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EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF AUTOMOBILE SALES OPERATIONS: EVALUATING LEAD-TO-DELIVERY WORKFLOWS AND CUSTOMER CONVERSION AT MITTAL HYUNDAI, PUNE

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ABSTRACT :

Automobile dealerships depend on a steady flow of leads and on how well those leads are turned into deliveries. This paper studies the lead-to-delivery workflow of Mittal Hyundai, an authorised Hyundai dealership in Viman Nagar, Pune, using the author's On-the-Job Training (OJT) as a Sales Consultant Intern from 20 May to 10 July 2026. The study uses a descriptive and exploratory design. Primary data come from direct observation, the author's activity records (calls, walk-ins, leads, follow-ups and sales) and a short questionnaire answered by 12 customers. Findings show that the dealership generates leads from four sources: cold calling (60+ calls per day), walk-ins (25), one referral and an outdoor bank activation (2 leads). From about 40 customers handled, roughly 12 became serious leads, and 2 cars were sold, which equals 100% of the intern's monthly sales target. Two more cases were still in process. Among the 12 surveyed customers, SUVs were preferred most (41.7%), and mileage (58.3%) and safety (50.0%) were the most mentioned features. A cancelled booking caused by an infotainment mismatch shows that conversion can still be lost late in the process. The paper recommends structured follow-up, need-first selling, a competitor comparison toolkit, disciplined CRM records and regular digital content. Results are indicative because the sample is small and some figures are approximate.

Keywords: Lead Generation, Sales Conversion, Lead-to-Delivery Workflow, Automobile Dealership, Customer Buying Behaviour, Cold Calling, Customer Follow-up, CRM, On-the-Job Training (OJT), Hyundai

I. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Indian passenger vehicle market is large and growing fast. The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) reports domestic passenger vehicle sales of 46,43,439 units in FY 2025–26 and about 1.27 million units in the first quarter of FY 2026–27, a rise of 25.9% over the same quarter last year. Utility vehicles (SUVs) made up about 68% of these sales [1]. Retail data from the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) shows that Hyundai held about 12.50% of retail sales in calendar year 2025 [2]. In such a crowded market, a manufacturer's product alone does not decide who wins. The dealership is the point where a customer's interest becomes a booking and then a delivery.

A dealership earns revenue only when a lead completes the full journey: first contact, need discussion, product demonstration, test drive, price and finance discussion, booking, documentation and delivery. A lead can be lost at any of these steps. This journey is called the **lead-to-delivery workflow** in this paper. The share of leads that finally reach delivery is called **customer conversion**.

1.2 Problem Statement

Dealerships make many calls and meet many walk-in customers, yet only a small part become buyers. Most dealerships track total sales but not clearly where leads drop out. This paper examines one dealership, Mittal Hyundai, Pune, to understand how leads are generated, how they move through the sales process and where conversion can be improved.

1.3 Context of the Study (OJT)

This paper is based on the author's On-the-Job Training (OJT), a compulsory internship in the MBA programme of the School of Business, Indira University, Pune. The author worked as a **Sales Consultant Intern** at Mittal Hyundai, Viman Nagar, Pune, from 20 May 2026 to 10 July 2026. The dealership is run by Krishom Automotive LLP, has about 60 employees and one branch, and works as a 3S facility (Sales, Service and Spares). The internship covered cold calling, walk-in handling, test drives, follow-ups, booking support, RTO and insurance documentation, record keeping and delivery coordination.

1.4 Significance

The study gives a first-hand, ground-level view of dealership sales operations. Dealership managers can use it to find weak points in follow-up and conversion. MBA students can use it to see how marketing ideas such as consumer decision-making and relationship marketing work in a real showroom.

II. Review of Literature

The study draws on five streams of literature: consumer decision-making, service quality, relationship marketing, customer journey and digital marketing.

Consumer decision-making. Kotler and Keller describe buying as a series of steps: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase evaluation [3]. Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior explains that a person's attitude, the opinion of family and peers, and the person's sense of control shape buying intention [4]. Car buying is usually a family decision, so this theory fits showroom conversations well.

Service quality. The SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry measures service quality through dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness and empathy [5]. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman link good service quality to loyalty and willingness to recommend [6]. For a dealership, this includes how a customer is received, how clearly features are explained and how reliable after-sales service looks.

Relationship marketing. Morgan and Hunt show that trust and commitment are central to lasting customer relationships [7]. Follow-up calls and messages after a showroom visit are practical ways to build this trust.

Customer journey and experience. Lemon and Verhoef describe the customer journey as a sequence of touchpoints that shape the total experience [8]. Verhoef et al. add that experience depends on many factors, including the social setting and the seller's own actions [9]. A dealership has many touchpoints (call, showroom, test drive, finance, delivery), and weakness in one can reduce overall satisfaction.

Automobile buying and digital marketing. Maheshwari, Seth and Gupta study consumer buying behaviour in the Indian automobile sector [10]. Dahiya and Gayatri find that Indian car buyers use digital communication when they decide on a purchase [11]. Safari et al. link electronic CRM performance with customer loyalty [12], and Chauhan reviews how tailored communication and after-sales support improve CRM in an Indian automobile company [13]. Recent studies point to the growing role of digital channels, online reviews and customer engagement in passenger-vehicle purchases [14], [15].

2.1 Research Gap

Most earlier studies look at customer attitudes or at CRM and digital marketing in general. Few studies describe the full lead-to-delivery workflow inside a single dealership from the sales consultant's own working experience. This paper tries to fill that gap with a small, practical, single-dealership case.

III. Objectives and Research Questions

3.1 Objectives

- To study the lead generation and customer engagement process followed at Mittal Hyundai, Pune.
- To evaluate the lead-to-delivery workflow and identify the stages where conversion can be lost.
- To identify vehicle preferences and key buying factors among surveyed customers.
- To recommend practical improvements in follow-up, comparison support, digital marketing and need-based selling.

3.2 Research Questions

- Which lead sources and activities feed the dealership's sales pipeline?
- How many leads move from contact to serious lead and then to a sale?
- Which car types and features matter most to customers?
- Where in the workflow is a sale most likely to be lost?

IV. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study is **descriptive and exploratory**. The descriptive part summarises activity figures and survey answers. The exploratory part uses observation to understand how the workflow runs and where problems appear. It is a single-organisation case study.

4.2 Data Sources and Tools

Table 1: Data sources used in the study

Type	Source	Used for
Primary	Questionnaire, 12 customers	Car type, features, buying factors, purchase triggers
Primary	Direct observation during OJT	Workflow, objections, customer handling
Primary	Intern's activity records (Excel, H-Smart, WhatsApp Business)	Calls, walk-ins, leads, follow-ups, sales
Secondary	SIAM, FADA, Hyundai Motor India website	Sector and company context
Company documents	Offer and Experience Letters	Role and internship period

Source: Author's OJT records.

4.3 Sample and Period

The questionnaire was given to **12 customers** who interacted with the dealership during the internship. They were chosen on a convenience basis (whoever was available and willing). It had four questions: preferred car type, top features sought, most important buying factor and what would convince the customer to buy. Answers to the open-ended questions were grouped into simple themes and counted. Because one customer could mention several features, feature percentages add up to more than 100%.

4.4 Method of Analysis

Simple percentages, ratios and frequency counts were used. Figures that have different time bases (for example, calls per *day* and walk-ins in *total*) are shown separately and are not mixed into a single percentage. Where a conversion ratio is calculated, it is marked as *indicative*.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

No customer names or personal details are used. Survey results are shown only in aggregate form. Company information is limited to what is needed for academic purposes.

V. The Lead-to-Delivery Workflow at Mittal Hyundai

Figure 1 shows the workflow as observed during the OJT. A typical working day began with a team meeting at 9:30 AM, followed by cold calling at 10:00 AM, walk-in handling from 2:00 PM, and reporting with follow-up calls at 6:00 PM. A weekly Saturday meeting reviewed targets, mistakes, product updates and customer complaints.

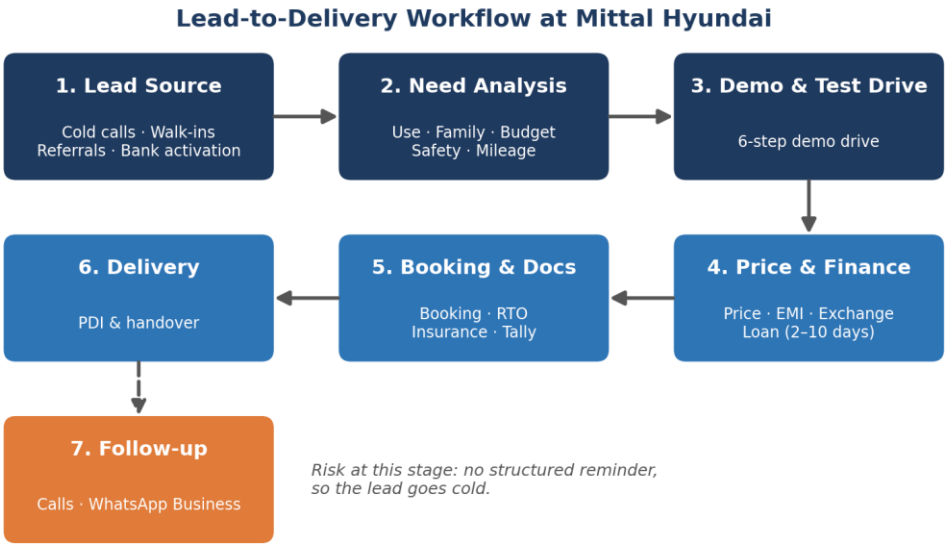


Figure 1: Lead-to-delivery workflow observed at Mittal Hyundai

Table 2: Workflow stages, activities and observed risks

Stage	What happens	Where a lead can be lost
1. Lead source	Cold calls, walk-ins, referrals, bank activation	Call not answered; weak interest; no record kept
2. Need analysis	Ask about use, family, budget, safety, mileage	Premature judgement about the customer; wrong model suggested
3. Demo and test drive	6-step demo drive (Design, Redefine performance, Interior, Values, Experience, Safety)	Poor competitor comparison; feature mismatch
4. Price and finance	Price talk, EMI, exchange, loan from HDFC, ICICI, SBI, Axis or Bajaj Finance (2 to 10 days)	Loan delay; discount or EMI not acceptable
5. Booking and documents	Booking, RTO, insurance, Tally records	Cancellation; paperwork delay
6. Delivery	Pre-delivery inspection (PDI) and handover	Delay; poor handover experience
7. Follow-up	Calls and WhatsApp Business messages	No structured reminder; lead goes cold

Source: Author's observation during OJT (20 May – 10 July 2026).

The intern's personal monthly target was **5 inquiries and 2 car sales**. The team target was 60 inquiries and 30 cars a month, and the showroom target was 180 cars a month. These targets show that the dealership needs both a steady pipeline (leads) and conversion (sales).

VI. Data Analysis and Results

6.1 Lead Generation Activity

Table 3: Reported lead generation and sales activity

Measure	Reported value	Basis
Cold calls	60+	Per typical day
Walk-ins handled	25	Internship total
Referral leads	1	Internship total
Bank (HDFC) activation leads	2	Event total
Customers personally handled	40+	Internship total
Serious leads	≈12	Internship total
Test drives / follow-ups	4–6 / ≈4	Per day
Cars sold (booked)	2	Internship total
Cases in process	2	At time of reporting

Source: Author's OJT activity records. Figures are the author's own reported counts; some are approximate.

Cold calling was the main proactive source of leads. Walk-ins were fewer in number but came from customers who had already decided to visit, so they were of higher intent.

VI. Data Analysis and Results

6.2 Conversion Indicators

Using the totals above, three simple ratios were worked out (Table 4). They are *indicative* only because the number of customers handled is given as "40+" and the lead count is approximate.

Table 4: Indicative conversion ratios

Ratio	Calculation	Result
Serious leads per customer handled	12 ÷ 40	≈30% (maximum)
Sales per serious lead	2 ÷ 12	≈16.7%
Sales plus cases in process, per serious lead	(2 + 2) ÷ 12	≈33.3% (if both close)
Sales per customer handled	2 ÷ 40	≈5% (maximum)

Source: Author's calculation from reported OJT figures.

Roughly one in three customers handled became a serious lead, and about one in six serious leads became a sale. If the two cases in process close, this could rise to one in three. This shows that the biggest drop happens **after** a lead is qualified, that is, between serious interest and booking. This is the stage where follow-up, comparison material, finance support and product fit matter most.

VI. Data Analysis and Results

6.3 Target Attainment

Table 5: Personal target versus outcome

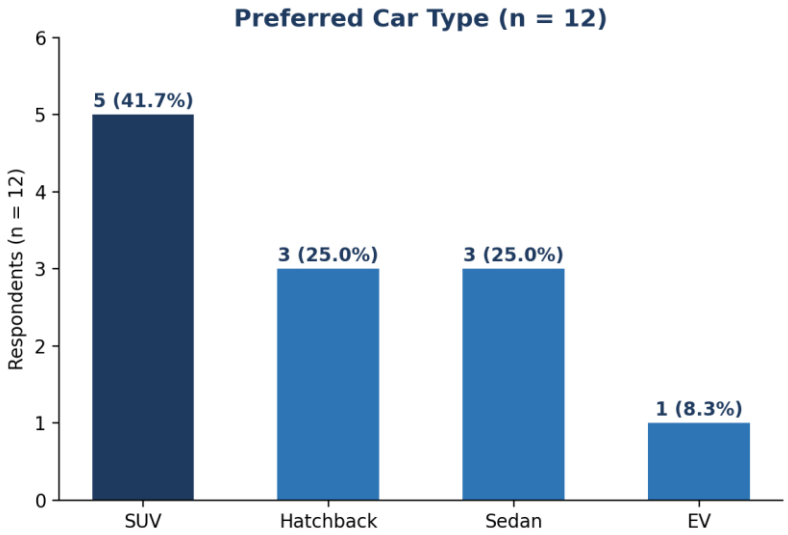
Measure	Target	Outcome	Result
Car sales	2	2	100%
Inquiries / serious leads	5	≈12	≈240%*

**Indicative only: 'inquiries' and 'serious leads' are defined differently. Pipeline cases (2) are not counted as sales.*

VI. Data Analysis and Results

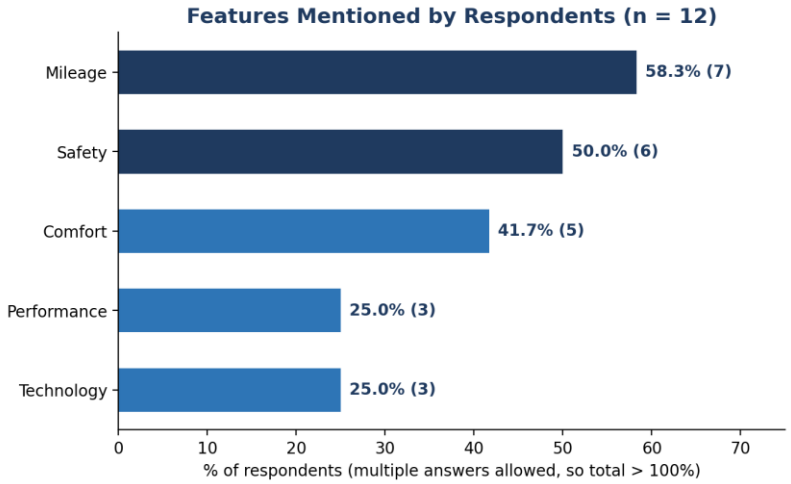
6.4 Customer Preferences (Survey, n = 12)

Figure 2: Preferred car type (n = 12)



SUV was the most preferred type (5 of 12, 41.7%), followed by hatchbacks and sedans (3 each, 25.0%) and one EV respondent (8.3%). This agrees in direction with the sector-wide SUV share of about 68% [1], but the sample is too small to represent the Pune market.

Figure 3: Features mentioned by respondents (n = 12)



Mileage (58.3%) and safety (50.0%) were mentioned most, followed by comfort (41.7%). Performance and technology were each mentioned by 25.0%. Customers therefore weigh running cost and family safety together, and a sales talk should link each feature to a practical benefit (for example, safety features to family protection and mileage to monthly fuel cost).

VI. Data Analysis and Results

6.5 Buying Factors and Purchase Triggers

The most important buying factors named by respondents were safety and family comfort, running cost, value for money, reliability, comfort and affordability. When asked what would convince them to buy, respondents named a high safety rating, attractive finance and low EMI, good after-sales service, good mileage and low maintenance, a comfortable test drive, competitive price, exchange or resale value, warranty and brand trust. No single factor worked for everyone, so a mix of product, price and service benefits is needed.

VI. Data Analysis and Results

6.6 Customer Profile and Satisfaction

About 60% of customers were salaried, 30% business owners and 10% self-employed, mostly aged 24 to 50. The author reports that about 95% of customers were happy after delivery, mainly because of staff behaviour, clear explanations and the showroom experience. This is the author's observation and not a verified dealership figure.

VI. Data Analysis and Results

6.7 Two Case Observations

Case 1: Need-based selling. A customer came to buy a Venue as a gift for his father. After the intern asked about usage, family needs and safety, the Creta SX(O) was suggested as a better fit, and the customer bought it. Understanding the need changed the sale to a higher-value, better-matched model.
Case 2: Late-stage loss. A customer first wanted a Tata Harrier. After a discussion of features, ADAS, service network and resale value, the customer returned with family and booked an Alcazar Signature. The booking was later cancelled because the customer was not satisfied with the infotainment screen. A booking can therefore still be lost if specific feature expectations are not checked before booking.

VII. Discussion

The results fit the literature. The buying steps described by Kotler and Keller [3] were visible: customers arrived with a model or competitor in mind and then compared mileage, safety, price and EMI. The trust element of relationship marketing [7] explains why follow-up matters. A customer who is still comparing needs answers, not only reminders. The customer journey view [8], [9] helps locate the weak points: the early stage (high call volume, low qualification) and the late stage (comparison, finance and feature fit).
Three leakage points stand out. First, **follow-up**: with 60+ calls a day and only about 4 follow-ups a day, many contacts can go cold without a clear tracker. Second, **comparison readiness**: customers compare Hyundai with Tata and Maruti Suzuki, and the intern admits early reliance on the team leader before building independent product knowledge. Third, **feature fit**: Case 2 shows that a good price and a good discussion are not enough if one feature expectation is missed.
The high reported satisfaction after delivery suggests that the dealership is strong in handover and staff behaviour. These strengths can be used to ask for referrals, which were only one lead in this study.

VIII. Recommendations

Table 6: Recommendations for the dealership

Recommendation	How to do it	Expected result
1. Structured follow-up	Lead-wise stages and call or WhatsApp reminders	Fewer lost leads
2. Need-first selling	Five-minute needs checklist before suggesting a model; record top three priorities	Better product fit; fewer cancellations
3. Comparison toolkit	Fact-based comparison sheets for rival models; no negative claims about competitors	Faster, clearer objection handling
4. Feature confirmation	Confirm key features (for example infotainment) before booking	Lower late-stage cancellation
5. CRM discipline	Record source, need, budget, preferred model and next action for every lead	Better tracking and reporting
6. Digital content	Regular reels on mileage, safety, SUV features and offers	More awareness and inbound leads
7. Referral drive	Ask satisfied buyers for referrals at delivery and follow-up	Low-cost, high-trust leads

Source: Author's recommendations from OJT observations and survey.

IX. Limitations and Future Scope

- The survey has only 12 respondents and uses convenience sampling, so results cannot be generalised.
- Several activity figures (leads, walk-ins, customers handled) are approximate and come from the author's own records.
- Confidential CRM data, such as source-wise conversion, cost per lead and monthly model-wise sales, was not available.
- The internship lasted about seven weeks, so repeat purchase and long-term loyalty could not be studied.
- Two cases in process are not counted as sales.

Future studies can use 100 to 300 customers, track each lead from source to delivery, compare response time with conversion, compare digital and offline leads, and measure satisfaction and referrals after delivery.

X. Conclusion

This paper examined the lead-to-delivery workflow and customer conversion at Mittal Hyundai, Pune, based on the author's OJT. The dealership uses several lead sources, with cold calling as the main one. In the author's records, roughly 30% of customers handled became serious leads and about 16.7% of serious leads became sales, so the largest drop occurs after a lead is qualified. Customers care most about mileage, safety and overall value, and SUVs were the most preferred type in the sample. The two case observations show that need-based selling can improve a sale, while a missed feature expectation can cancel one. Structured follow-up, need-first selling, comparison material, careful CRM records and regular digital content can strengthen conversion. Because the data are small and partly approximate, the findings are indicative and should be tested on a larger sample.

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