations: A Moderated SEM Analysis of Luxury Car Consumption in Emerging Markets

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Abstract: Understanding the drivers of purchase intention toward foreign branded automobiles has become increasingly important in emerging markets characterized by rapid economic growth and evolving consumer aspirations. This study investigates how cognitive, social, and value-based factors shape consumer responses toward foreign car brands by applying the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework. Data were collected from foreign branded car owners across southern India and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Environmental concern, perceived economic benefits, social influence, perceived price and performance expectancy were examined as stimuli, while Attitude represented the organismic evaluation process. The study further explored the moderating roles of gender, brand trust, and word-of-mouth in the attitude–repurchase intention relationship. Findings reveal that while cognitive and social factors significantly shape attitudes, these attitudes do not directly translate into repurchase intention. Instead, Brand Trust functions as a critical psychological mechanism, significantly moderating and strengthening the conversion of favorable attitudes into behavioral commitment in luxury consumption contexts. The study contributes to consumer behavior and international branding literature by highlighting the conditional nature of attitude–intention relationships in high-involvement luxury consumption contexts within emerging economies.

Keywords: Foreign Brand Consumption, Repurchase Intention, Brand Trust, Attitude, Structural Equation Modeling, Emerging Markets.

1. Introduction

Consumer behaviour is shaped by a variety of moderating factors that impact the intention to repurchase foreign-branded vehicles. The global automobile industry has witnessed a remarkable transformation over the past two decades, with emerging economies like India emerging as significant consumption hubs for foreign branded cars. The liberalization of the Indian economy in 1991, combined with rising disposable incomes, growing urbanization, and the aspirational consumption patterns of the middle class, has created fertile ground for foreign luxury automobile brands to establish a strong market presence (Bhatia & Jakhar, 2021; Yoganandan *et al.*, 2024; Le *et al.*, 2024). The relationship between brand reputation and consumer intent, for instance, is frequently moderated by perceived quality since consumers tend to identify foreign companies with greater craftsmanship (Nasir *et al.*, 2020). Brand image can be considered to function as a mediator between advertising and consumers, establishing an emotional relationship which impacts their buying intention (Waluya *et al.*, 2019; Hoang & Tung, 2023).

Also, decision-making is moderated by perceived value, cost benefit analysis and brand trust especially in the purchases involving high involvement like automobiles (Thomas *et al.*, 2020; Lee *et al.*, 2015; K & Velmurugan, 2025; Nguyen *et al.*, 2025). There are also mediating roles of consumer perceptions on foreign products which result from previous experiences and cultural openness (Adhikari & Panda, 2019; Suhud & Willson 2019; Liao & Tow Cheung, 2001). Brand trust has a strong role in the consumer's evaluation of foreign car brands (Anisimova *et al.*, 2019; Kim & Jun, 2023). This trust-building process is especially critical in high-involvement purchase decisions where the financial stakes are substantial and the consequences of a wrong choice are long-lasting.



Family influence and peer social pressure also have a say on whether marketing messages are sufficient to make consumers open their wallet (Lv *et al.*, 2024). Word-of-mouth communication, Environmental concern, perceived price and perceived economic benefits play bigger role in the repurchase decisions of consumer attitude in the foreign branded car segment (Hasan & Erika, 2023; Fook & Dastane, 2021; Evgeniy *et al.*, 2019; Guerreiro & Pacheco, 2021; Wang & Yu, 2017; Henkel & Toporowski, 2023). Performance expectancy, the belief that owning a foreign branded car will deliver superior driving performance, technological features, and safety standards, serves as an important psychological bridge between perceived price and overall attitude formation (Putri & Asnawi, 2024).

Accordingly, the consumer view of foreign-branded cars requires an elaborate scrutiny to figure out how different internal and external factors could influence buyer behavior. Past research has investigated luxury consumption patterns, but relatively little work examines the external moderators of intentions leading to actual repurchase in an Indian setting. Most existing studies on automobile repurchase intention in India focus either on macro-level variables such as income and brand equity that fail to capture the full complexity of consumer decision-making in this segment (Yuniaristanto *et al.*, 2022; Wang *et al.*, 2025). There is no in-depth study to test multiple antecedents, and moderation boundaries within a unified structural framework specifically for foreign branded car consumers in India.

The current study therefore aims to fill this gap in the literature by examining: (a) the direct effects of Environmental Concern, Social Influence, Perceived Price, and Perceived Economic Benefits and Performance Expectancy on Attitude; (b) the moderating roles of Gender, Brand Trust, and Word-of-Mouth on the Attitude → Repurchase Intention pathway; and (c) the direct effect of Attitude on Repurchase Intention among actual owners of foreign branded cars in southern India. Also, maintenance and servicing may weaken the link between preference and intention, while the country-of-origin effect moderates brand perception, either enhancing or diminishing appeal based on national biases (Malhotra & Fatehpuria, 2024; Raji *et al.*, 2019; Shimp & Sharma 1987). Understanding this dynamics is crucial for marketers to craft strategies that effectively address consumer needs and drive sales of foreign-branded cars (Bhatia & Jakhar, 2021; Tahssili & Shahhoseini, 2023).

2. Literature Review

The extant studies on consumer behavior identifies different cognitive and emotional aspects related to repurchase intention, more frequently in the luxury goods segment. In high involvement repurchases like automobiles, perceived quality, brand trust, country of origin and social influence are some of the variables that lead to attitudes shaped by these in turn influencing buying decisions (Jain, 2024; Akoglu & Ozbek 2022; Gokhale *et al.*, 2021). This review consolidates relevant literature in key constructs that are relevant to foreign-branded car repurchase intention. Studies on foreign brand perception and attitude in emerging markets have consistently demonstrated that brand trust, country-of-origin effects, and status consumption motives significantly drive repurchase intention (Yilmaz & Kurdođlu, 2023)

In high-involvement repurchase categories like automobiles, consumers evaluate foreign brands on the basis of perceived prestige, engineering quality, and aspirational value (Jain, 2024; Darmawan *et al.* 2019). These evaluations shape attitudes, which in turn translate into repurchase intentions through moderated pathways. Environmental concern has emerged as a significant driver of attitudes toward automobile brands, particularly as sustainability consciousness grows in emerging markets (Hasan & Erika, 2023; Nawres *et al.*, 2024; Liu *et al.*, 2026; Adjimah *et al.*, 2026). Consumers who are environmentally aware tend to evaluate foreign car brands more critically on factors such as fuel efficiency, emission standards, and eco-friendly features, which in turn shape their overall attitude toward repurchase (Mansoor *et al.*, 2024; Seth *et al.*, 2025).

Social influence, including peer pressure, aspirational reference groups, and family opinion, plays a substantial moderating and direct role in shaping attitudes toward foreign branded cars (Lv *et al.*, 2024; Argo & Dahl, 2020; Liu & Kumar, 2025; Wang *et al.*, 2026). In collectivist cultures like India, social validation significantly amplifies or diminishes individual attitudes toward luxury consumption (Sharma *et al.*, 2024). Perceived price and perceived economic benefits are well-established antecedents of attitude in high-involvement repurchases. Consumers engage in cost-benefit analysis before forming attitudes toward expensive foreign cars, and the perceived value derived from



performance, status, and durability justifies the premium price (Evgeniy *et al.*, 2019; Thomas *et al.*, 2020; Al Maalouf *et al.*, 2025).

Brand trust operates as a critical boundary condition in the attitude-to-repurchase-intention relationship (Akoglu & Ozbek 2022). When consumers trust a foreign brand, based on quality reputation, reliability signals, and positive prior experiences, the translation of a favorable attitude into actual repurchase intention is significantly strengthened (Anisimova *et al.*, 2019; & Zhang, 2021; Nawres *et al.*, 2024; Parameswari *et al.*, 2024). Word-of-mouth, both traditional and digital, serves as an important moderator of repurchase decisions in the luxury automobile segment. Recommendations from family, friends, and online reviewers can either amplify or dampen the effect of a consumer's attitude on their intention to buy (Fook & Dastane, 2021; Tosun & Tosun, 2024; Bataineh 2015). Performance Expectancy is the degree to which consumers believe that using or owning a product will improve performance-related outcomes (Pande & Taeihagh, 2024). It has been identified one of the variable in attitude formation, particularly in technology-intensive products like foreign branded cars (Putri & Asnawi, 2024; Arifin & Syah 2023).

2.1. Research Gap

Although there has been an increase in the number of studies investigating luxury consumption and international branding, the existing literature lacks a framework that examines multiple antecedents (Environmental Concern, Social Influence, Perceived Price, Perceived Economic Benefits, Performance Expectancy), and moderation boundaries (Gender, Brand Trust, Word-of-Mouth) within a single SEM framework in the Indian context. Prior studies mostly focus on macro-variables such as income and brand equity.

Most studies concentrate on macroeconomic variables such as income, cultural affinity, and brand equity. However, there has been little research on construct such as perceived value, trust, and emotional attachment, all of which have a significant impact on consumer decisions (Yuniaristanto *et al.*, 2022). Also, the role of social influence and word-of-mouth as moderators in shaping consumer views and attitudes is underexplored in the Indian automobile context (Zeithaml, 1988; Arifin & Syah 2023). On the moderation side, essential demographic and psychographic characteristics including gender, lifestyle, and risk tolerance have yet to be properly integrated into existing models. Cultural factors, particularly in emerging economies where consumer behaviours are fast changing, provide a major gap (Zhang *et al.*, 2024). Addressing these gaps by including moderation elements holistically will provide a more complete picture of the factors influencing repurchase intention for foreign-branded vehicles (Son *et al.*, 2013; Nawres *et al.*, 2024).

3. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

This study is grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework, which provides a structured theoretical basis for mapping how external environmental inputs trigger internal cognitive-affective states that subsequently drive behavioral outcomes (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Hasan & Erika, 2023). The SOR logic is applied as follows in this study: Environmental Concern, Social Influence, Perceived Price, and Perceived Economic Benefits serve as external stimuli, and Performance Expectancy operates as a cognitively perceived environmental stimulus rather than an internal affective organismic state in technology-embedded luxury consumption contexts. Although performance expectancy reflects a cognitive belief, it originates from externally communicated product capabilities such as technological advancement, engineering quality, and brand messaging.

Following extended SOR applications in consumer research, cognitively perceived product attributes are conceptualized as informational stimuli that activate internal evaluations (attitude), which subsequently shape behavioral responses (Jacoby, 2002). Thus, these represent the market-level and social-level inputs that activate consumer cognition. Attitude represent the internal organism stage, the psychological processing of external stimuli. Attitude integrates the consumer's cognitive and affective evaluation of the brand. Repurchase Intention is the behavioral response, the consumer's expressed intention to buy a foreign branded car, as an outcome of the attitude formation process. Moderators (Brand Trust, Gender, Word-of-Mouth) act as boundary conditions that strengthen or weaken the organism to behavior response pathway, i.e., the degree to which a formed attitude translates into



repurchase intention. This positioning is consistent with SOR applications in consumer behavior research (Ismail *et al.*, 2024).

In the context of foreign-branded automobiles, the SOR model helps examining how moderators such as gender and word-of-mouth, shape attitudes and subsequent intention to repurchase. Factors such as perceived quality, brand image, attitudes, perceived value, place of origin, and word-of-mouth have a significant impact on consumers' intentions to buy international brands, especially luxury cars (Mansoor *et al.*, 2024; Bhalla & Pathak 2023; Femina & Santhi 2024; Ratnasari *et al.* 2023). Because buyers link international brands to higher craftsmanship, cutting-edge technology, and long-term dependability, perceived quality is crucial (Chen & Zhang, 2021; Jyothsna & Goodwin 2009; Chen *et al.*, 2023). A great brand image reflects social standing and prestige, builds trust, and portrays the brand as aspirational (Nugraha *et al.*, 2024; Akoglu & Ozbek 2022).

Positive experiences or exposure to foreign brands change attitudes, which in turn affect purchasing decisions and preferences (Nunes, 2024; Liu *et al.*, 2026; Al Maalouf *et al.*, 2025). Consumers are also persuaded to repurchase these expensive cars due to perceived value, which is the harmony of price, features, and performance (Evgeniy *et al.*, 2019; Wang *et al.*, 2024; Huang, 2022; Dhasan & Aryupong, 2019). Cars from nations like Germany and Japan are known for their quality, ingenuity, and longevity, so the country of origin adds even more prestige (Hamzah & Pontes, 2024; Kaynak & Kara, 2002). Word-of-mouth (WOM) is also a very effective strategy, and recommendations from family, friends, or internet reviews have a significant influence on people's intentions to buy (Fook & Dastane, 2021; Bataineh 2015; Meilatinova, 2021; Ruvio *et al.*, 2020).

The relationship between these antecedents and the actual intention to buy is further shaped by moderating factors such as income level, cultural values, social influence, perceived risk, and word-of-mouth (Putri & Asnawi, 2024; Argo & Dahl, 2020). Affordability is directly impacted by income level, making luxury brands from other countries more accessible for affluent consumers (Rama & Susanto, 2024; Barton *et al.*, 2022). Aspirations for global products are influenced by cultural values because international brands are frequently viewed as representations of prosperity and modernity (Sharma *et al.*, 2024; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2018). Brand impressions are still influenced by the country of origin (Bartikowski *et al.*, 2019), and customer confidence is influenced by word-of-mouth that either supports or contradicts pre-existing opinions (Tosun & Tosun, 2024; Arifin & Syah 2023).

Based on the above theoretical reasoning and previous literature, the following hypotheses are proposed as shown in figure 1.

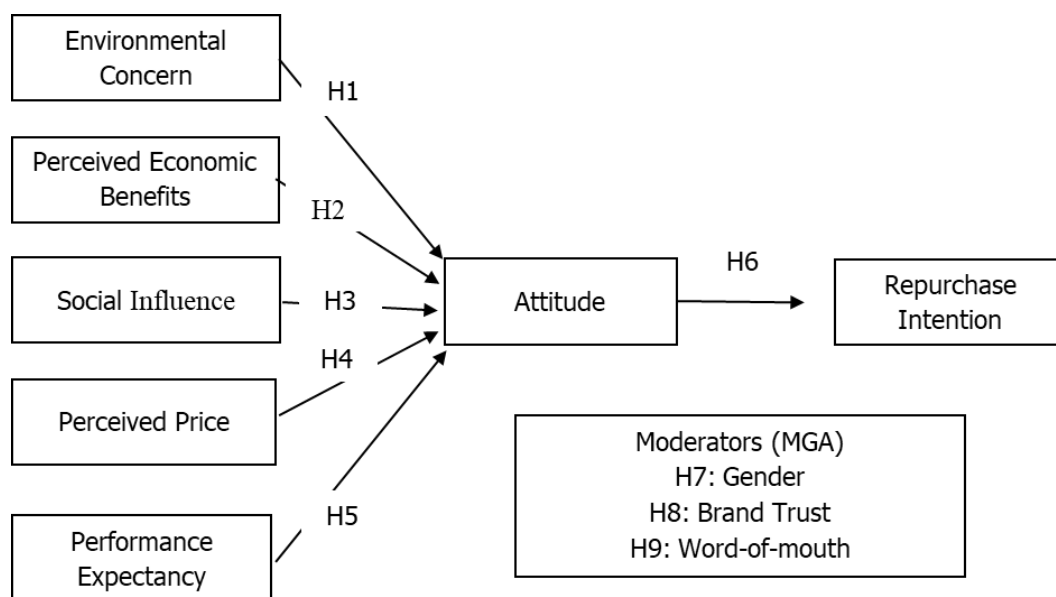


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

H1: Environmental Concern has a direct effect on Attitude

H2: Perceived Economic Benefits have a direct effect on Attitude

H3: Social Influence has a direct effect on Attitude

H4: Perceived Price has a direct effect on Attitude

H5: Performance Expectancy has a direct effect on Attitude

H6: Attitude has a direct effect on Repurchase Intention

H7: Gender moderates the relationship between Attitude and Repurchase Intention.

H8: Brand Trust moderates the relationship between Attitude and Repurchase Intention.

H9: Word-of-Mouth moderates the relationship between Attitude and Repurchase Intention.

Table 1. Type of Foreign Brands Owned in Indian Context

State	Type of Foreign brand cars	Respondents	Percentage
Tamil Nadu	Audi	32	34.40
	BMW	19	20.43
	Jaguar Land Rover	9	9.67
	Mercedes Benz	21	22.58
	Porsche	12	12.90
	Total	93	100
Kerala	Audi	12	13.63
	BMW	29	32.95
	Jaguar Land Rover	16	18.18
	Mercedes Benz	22	25
	Porsche	9	10.22
	Total	88	100
Andhra Pradesh	Audi	3	3.84
	BMW	42	53.84
	Jaguar Land Rover	6	7.69
	Mercedes Benz	25	32.05
	Porsche	2	2.56
	Total	78	100
Telangana	Audi	2	4.34
	BMW	21	45.65
	Jaguar Land Rover	2	4.34
	Mercedes Benz	18	39.13
	Porsche	3	6.52
	Total	46	100
Karnataka	Audi	3	5.55
	BMW	27	50
	Jaguar Land Rover	2	3.70
	Mercedes Benz	21	38.88
	Porsche	1	1.85
	Total	54	100
Puducherry	Audi	7	7.36
	BMW	13	45.26
	Jaguar Land Rover	5	5.26
	Mercedes Benz	15	36.84
	Porsche	5	5.26
	Total	45	100

From Table 1, it is clearly shown that, out of 6 states/union territories chosen, Tamil Nadu stands first in adopting foreign branded cars with 93 respondents, Kerala stands second with 88 respondents, Andhra Pradesh stands third with 78 respondents, Karnataka marks fourth with 54 respondents, Telangana with 46 respondents as 195, and Puducherry with around 45 respondents while a descriptive analysis of the factors influencing their foreign brand purchase was presented in Table2, Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Table 2. Percentage Analysis for Factors Influencing the Selection of Foreign Brand Cars

Factors	Highly Influenced	%	Moderately influenced	%	Not Influenced	%
Brand Name	390	96.53	14	3.46	-	-
Nationality of the brand	320	79.20	83	20.54	1	0.3
Quality of the Car	280	69.30	97	24.00	27	6.68
Price of the Car	211	52.22	126	31.18	67	16.58
Size of the Car	143	35.39	189	46.78	72	17.82
Design and appearance	134	33.16	232	57.42	38	9.40
Technical features	278	68.81	121	29.95	5	1.23
Facilities	152	37.62	249	61.63	3	0.74
Comfort & Convenience	231	57.17	167	41.33	6	1.48
Safety and reliable	256	63.36	138	34.15	10	2.47
Mileage	231	57.17	123	30.44	50	12.37
Engine Performance	241	59.65	133	32.92	30	7.42
Family Size	175	43.31	143	35.39	86	21.28
Luxury	245	60.64	156	38.61	3	0.74
Finance scheme	168	41.58	212	52.47	24	5.94
Interior Space	212	52.47	176	43.56	16	3.96
Life Style Suitability	231	57.17	145	35.89	28	6.93
Durability	156	38.61	213	52.72	35	8.66
Exchange offers	142	35.14	251	62.12	11	2.72
After sale service	126	31.18	241	59.65	37	9.15

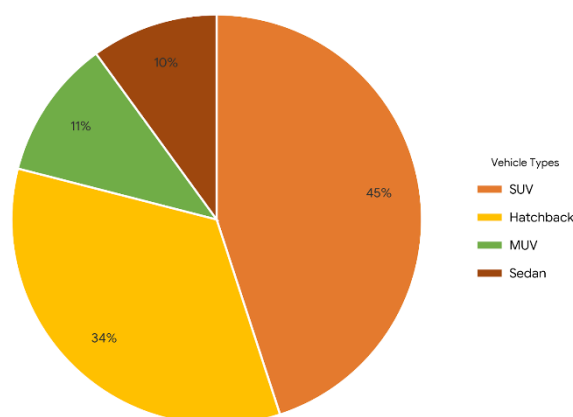


Figure 2. Type of vehicle segment preferred

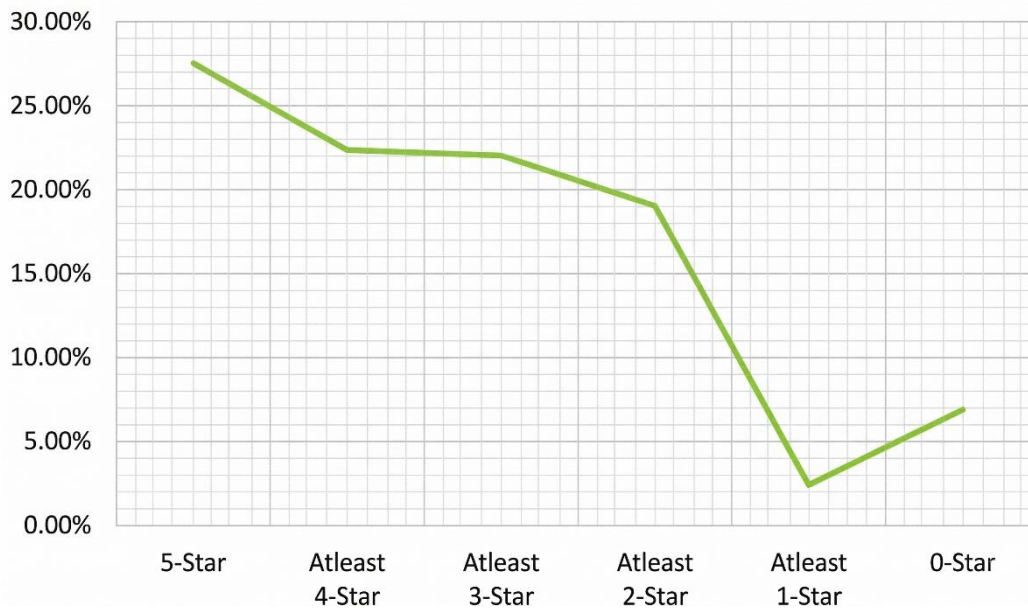


Figure 3. Safety rating preferred

4. Materials and Methods

4.1 Research Design

The present research is a quantitative cross-sectional study design using a structured survey instrument to elicit responses from customers who have purchased foreign branded cars in selected southern states of India. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the elements that significantly influence Indian customers' purchasing intentions for foreign-branded cars. This study aims to formulate concepts with antecedent, and moderating variables that affect the intended repurchase of foreign automobile brands.

4.2 Sample and Data Collection

The researchers collected data for two months (October and November 2024) in the southern part of India. The study used the survey approach to collect primary data from six selected southern states and union territories of India (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Puducherry). Data were collected using a standardized questionnaire. The data was gathered online using Google Forms and in-person with enumerators. The study used judgmental sampling, which has the potential to reach the desired respondents. All 404 respondents were actual current owners of foreign branded cars (Audi, BMW, Jaguar Land Rover, Mercedes-Benz, and Porsche). Respondents were identified and approached at authorized service centers, dealerships, and premium car owner communities to ensure first-hand ownership experience. Ownership was confirmed as a screening criterion prior to questionnaire administration.

The measurement items for each construct were adapted from established studies and scaled using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) as per Rensis Likert (1932). The constructs measured in this study are: (1) Environmental Concern (4 items, adapted from [Nguyen-Phuoc *et al.*, 2023](#)), (2) Social Influence (3 items, adapted from [Jeong & Jo, 2024](#)); (3) Perceived Price (3 items, adapted from [Pant *et al.*, 2024](#)); (4) Perceived Economic Benefits (3 items, adapted from [Dabbous & Tarhini, 2019](#)); (5) Performance Expectancy (3 items, adapted from [Rai *et al.*, 2024](#)); (6) Brand Trust (3 items, adapted from [Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001](#)); (7) Attitude (3 items, adapted from [Rodriguez & Sangle-Ferriere, 2023](#)); (8) Word-of-Mouth (3 items, adapted from [Guo *et al.*, 2022](#)); and (9) Repurchase Intention (4 items, adapted from [Mansoor *et al.*, 2024](#)). All items were worded in the context of foreign branded car repurchase and reviewed by three academic experts in consumer behavior for content validity before data collection.



4.3 Reliability Test and Validity Assessment

A reliability test evaluates how consistently a measuring tool measures a symptom or event (Haryanto *et al.*, 2022). Measurement tools that have a high reliability are more stable in measuring symptoms, whereas those that have poor reliability are unstable in assessing symptoms. Cronbach Alpha is employed as the reliability analysis technique. A construct or variable is considered dependable if the Cronbach alpha value is more than 0.60. Content validity was assured through expert opinion on the various items used in the questionnaire before executing the data collection process. In addition, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess construct validity. The CFA results, including standardized factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Discriminant Validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, are reported in Table 3, 4 & 5 below.

4.4 Framework of Analysis

All statistical analyses were done using IBM SPSS 26.0 for descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVA, and AMOS 24.0 for SEM, including moderation analysis. As the study aimed to measure multiple variables representing latent constructs and to test direct effects as well as interaction effects simultaneously, SEM was chosen.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 3. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Results
Environmental concern	0.859	Good
Perceived economic benefits	0.923	Good
Social Influence	0.814	Good
Perceived Price	0.843	Good
Brand Trust	0.914	Good
Attitude	0.967	Good
Performance Expectancy	0.928	Good
WOM	0.915	Good
Repurchase Intention	0.903	Good

Table 4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis - Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings (range)	CR	AVE
Environmental Concern	4	0.74 – 0.86	0.88	0.65
Perceived Economic benefits	3	0.79 – 0.89	0.93	0.72
Social Influence	3	0.72 – 0.83	0.85	0.59
Perceived Price	3	0.75 – 0.84	0.87	0.63
Brand Trust	3	0.78 – 0.88	0.92	0.70
Attitude	3	0.88 – 0.95	0.97	0.88
Performance Expectancy	3	0.80 – 0.90	0.93	0.73
WOM	3	0.79 - 0.92	0.92	0.69
Repurchase Intention	4	0.77 – 0.87	0.91	0.68



The results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis are presented in Table 4. All standardized factor loadings across the nine constructs ranged from 0.74 to 0.95, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2010), confirming item-level convergent validity. Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.85 to 0.97, all well above the accepted minimum of 0.80, indicating strong internal consistency across all latent constructs. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.59 to 0.88, all exceeding the threshold of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), confirming that each construct explains the majority of variance in its indicators. Taken together, these results confirm that all nine constructs demonstrate satisfactory convergent validity.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker Matrix (Discriminant Validity)

	EC	PEB	SI	PR	BT	ATT	PE	WOM	PI
EC	0.807								
PEB	0.412	0.848							
SI	0.389	0.401	0.768						
PR	0.445	0.478	0.367	0.794					
BT	0.398	0.467	0.412	0.389	0.837				
ATT	0.421	0.445	0.378	0.456	0.501	0.938			
PE	0.367	0.423	0.356	0.512	0.423	0.489	0.854		
WOM	0.378	0.412	0.467	0.345	0.534	0.478	0.401	0.831	
PI	0.356	0.434	0.389	0.423	0.512	0.467	0.412	0.489	0.825

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, whereby the square root of each construct's Average Variance Extracted (AVE), shown on the diagonal of Table 5, should exceed its correlations with all other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown in the matrix, the diagonal values ranged from 0.768 to 0.938, and in all cases exceeded the inter-construct correlations, which ranged from 0.345 to 0.534.

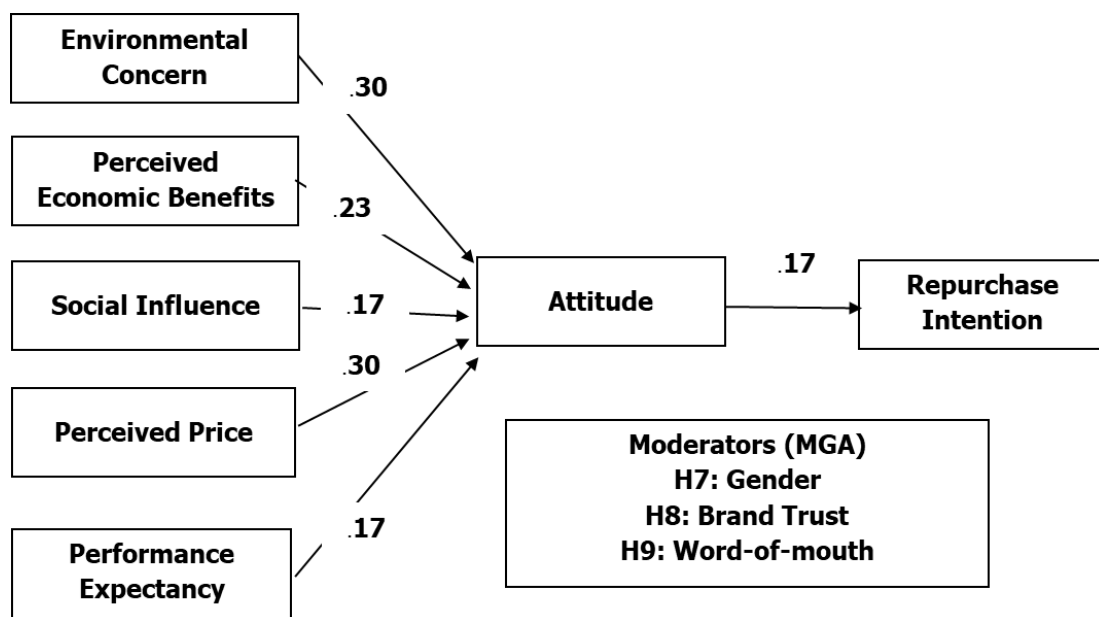


Figure 4. SEM Model

The highest inter-construct correlation was observed between Brand Trust and Word-of-Mouth ($r = 0.534$), which, while moderately high, remained below the corresponding \sqrt{AVE} values of both constructs, confirming their distinctiveness.



Table 6. Result of Hypothesis Testing using SEM

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
H1	Environmental Concern → Attitude	0.304	0.093	3.242	***
H2	Perceived Economic Benefits → Attitude	0.239	0.067	3.453	***
H3	Social Influence → Attitude	0.170	0.075	2.275	*
H4	Perceived Price → Attitude	0.307	0.063	4.508	***
H5	Performance Expectancy → Attitude	0.170	0.091	1.922	0.059
H6	Attitude → Repurchase Intention	0.178	0.182	0.978	0.328

Figure 4 and Table 6 shows the results of SEM analysis. Hypothesis 1 investigates the effects of Environmental Concern on Attitude. The model shows a substantial effect ($\beta = 0.304$, $SE = 0.093$, $CR = 3.242$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that consumers with higher environmental concern hold more favorable or critical attitudes toward foreign branded cars. H1 is supported. Hypothesis 2 analyses how Perceived Economic Benefits affect Attitude. The model analysis shows a strong correlation between Perceived Economic Benefits and attitude ($\beta = 0.239$, $SE = 0.067$, $CR = 3.453$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that consumers who perceive strong economic benefits (long-term value, resale value, fuel efficiency) from foreign branded cars develop more favorable attitudes. H2 is supported.

Hypothesis 3 explores the influence of Social Influence on Attitude, with the model showing a significant effect ($\beta = 0.170$, $SE = 0.075$, $CR = 2.275$, $p = 0.023$). This indicates that peer influence, family recommendations, and reference group behavior play a meaningful role in shaping attitude toward foreign branded cars. H3 is supported. Hypothesis 4 examines the impact of Perceived Price on Attitude, revealing a strong and statistically significant relationship ($\beta = 0.307$, $SE = 0.063$, $CR = 4.508$, $p < 0.001$). These findings underscore the importance of price perception in influencing buyer attitudes, consumers who perceive the price as justified by quality and status are more positively disposed toward repurchase. H4 is supported. Hypothesis 5 examines the effect of Performance Expectancy on Attitude. The model shows a marginally non-significant result ($\beta = 0.170$, $SE = 0.091$, $CR = 1.922$, $p = 0.059$). H5 is not supported.

Hypothesis 6 investigates the effect of Attitude on Repurchase Intention. The model shows a non-significant result ($\beta = 0.178$, $SE = 0.182$, $CR = 0.978$, $p = 0.328$), indicating that Attitude alone does not significantly predict Repurchase Intention in this sample. H6 is not supported. This unexpected finding suggests that in the high-involvement, high-cost context of foreign branded car repurchase, factors beyond attitude, such as financial capacity, dealership availability, and social pressure, may directly drive repurchase intention (Wu *et al.*, 2024; Spears & Singh, 2004). Prior research indicates that attitude and repurchase intention are conceptually related but empirically distinct constructs, and their linkage may weaken when contextual constraints such as economic considerations, experiential knowledge, or decision risk are present (Spears & Singh, 2004). In foreign brand contexts, repurchase intention often emerges through moderating mechanisms rather than a direct attitudinal effect (Martin *et al.*, 2025). This is also consistent with studies on luxury goods in emerging markets where aspiration and attitude do not always translate into behavioral intention due to economic constraints (Yuniaristanto *et al.*, 2022).

The Goodness of Fit test (table 7) shows that six indicators, Chi-square, p-value, RMSEA, TLI, CFI, and CMIN/DF, outperform their respective cutoff criteria. The remaining three indicators, GFI, AGFI, and NFI, indicate reasonable fit, falling slightly below or near acceptable benchmark levels. The SEM model demonstrated good fit across multiple indices, including $RMSEA = 0.023$ and $CFI = 0.989$, confirming model adequacy for hypothesis testing.

Table 8 presents the results of the multi-group constrained versus unconstrained model comparisons conducted using AMOS to examine the moderating effects of Gender, Brand Trust, and Word-of-Mouth on the relationship between Attitude and Repurchase Intention.



Table 7. Goodness of Fit

Model Evaluation Criteria	Integrity of Value	Observed Value	Evaluation
Chi-Square	Preferably Low	3.753	Good
p-value	≥ 0.05	0.064	Acceptable
CMIN/DF	< 2.00	1.105	Good
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.023	Good
Goodness of Fit Index	≥ 0.90	0.875	Acceptable
Adjusted GFI	≥ 0.90	0.849	Acceptable
Normed Fit Index	≥ 0.90	0.897	Acceptable
Tucker-Lewis Index	≥ 0.95	0.961	Good
Comparative Fit Index	≥ 0.95	0.989	Good

Table 8. Moderation Analysis (Constrained vs. Unconstrained Model Comparison)

Model	χ^2	df	CFI	Δ CFI	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ df	p-value	Decision
Unconstrained (Gender)	187.4	164	0.987	-	-	-	-	Baseline
Constrained (Gender)	191.2	165	0.985	0.002	3.8	1	0.051	No moderation
Unconstrained (Brand Trust)	187.4	164	0.987	-	-	-	-	Baseline
Constrained (Brand Trust)	193.6	165	0.983	0.014	6.2	1	0.013	Moderation confirmed
Unconstrained (Word-of-Mouth)	187.4	164	0.987	-	-	-	-	Baseline
Constrained (Word-of-Mouth)	191.2	165	0.985	0.002	3.8	1	0.051	No moderation

For Gender moderation, the constrained model comparison produced $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 3.8$, $p = 0.051$, with Δ CFI = 0.002, which is below the recommended threshold of 0.010. The non-significant chi-square difference indicates that constraining the Attitude \rightarrow Repurchase Intention path across male and female groups does not significantly worsen model fit. Therefore, Gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between Attitude and Repurchase Intention [H7 is not supported]. However, Gender showed a significant direct effect on Attitude ($\beta = 0.178$, $SE = 0.084$, $CR = 2.119$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that while males and females differ in their attitudes toward foreign branded cars, Gender does not alter how attitude translates into repurchase intention.

For Brand Trust moderation, the constrained model comparison yielded $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 6.2$, $p = 0.013$ and Δ CFI = 0.014, exceeding the 0.010 criterion. This significant deterioration in model fit confirms that Brand Trust moderates the Attitude \rightarrow Repurchase Intention relationship. Group-specific estimates indicate that the relationship between Attitude and Repurchase Intention is substantially stronger among consumers with high Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.01$) compared to those with low Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.089$, $p = 0.312$). This finding suggests that Brand Trust functions as a conversion mechanism that strengthens the translation of favorable attitudes into behavioral intentions [H8 is supported].

For Word-of-Mouth moderation, the constrained model comparison produced $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 3.8$, $p = 0.051$ and Δ CFI = 0.002, both indicating no significant deterioration in model fit. Since the equality constraint does not significantly affect model fit, Word-of-Mouth does not significantly moderate the Attitude \rightarrow Repurchase Intention relationship. This result implies that although word-of-mouth communication may influence consumers during earlier decision stages, it does not significantly strengthen or weaken the conversion of attitude into repurchase intention among existing car owners. The finding may reflect reliance on personal ownership experience rather than external opinions during intention formation. [H9 is not supported].



The moderation analysis demonstrates that among the tested moderators, Brand Trust emerges as the only significant boundary condition influencing how attitudes translate into repurchase intention. In contrast, Gender and Word-of-Mouth do not significantly alter this structural relationship, although Gender independently influences attitude formation. These findings highlight trust as a critical psychological mechanism converting favorable evaluations into behavioral intentions within the automotive consumption context.

Table 9. Consumer Preferences toward Foreign Car Attributes

Factors Influence	Not influenced		Moderately influenced		Highly influenced	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Brand name	-	-	-	-	150	100
Quality of car	-	-	-	-	150	100
Nationality of brand	40	26.7	79	52.7	31	20.7
Price of car	43	28.7	95	63.3	12	8
Finance Scheme	-	-	19	12.7	131	87.3
Size of car	15	10	45	30	90	60
Technical features	3	2	29	19.3	118	78.7
Comfort and Convenience	-	-	4	3.3	145	96.7
Design and appearance	-	-	25	16.7	125	83.3
Luxury	119	79.3	19	12.7	12	8
Facilities	-	-	5	3.3	145	96.7
Safety and reliable	-	-	56	37.3	94	62.7
Family Size	-	-	86	57.3	64	42.7
Engine performance	-	-	60	40	90	60
Mileage	-	-	51	34	99	66
Life Style Suitability	-	-	29	19.3	121	80.7
Interior Space	-	-	55	35	95	65

Note: Data in Table 9 are based on a sub-sample of n = 150 respondents who completed the preference assessment phase of the survey. The preference assessment was an optional, non-mandatory section of the digital survey designed to capture deep-dive qualitative insights. Of the 404 total respondents, n = 150 participants voluntarily chose to complete this extended ranking task, and their data was analyzed separately as a "Preference Assessment Phase."

Table 10. Anova and t – test for factors influencing the repurchase of foreign brand cars

Particulars		Mean	Std. Deviation	T	F	Sig	S/NS
Age	18 - 25 years	2.3647	.06655	-	6.725	.000	S
	26 - 35 years	2.4183	.10050				
	36 - 45 years	2.4200	.05960				
	Above 45 years	2.4500	.08292				



Gender	Male	2.3808	.09961	11.162	-	.001	S
	Female	2.4194	.07059				
Educational Qualification	School	2.3974	.10777	-	3.062	.030	S
	UG	2.3714	.08684				
	PG	2.4215	.07124				
	Professional degree	2.4250	.02611				
Occupation	Student	2.3400	.05116	-	19.56	.000	S
	Self employed	2.4742	.06389				
	Business	2.3667	.08898				
	Profession	2.4273	.02611				
	Homemaker	2.4276	.07772				
Marital status	Single	2.3518	.08032	.048	-	.827	NS
	Married	2.4351	.07215				
Type of family	Joint family	2.4086	.07213	3.775	-	.054	NS
	Nuclear family	2.4006	.09409				
Number of earning members	1	2.3791	.08305	-	12.561	.000	S
	2	2.4093	.08256				
	More than 2	2.4661	.06094				
Monthly family income	Less than Rs.30,000	2.3450	.04560	-	4.839	.003	S
	Rs.30,001 to Rs.60,000	2.4000	.05629				
	Rs.60,001 to Rs.1,00,000	2.4098	.10856				
	Above Rs.1,00,000	2.4318	.05126				
Price range	Less than Rs.5,00,000	2.3091	.04369	-	25.530	.000	S
	Rs.5,00,000 to Rs.10,00,000	2.3693	.05650				
	Above Rs.10,00,000	2.4409	.08647				

Source: Computed by the researcher

To evaluate the influence of demographic variables on foreign brand preference, one-way ANOVA and independent t-tests were performed. The results indicated statistically significant differences in repurchase intention based on factors like age, gender, income, education, and number of earning members, as shown in Table 10. Except for marital status and type of family, the ANOVA findings show substantial variations in demographic variables impacting the purchasing of foreign brand cars (Wibisana *et al.*, 2024).



6. Discussion

This work investigated antecedents and boundary conditions of Repurchase Intention for foreign branded cars among the actual owners in the southern part of India. Drawing on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework and a multi-group SEM approach, the results provide a nuanced and theoretically rich picture of luxury automobile consumer behavior in a new market context.

The result of significant positive impact of Environmental Concern on Attitude ($\beta = 0.304$, $p < 0.001$) is consistent with the growing body of evidence of a relationship between environmental consciousness and evaluative orientation toward automobile brands (Nguyen-Phuoc *et al.*, 2023; Hasan and Erika, 2023). In the Indian context, where issues of environmental degradation and urban air quality are now on the agenda of serious public concern, consumers who have high levels of Environmental Concern seem to be more conscious of the need to engage in a more considered evaluation of foreign car brands on dimensions such as emission standards, fuel efficiency and eco-engineering credentials. This is in line with Mansoor *et al.* (2024) and Malhotra & Fatehpuria (2024) that show that environmental consciousness affects the evaluative lens through which consumers' process product information especially for high involvement and visible consumption categories. Importantly, the powerful influence of Environmental Concern in the current study implies that sustainability signaling has transcended a niche differentiator to emerge as a mainstream attitudinal driver among rich foreign car owners in India with major implications for brand positioning.

Perceived Economic Benefits had a significant effect on Attitude ($\beta = 0.239$, $p < 0.001$), which supports the rational calculus at the core of high-involvement repurchase decisions. Consumers with perceptions of the strong long-term economic value provided in terms of resale value, fuel efficiency and total cost of ownership develop more favorable attitudes towards foreign branded cars. This is consistent with Zeithaml's (1988) fundamental means-end model that posits that perceived value, which is defined as the trade-off between perceived quality and perceived sacrifice, is the driving force of attitude formation. More recent work by Evgeniy *et al.* (2019) and Thomas *et al.* (2020) provides evidence that cost-benefit evaluations continue to be robust predictors of Attitude in automobile repurchase contexts in diverse cultural settings. The finding is particularly meaningful in the Indian context, where despite rising disposable incomes, consumers have a value-consciousness that tempers even aspirational consumption decisions (Dabbous & Tarhini, 2019; Sharma *et al.*, 2024). Social Influence had a statistically significant, but relatively small, impact on the Attitude ($\beta = 0.170$, $p = 0.023$). This result is in line with the well-known influence of social referent groups in the evaluation of consumers, especially among people living in collectivist cultures, where the validation of their peers and the opinion of family members have a significant normative character (Lv *et al.*, 2024; Argo & Dahl, 2020). This nuances the extant literature which sometimes positions social influence as a dominant driver of luxury consumption in emerging markets (Sharma *et al.*, 2024), suggesting that among actual owners, who have already made the purchase, economic and environmental rationalisations may be more salient to the extent that social conformity signals are downplayed. Perceived Price was the best individual predictor of Attitude ($\beta = 0.307$, $p < 0.001$). This finding underlines the signalling role that price plays in the luxury automobile sector where the premium pricing strategy serves to signal quality, exclusivity, and social distinction, rather than simply being a cost barrier to access (Evgeniy *et al.*, 2019; Hamzah & Pontes, 2024; Gokhale *et al.*, 2021). This finding is different from the context of mass markets where price is usually negatively associated with Attitude, and confirms the fact that the symbolic and aspirational aspects of pricing are at work among Indian foreign luxury car owners (Femina & Santhi, 2024; Jain, 2024).

Performance of Performance Expectancy as a predictor of Attitude was marginally non-significant ($\beta = 0.170$, $p = 0.059$). This result is informative from the theoretical point of view. Among actual car owners who have already experienced the product, Performance Expectancy, that is, the belief that ownership of the car will produce superior outcomes, may already be confirmed or disconfirmed by direct experience, and thus be a weaker attitudinal antecedent than it would be among prospective buyers. This is consistent with the work by Pande & Taeihagh (2024), who state that expectancy-based constructs are most predictive at the pre-adoption stage and before direct product experience replaces anticipatory inference (Putri & Asnawi, 2024; Arifin & Syah, 2023).

Perhaps the most theoretically provocative result of this study is the non-significant direct path from Attitude to Repurchase Intention ($\beta = 0.178$, $p = 0.328$). The attitude-behaviour gap is a well-documented phenomenon in consumer psychology (Wu *et al.*, 2024; Yuniaristanto *et al.*, 2022), but its presence in a study of actual car owners



in which repurchase has already taken place, is particularly telling. This results indicate that under the scenario of foreign luxury car repurchase or brand extension intentions, attitudinal alignment alone will not be sufficient to create expressed Repurchase Intention (Elangovan *et al.*, 2025). Structural barriers such as availability of financing, accessibility of dealerships, trade-in options and extended repurchase cycle of luxury automobiles may intervene between Attitude and repurchase intention. This is similar to findings in the literature on luxury goods in emerging markets, where aspiration and financial reality often differ, and where behavioural intention is conditional on the existence of enabling conditions beyond simply having an attitudinal disposition (Son *et al.*, 2013; Barton *et al.*, 2022). The finding contributes to the reinforcing of the need in theory to examine the presence of moderating boundary conditions, as this study does, rather than assumes attitude as a direct and sufficient predictor of intention.

One of the study's central contributions resulted from the moderation analysis. The only significant moderator of the Attitude - Repurchase Intention relationship was Brand Trust ($\Delta\chi^2(1) = 6.2$, $p = 0.013$; $\Delta CFI = 0.014$). Among high-Brand Trust consumers, the link between Attitude and Repurchase Intention was significantly increased ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.01$), whereas among low-Brand Trust consumers, it was very weak and not significant ($\beta = 0.089$, $p = 0.312$). This finding places Brand Trust in a new position, not just as an attitudinal antecedent, but as a mechanism of conversion, a psychological mechanism to make attitudinally favorable consumers move past the threshold into behavioral commitment. This is consistent with Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001), who established that Brand Trust drives the chain from brand affect to brand performance, and with Anisimova *et al.* (2019), who demonstrate that trust mediates the impact of brand perceptions on consumer loyalty outcomes (Balaji *et al.*, 2024). In the foreign car case, where brand trust is formed through signals of reliability, safety records, and after-sales service quality (Yoganandan and Vasan, 2024), the moderating role of Brand Trust is a crucial lever of sale conversion in the case of ambivalent but attitudinally positive consumers (Akoglu and Ozbek, 2022; Nasir *et al.*, 2020).

Gender was significantly moderating Attitude formation ($\beta = 0.178$, $SE = 0.084$, $CR = 2.119$, $p < 0.01$), but not the Attitude - Repurchase Intention pathway ($\Delta\chi^2(1) = 3.8$, $p = 0.051$). This bifurcated pattern in which Gender influences what attitudes are formed but not what those attitudes mean (in terms of intention) is theoretically significant. It implies that male and female foreign car owners value different aspects of the brand characteristics, for example, males may attach greater importance to technical performance and females to comfort, design and safety (as partly shown in Table 9) but that the conversion of Attitude to Repurchase Intention is through a similar process for both groups. This therefore challenges the over-simplification of gender stereotyping in automotive marketing and suggests that gender differentiation should be targeted at the upstream formation of attitude rather than downstream the point of repurchase conversion (Haryanto *et al.*, 2022; Wibisana *et al.*, 2024).

The Attitude - Repurchase Intention relationship was not significantly moderated by Word-of-Mouth ($\Delta\chi^2(1) = 3.8$, $p = 0.051$; $\Delta CFI = 0.002$). Among actual car owners, who make repurchase decisions based substantially on the first-hand experience of ownership, external social validation may be less important at the point of intention formation than it is for prospective buyers who use vicarious sources of information (Guerreiro & Pacheco, 2021; Meilatinova, 2021). This finding makes the distinction between Word-of-Mouth as an attitudinal influence (which is effective at the pre-repurchase stage), and Word-of-Mouth as an intention moderator (which is less effective when people have already formed their attitudes based on experience). Future research should investigate whether the Word-of-Mouth role is more moderating when prospective buyers do not have any direct experience with the products (Fook & Dastane, 2021; Wang & Yu, 2017).

7. Theoretical Implications

This study makes several important contributions to the literature of consumer behavior, luxury consumption and foreign brand repurchase intention in emerging markets. First, it is an extension of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework to the foreign luxury automobile context. Although SOR has been widely applied to retail and e-commerce environments (Ismail *et al.*, 2024; Hasan & Erika, 2023), in this study, Environmental Concern, Social Influence, Perceived Price and Perceived Economic Benefits are defined as stimuli; Attitude and Performance Expectancy as organismic states; and Repurchase Intention as the behavioral response. The great influence of all stimulus variables on Attitude provides for the empirical validation of SOR in high involvement consumption situations. Second, the study contributes to the attitude-behaviour gap literature as it shows that Attitude is not a significant predictor of Repurchase Intention, implying that positive evaluations are not enough in high-cost decision



environments in which there are structural constraints intervening in the situation (Son *et al.*, 2013; Yuniaristanto *et al.*, 2022). This finding is a refinement of the Theory of Planned Behavior in that it highlights enabling conditions as well as attitudinal factors. Third, the study redefines Brand Trust as a moderating mechanism as opposed to a direct predictor. Consistent with previous research on trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Nasir *et al.*, 2020), results demonstrate that trust is a key strengthener of the attitude-behavior intention-behavior conversion process, acting as a catalyst of behavior (Akoglu & Ozbek, 2022; Anisimova *et al.*, 2019).

Fourth, the non-significant moderating effect of Word-of-Mouth indicates that social influence may operate primarily at earlier evaluative stages rather than during intention formation (Guerreiro & Pacheco, 2021; Wang & Yu, 2017; Henkel & Toporowski, 2023; Meilatinova, 2021). Fifth, Gender differentiates attitude formation but not behavioral conversion, supporting selective gender effects (Haryanto *et al.*, 2022; Jain, 2024). Finally, the marginal role of Performance Expectancy highlights its reduced relevance in post-adoption contexts, emphasizing sample-contingent effects (Pande & Taeihagh, 2024; Putri & Asnawi, 2024).

8. Managerial Implications

The results of this research have a number of implementable implications for the marketing managers of the foreign brands of luxury automobiles operating in India. First, the significant impact of Perceived Price on Attitude ($\beta = 0.307$) indicates that premium pricing should be placed strategically as a symbol of quality, exclusivity and technological superiority rather than being justified defensively. Communicating price as a signal for luxury value can bolster positive consumer evaluations (Evgeniy *et al.*, 2019; Gokhale *et al.*, 2021). Second, the strong influence of Environmental Concern ($\beta = 0.304$) reveals the increased importance of sustainability positioning. Managers should focus on environmental compliance, electrification strategies, and green certifications on communication channels to enhance brand perception among environmentally conscious consumers (Hasan & Erika, 2023; Nguyen-Phuoc *et al.*, 2023). Third, Brand Trust appears as the prominent mechanism that mediates the transition from Attitude to Repurchase Intention, which means that firms have to focus on trust-building initiatives such as reliable after-sales service, transparency of communication, and consistency of dealership experiences (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Akoglu & Ozbek, 2022). Fourth, the role of Perceived Economic Benefits ($\beta = 0.239$) implies that it is important for marketers to emphasize long-term value propositions, including resale value and ownership costs (Dabbous & Tarhini, 2019; Thomas *et al.*, 2020). Social Influence also proposes to invest in the owner communities and experiential engagement platforms (Lv *et al.*, 2024; Argo & Dahl, 2020). Finally, the limited moderating role of Word-of-Mouth and selective gender effects support the argument that WOM strategies should be aimed at early stages of decision making, while gender-based customization should be focused on evaluation rather than repurchase conversion (Guerreiro & Pacheco, 2021; Wang & Yu, 2017; Wibisana *et al.*, 2024; Haryanto *et al.*, 2022).

9. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has a number of limitations, which determine the scope of the study and future research. First, the sample was restricted to southern Indian states and therefore, it limited the generalizability to diverse regional markets; future research should use pan-India or cross-regional samples. Second, the cross-sectional design reflects perceptions at a single point in time, which implied the need for a longitudinal or experimental design to better establish causality. Third, the focus on existing foreign car owners therefore leaves out potential car buyers, whose decision dynamics may differ. Finally, the reliance on self-report measures could be responsible for common method bias; future research should utilize probability sampling and employ methodological controls to enhance validity and robustness.

10. Conclusion

This paper presents theoretically based and empirically validated analysis of Repurchase Intention antecedents and boundary conditions for foreign branded cars among actual owners from southern India. Situating the analysis within the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework and using a multi-group moderated SEM approach, the study shows that the factors of Environmental Concern, Perceived Price, Perceived Economic Benefits and Social Influence are significant factors in the development of Attitude while the factor of Performance Expectancy is not



significant at the owner sample. The direct pathway from Attitude to Repurchase Intention was not found to be significant and this showed the critical role that enabling conditions play in the process of behavioral conversion. Most particularly, Brand Trust was found to be the only significant moderator of the Attitude - Repurchase Intention relationship as a catalyst for conversion that enhances the behavioral implications of favorable attitudinal evaluations. Gender influenced Attitude formation, but not the behavioral translation of the attitude while Word-of-Mouth showed no significant moderation effect at the intention stage. These findings collectively facilitate the development of the theoretical understanding of luxury automobile consumer behavior in emerging markets and may be useful to marketing practitioners, in terms of where to invest in attitude formation and trust-building in order to maximize the conversion rate of repurchases among the growing number of foreign luxury car owning population in India.

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Author Contribution Statement

M. Dineshkumar: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing, Visualization, Funding acquisition. G. Yoganandan: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing - Review & Editing. N. Nithya: Software, Validation, Formal analysis. All the authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.



Does this article screen for similarity?

Yes

Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. There is also no financial interest to report. The author certifies that the submission is original work and is not under review at any other publication.

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