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## EFFECT OF SALES PROMOTION ACTIVITIES ADOPTED BY MAHINDRA AUTOMOBILES ON RURAL MARKET OF PUNJAB

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### ABSTRACT

*Indian four wheeler industry is facing stiff competition, as overseas players and domestic participants are queuing up to launch new models/ variants. Indian rural market which contributes around 60% of total national demand has also fuelled the demands of four wheelers in India. After acquiring SangYong Motor Company, Mahindra has emerged as an important market player in Indian passenger car segment. Different companies in the Automobile sector are coming up with very attractive sales promotion plan to woo customers. The present study has made an attempt to identify the factors which affect the purchasing behavior of customers towards Mahindra passenger vehicles and also to understand the effect of sales promotion activities carried out by Mahindra automobiles on customers. A research framework was designed and factor analysis method of data reduction was incorporated. Four factors were derived from the analysis of the research data. The four factors are named as Utility, Technology, and Price & after sales service and Sales Promotion activities. Analysis of paired t-test was also performed to test the significant difference in purchasing behavior of customers due to sales promotion activities carried out by Mahindra Automobiles. Further analysis of the data revealed that sales & promotion activities have an impact on consumer buying behaviour.*

### KEYWORDS

Factor analysis, Mahindra & Mahindra, Paired t- test, Rural area and Sales & Promotion.

### INTRODUCTION

The Automobile Industry of India, the world's second-fastest growing auto market has come a long way over the decade. The liberalization policy and various tax reliefs by the Govt. of India in recent years have made remarkable impact on Indian Automobile Industry. Indian auto industry, which is currently growing at the pace of around 18 % per annum, has become a hot destination for automobile manufacturers due to its robust economic growth, favorable demographics, higher disposable income, changing lifestyle and positive industrial eco-system. India is expected to become the third biggest automaker in the world within next decade, according to Diane H Gulyas, President and DuPont Performance Polymers. Owing to its vertical and horizontal integration with other key segments of the economy, the industry is said to be a major growth driver. At present, Indian automobile industry is one of the major contributors in increasing the country's GDP by 9% every year. New heights have been scaled by the industry in the year 2010. According to the reports of Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, annual car sales are estimated to reach 5 million vehicles by 2015 and more than 9 million by 2020. To believe New York Times reports, several automobile companies like Hyundai Motors, Nissan, Toyota, Mahindra & Mahindra, Volkswagen and Suzuki have expanded their manufacturing facilities owing to India's strong engineering base and expertise in the manufacturing of low-cost, fuel-efficient cars.

### INDIAN RURAL MARKET

Rural India accounts for almost 70 per cent of the population as the Census 2011 indicates that out of the 1.21 billion population, 833 million people live in rural India. Rural India has grown up over the years, not only in term of income, but also in term of thinking. The rural market has grown at two time faster pace than urban market, not surprisingly, rural India accounts for 60% of the total national demand, according to the survey conducted by Mckinsey. Moreover, the growth of rural India is largely attributed by increasing awareness about need of education. According to the ASER (2012) report, private school enrolment in rural India has enhanced by 5.5 per cent points over past six years. The literacy rate has also gone up by 68.91 per cent in rural India. Rural India is the new battle ground for marketers and manufacturers these days. India's growth in terms of consumption pattern is largely to be accounted by the people residing in hinterlands. A report by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and CII projects that small town and rural customers would be the single largest market segment constituting 36 per cent of households by 2020 and rural & urban aspirers would account for 23 per cent of all the households. Automobile makers are targeting Indian consumer market in a big way, in search of potential car buyers. Rural India accounts for almost 35 per cent of the automobile industry sales. Companies like Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors, Ford, and Hyundai are targeting potential buyers in rural market by different marketing schemes. After acquiring SangYong Motor Company, Mahindra has emerged as an important market player in Indian passenger car segment. The present study has made an attempt to identify the factors which affect the purchasing behavior of customers towards Mahindra passenger vehicles and also to understand the effect of sales promotion activities carried out by Mahindra Automobiles on customers in rural areas of Phagwara, Punjab.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

(Clarke, 1976) has got the evidence which leads to the conclusion that the cumulative effect of advertising on sales lasts for only months rather than years. (Louie, 1990) concluded that if only one brand is being promoted and subjects are generally loyal to the last brand purchased, brand choice probability declines from prepromotion levels once the promotion is withdrawn. However, if subjects tend to switch among brands in the absence of promotions, or if several brands are being promoted, this decline is mitigated and/or does not occur. (William Boulding, 1994) found that by providing unique and positive messages, a firm can insulate itself from future price competition, as witnessed by less negative future price elasticities. Conversely, results indicate that nonunique messages can decrease future differentiation, eg. price promotions for firms that price above the industry average lead to more negative future price elasticities. (Koen Pauwels, 2002) found that each sales component generally lacks a permanent promotion effect. Their findings support the notion that brand choices are in equilibrium in mature markets and that price promotions produce only temporary benefits for established brands. (Joffre Swait, 2002) has found that Lack of sales promotion mix consistency is generally deleterious to consumer brand evaluations through (1) decreases to average valuations and (2) decreases in scale, both of which can lead to decreases in market share. (Harald J. Van Heerde, 2003) has established that a choice elasticity of 74% of the total sales elasticity does not imply that if a promoted brand gains 100 units, the other brands together lose 74 units. Instead, they found that, on average, the other brands together lose approximately 33 units. (Shoemaker, 2004) found that unlike most consumer promotions, free sample with coupon promotions can have measurable long-term

conversion effects that can be observed for as long as 12 months after the promotion and the effects of a free sample promotion can vary widely, even between two different brands in the same product class. (Delgado-Ballester, 2005) findings derived from a sample of 167 buyers suggest that non-monetary promotions are more appropriate as a brand-building activity and that the product type exerts a moderator effect on the relationship between sales promotions and brand knowledge. (Dennis Fok, 2009) put forth a sales response model to explain the differences in immediate and dynamic effects of promotional prices and regular prices on sales. The authors find many significant moderating effects on the elasticity of price promotions. Brands in categories that are characterized by high price differentiation and that constitute a lower share of budget are less sensitive to price discounts. Deep price discounts increase the immediate price sensitivity of customers. (Mercedes Esteban-Bravo, 2009) analyzed a type of non price promotion implemented in the magazine publishing industry in Europe, and also to determine whether the effect of implementing these promotions is favorable in the long term. Results suggest that some buyers of the promoted issues, who read the magazine for the first time, have a positive experience with the magazine and become customers. (Nagar, 2009) has opined that Sales promotions are generally looked at as tools that undermine the brand; yet a tool that is necessarily meant to speed up sales. The study found that consumer sales promotions have more influence on the brand switchers as compared to the loyal consumers. Also, among the various forms of consumer sales promotions, free gifts have more influence on the brand switching behaviour of consumers. (Rao, 2009) through his study was able to establish that the dimensions of Price perceptions (as measured by Value consciousness and Price consciousness) and Deal proneness are important variables that cannot be ignored by marketers while designing pricing and promotional strategies. It is an imperative today. It will be a positive development if marketers are able to incorporate these dimensions into their consumer research agenda prior to launch of new promotional schemes in the market place. (Waller, 2010) explained that as part of the arsenal of marketing, sales promotions are strategies wherein an incentive is offered to the final consumer or customer to impact sales in the short term. Author found that, Sales promotion cost how much to the organization, is very hard to measure, thus measuring effect of sales promotion on bottom line of the company is even harder. (Tsung-Chi Liu Ti Cheng, 2011) describes the phenomenon that an individual is unlikely to act on an attractive opportunity after having bypassed an even more attractive one. The results of two experiments indicate that after missing an initial opportunity to obtain a product as a free gift during a promotional period, the inaction inertia effect reduces the likelihood of consumers buying the product at a discounted price (second, inferior opportunity), particularly if the free gift has a high regular price. (Kautish, 2011) found that in-store display proneness has the strongest effect on product trial compared to other sales promotional tools. Attractive instore display practices are necessary to gain the greatest sales from product trial. Bonus pack, free sample, and price discount significantly affect product trial, albeit the determinant power of bonus pack is the lowest among other promotional tools.

## OBJECTIVES

- To identify the factors which affect the consumer purchasing behaviour towards Mahindra vehicles.
- To know the consumer attitude towards the sales promotion activities carried out by Mahindra automobiles for rural market.
- To check the effectiveness of sales and promotion activities carried out by Mahindra for rural market.

## NEED OF THE STUDY

Rural market comprise of more than 70 % of the total population of the country thus making it as one of the most important potential market. Now days companies are focusing more on the rural market segment to explore the untapped market by extending their product portfolio to the rural customer. Various promotional activities have been adopted by the companies to leave an impact on the rural customer. Sales promotion is one of the four aspects of promotional mix. (The other three parts of the promotional mix are advertising, personal selling, and publicity/public relations.). With the focus of automobile companies are shifting towards rural market which they see as a lucrative opportunity to creep in, it has opened a new gateway to gain insights about the potential rural market, strategies adopted by companies to capture the rural market, perception of a rural customer towards the efforts made by these companies and finally the effect of this on the purchasing behavior of the customer.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is limited to the Phagwara and its suburbs region, thus limiting the area of consideration. However, the data collected within from the population gives better insights about the perception of a rural customer and helps in forming a conclusion. Researchers have collected the data only from those people, who are the owners of Mahindra cars. The data is collected in between the time frame of month January 2012 to April 2012.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

**Type of Research:** For this study, descriptive research design has been adopted. This study identifies and evaluates the Sales promotions activities adopted by Mahindra automobiles for targeting the rural population. Factors affecting consumers' preferences towards the automobile buying behaviour, effect of sales and promotion activities and change in the perception of consumers after confronting with the promotion activities adopted by the company have also been examined. Basically this research is describing the population surveyed and its characteristic, so it is descriptive research.

### SAMPLING DESIGN

**Target population:** Owners of Mahindra automobiles residing in Phagwara and its suburbs.

**Sampling Technique:** This study is broadly on sales promotion activities adopted by Mahindra for rural market and its effects. A large share of population residing in rural area still does not own cars. So, researchers have used the 'convenience sampling' which was performed purposefully. Researchers have collected the data only from those people, who are the owners of Mahindra cars. It is a type of non-probability sampling technique.

**Sample size and data collection tool:** A sample size of 100 respondents (effective 82 respondents) residing in Phagwara and its nearby villages has been taken. Major data for proposed is collected by means of structured questionnaire. To fulfill the objectives of proposed study a 'Liker Scale' of five points is used in survey instrument to record consumer attitude towards attributes of Mahindra automobiles and its sales & promotion activities. Few dichotomous questions were put into the questionnaire for measuring behaviour pattern among various customers. The secondary data has been collected from the company's annual reports, various magazines, newspapers, internet, journals etc.

**Time period of Data:** The data is collected in between the time frame of month January 2012 to April 2012 across Phagwara city and its suburbs.

**Pilot testing:** A pilot testing was done by doing convenient sampling technique. The sample was of 30 in size. A questionnaire was instrumented for this purpose. Reliability testing for the pilot survey was satisfactory with Cronbach's Alpha 0.717. Some necessary changes were made in the questionnaire after conducting pilot testing.

**Data analysis:** First, analysis is done on the basis of demographic variables like Income, age etc. Population is the one who either owns a Mahindra vehicle or someone in his/her family owns it. As the number of variables used in this research is quite extensive, Factor analysis has been used to simplify the interpretation of the variables. Factor analysis has been used to identify the factors which affect consumers buying behaviour toward Mahindra automobiles and perception about its sales and promotion activities. Apart from this a paired comparison test is also applied so as to measure the change in perception of the consumers prior and post to the sales and promotion activities of the company.

### BRIEF SUMMARY OF TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSIS

1. Descriptive Statistics: - For profiling of customers.
2. Factor Analysis: - To identify important factors affecting consumer preference towards Mahindra automobiles and its sales promotion activities.
3. Paired comparison test- To compare the perception of consumers prior and post to the sales and promotion activities of the company.

### FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION

The frequency distributions of various groups of respondents are displayed below. The frequency distributions are related to age group of people surveyed.



TABLE 1: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF AGE OF SURVEYED PEOPLE

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 20-30	31	37.8	37.8	37.8
31-40	38	46.3	46.3	84.1
41-50	12	14.6	14.6	98.8
50 and above	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: The researcher's survey

As sample size is taken on the convenience basis different level of ages came into consideration, 31 respondents are between the age group of 20 - 30, 38 are between the age group 31-40, 12 respondents are in the age group 41-50, and 1 respondent was above the age of 50.

TABLE 2: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME OF SURVEYED PEOPLE

Annual income	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid below 10 lakh	38	46.3	46.3	46.3
10 lakh-15 lakh	31	37.8	37.8	84.1
above 15 lakh	13	15.9	15.9	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: The researcher's survey

Out of 82 respondents, 38 respondents were having the annual income below Rs.10 lakh, 31 respondents were having the income in between Rs. 10 lakh - 15 lakhs and the rest 13 respondents stated their income level above Rs. 15 lakh annually.

**FACTOR ANALYSIS**

Questionnaires were collected from a sample of 100 respondents, after scrutiny researcher has removed 18 questionnaires due to errors in response. The data was entered into SPSS data sheet. Reliability test was performed and the data was subjected to further analysis by using Principal Components Analysis (PCA) method. Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization was chosen to get the % of variance for 12 statements in the questionnaire. Eigen value of greater than 1 was identified and the relevant factors have been obtained accordingly in line with the statements in the questionnaire. A Rotated Component Matrix Table is generated and four factors were derived. Factor loading above 0.50 are considered as per factor analysis format. The derived factors are arranged based on the statements that have gone into each factor. The list of factors along with the supporting statements is displayed in Table 4.

TABLE 3: KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.576
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	Df
	Sig.
	218.521
	66
	.000

Source: The SPSS output

We have applied Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test to check the adequacy of data and we find the value is 0.576 which is more than ideal value 0.50, hence data is adequate.

TABLE 4: ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX

Statements	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4
1.Family needs	<b>0.775</b>	-0.256	0.216	-0.25
2.Society influence	<b>0.756</b>	0.174	-0.188	0.126
3.Utility of vehicle	<b>0.687</b>	-0.053	-0.029	0.083
4.Safety	<b>0.617</b>	0.383	0.052	0.073
5.Fuel economy	0.228	<b>0.612</b>	0.162	0.415
6.Style statement	0.274	<b>0.502</b>	-0.132	0.411
7.Latest technology	-0.067	<b>0.739</b>	0.106	0.058
8.Reliability of brand	-0.03	-0.172	<b>0.829</b>	0.303
9.Price of vehicle	0.088	0.192	<b>0.733</b>	-0.05
10.After sales service	-0.185	0.442	<b>0.544</b>	-0.119
11.Additional warranty coverage	-0.221	0.248	0.03	<b>0.698</b>
12.Seasonal offers/festive offers	0.192	0.01	0.079	<b>0.782</b>

Source: The SPSS output

TABLE 5: FACTORS LIST

Utility	Technology	Price & after sales service	Sales promotion activities
Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Family needs	Fuel economy	Reliability of brand	Additional warranty coverage
Society influence	Style statement	Price of vehicle	Seasonal offers/festive offers
Utility of vehicle	Latest technology	After sales service	
Safety			

Source: The SPSS output

**DESCRIPTION OF THE FACTORS**

Factor 1, refers to 'Utility and contributes to 22.61% variance. This factor is described in terms of family needs, society influence, utility of vehicles and safety. Factor 2, describes the 'Technology' and contributes to 17.54% variance. This factor refers to fuel efficiency, style statement and latest technology. Factor 3, focuses on 'Price and after sales service and contributes to 12.637% variance. This factor includes statements on the price of the vehicle, after sales service and reliability of the vehicle brand.

Factor 4, explains the 'sales promotion' and contributes to 8.35% variance. This factor addresses issues such as additional warranty and seasonal/festival offers.

#### PAIRED SAMPLE t-TEST

Paired sample t-test was performed to determine that is there any change in buying behaviour of the customers due to sales and promotion activities carried out by Mahindra motors. For this Hypothesis were framed.

Ho- There is no significance change in buying behaviour of customers due to the sales and promotional activities adopted by Mahindra automobiles

H1- There is significance change in buying behaviour of customers due to the sales and promotional activities adopted by Mahindra automobiles.

As, here researchers have followed 'convenience sampling' and data is not normal. So, researchers have used alternative of paired t-test from non parametric test, which is known as 'Wilcoxon signed rank test'. Wilcoxon signed rank test output of SPSS has been displayed below.

TABLE 6: WILCOXON SIGNED RANK TEST OUTPUT OF SPSS Test Statistics<sup>b</sup>

	After knowing about the sales promotion activities, would you buy Mahindra cars. - if sales and promotion activities would not have been adopted by the company would had still gone for the purchase
Z	-4.435 <sup>a</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Source: SPSS output

In the above table the z value is -4.435 and has a p value of .000 which is less than 0.05, the assumed level of significance. Therefore, there is enough evidence to reject Null hypothesis. Thereby, indicating that Sales and promotion activities carried out by Mahindra automobile has significant impact on purchasing behavior of customers.

#### SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Rural market is emerging market, so Automobile companies are focusing upon this potential market.
2. 84% purchaser of Mahindra vehicles are between 20-40 years of age group.
3. Around 50% purchaser of Mahindra vehicles belongs to income group less than Rs. 10 lakhs per annum. This also signifies that rural market despite less income than urban part can be major market for automobile companies like Mahindra & Mahindra.
4. Factor analysis of surveyed respondents reveals that for rural people most important factor while purchasing vehicle is Utility of the vehicle.
5. Factor analysis of surveyed respondents reveals that apart from utility, other important factors are technology used in vehicles to increase fuel efficiency & appearance etc., Price & after sales service and sales promotion activities.
6. Wilcoxon signed rank test performed on the surveyed respondents establishes that sale and promotion activities carried out by Mahindra automobiles has significant impact on purchasing behavior of the respondents.

#### CONCLUSION

After this research it can be concluded that, a rural customer while purchasing any vehicle looks for utility of the vehicle, technology used in vehicle, price & after sales service and Sale promotion activities carried out by automobile companies. Sales and promotion activities are of one of the most important particularly for automotive industry as the competition is very stiff in this sector and companies need to have effective promotional activities, so as to cope up with the competition and current market scenario. Mahindra automobiles have successfully applied the sales and promotion activities which have helped them in capturing more market share particularly in rural market.

#### SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The scope of this research study may be further enhanced by incorporating different automobile firms in the research. This research can also be extended further for different sectors like FMCG, electronics etc. Researchers can also study the impact of sale & promotion activities on brand equity of the respective brand.

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## ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE 1: TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.714	22.617	22.617	2.714	22.617	22.617	2.285	19.043	19.043
2	2.105	17.54	40.158	2.105	17.54	40.158	1.74	14.503	33.547
3	1.516	12.637	52.795	1.516	12.637	52.795	1.669	13.911	47.458
4	1.002	8.35	61.145	1.002	8.35	61.145	1.642	13.687	61.145
5	0.949	7.908	69.053						
6	0.779	6.493	75.547						
7	0.706	5.883	81.43						
8	0.636	5.303	86.733						
9	0.568	4.733	91.466						
10	0.448	3.734	95.199						
11	0.363	3.025	98.225						
12	0.213	1.775	100						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

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