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**AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY AUTOMOBILE COMPANIES OF  
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BHUPAL NOBLES' UNIVERSITY  
UDAIPUR****ABSTRACT**

Every organization uses promotional strategies to create a positive brand image in the market and to attract more and more customers; the automobile sector is not an exception to it. Almost all the big automobile brands are having their showrooms in Udaipur, so keeping this in view this research has been conducted to study the promotional strategies adopted by the automobile companies of Udaipur. The data has been collected from 514 automobile employees with the help of semi structured questionnaire and it has been concluded that most common used promotional strategies are electronic media advertisements, social media advertisements, print media advertisements and sales promotion.

**KEYWORDS**

promotional strategies, automobile companies.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Marketing Strategies according to Kotler (1993), "comprises the broad principle by which marketing management expects to achieve its business and marketing objectives in a target market. It consists of basic decisions on marketing expenditures, marketing mix and marketing allocation". Business and marketing objectives fall within the realm of strategic management, whereas the target market is a domain shared by both these domains. Formulation of marketing strategies takes off after strategic management objectives of the firm are decided and goes about deciding the ways and means to achieve these objectives within the set timelines. Target market is arrived at after an in-depth understanding of the total available market and segmenting it based on the types of needs and ways by which the needs are met or problems are solved, coupled with matching capabilities of the firm to service needs of these market segments. Marketing strategies adopted by the firms of any industry play vital role in the growth and development of the industry. The intense competition has gripped the automobile industry in India in recent years with major world players entering in the market and bringing better technology and experience. Consequently, the importance and implementation of innovative and prudent marketing strategies has increased in the industry during the past couple of decades. These marketing strategies not only affect the overall performance of the industry but also growth by increasing the demand.

Sales promotion refers to using short term incentives to educate, demonstrate and entice sales. It makes use of trade shows, fairs, samples, trials, gifts, lucky draws and discounts. These short-term campaigns achieve greater focus and intensity, than advertisement, in engaging the target audience. Sales promotion forms an important vehicle for on ground promotion of products at various lifecycle stages. They can boost awareness and trials for new introductions as well as renew interest in mature and declining stages of products. Sales generated as a result of such campaigns can be better identified and inferred.

Most major automobile companies have used the electronic, print, in-store and outdoor media to promote their brand. They have adopted the strategy of campaigns on television and radio over multiple time periods of few weeks at a stretch followed up again with a few weeks and in multiple time slots through the day over short durations of 10 to 15 seconds each. The preferred channels of television are satellite broadcast news, entertainment and sports channels, while the preferred channel on radio is the frequency modulation (FM) channel. These channels are chosen in view of their popularity covering various categories of audience.

Automobile companies have been prominent at major trade fairs, auto exhibitions, industrial expositions and automobile fairs to showcase their products, disseminate information and generate interest for their brand. They have also organized road shows on similar lines at prominent marketplaces.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Owonte, L. H., & Uduak, J. (2022) investigated "customer service strategy and marketing performance of automobile firms in South-South, Nigeria. The researcher adopted the correlational research design. The population of the study consisted of customers of 197 automobile dealers registered with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in the six (6) states of South-South, Nigeria 2017/2018 edition. The sample size of 132 was used. The researcher adopted the convenience sampling technique in selecting members of the sample. The customers of 132 automobile dealers in South-South, Nigeria who must have had buying relationship with the dealers for at least 15 years were accessible for the study. The study adopted convenience sampling technique. The results of the study showed that customer service influenced the metrics of performance of automobile dealers. The results implied that when marketing strategies is adequately implemented and improved upon, it will enhance customers satisfaction, loyalty, retention, patronage and more specifically, long-term financial performance for the automobile dealers. Based on the findings of the study, the study concluded that marketing strategies play important role in the performance of automobile dealers and should be employed as a broad commercial logic for meeting customers' needs at a profit and also as a tool for gaining sustainable competitive advantage in the target market. The study recommended among others that automobile dealers should leverage on the knowledge acquired through their relationship with customers in the use of customer service strategy to shape offerings, reap customers' lifetime value and achieve competitive advantage for the organization".

Shaikh, A. J., Shah, J. A., & Iqbal, (2019) investigated "the relationship and impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Intentions in Automobiles Sector. The Automobile Sector is emerging and growing due to intense competitions and many players compete on different brands due to this sale of organizations shrinks. The Marketing and Advertising are always integral part of sales and advertising affects the buying intentions of customers. This research conducted to

evaluate the impact of social media marketing, promotions through digital media and door to door marketing affects the buying intentions. This study not reflected to buying intentions of particular Brand but it's for all Automobile Sector that evaluates and analyze the buying pattern. The data collected through probability random sampling method from 385 consumers who use online media and buying and selling cars online. The researcher evaluates three constructs includes three core marketing channels social media marketing, online promotion and door to door marketing. The results show there is significant relationship of social media marketing, online promotion and door to door with buying intentions towards purchase of automobile. The regression analysis showed the promotional media marketing is significant predictor evaluates the online marketing".

**Oberaia, V., & Sharmab, S. K. (2018)** stated that "Buyer behaviour is all psychological, social and physical behaviour of potential consumers as they become aware to evaluate, purchase, consume and tell other about products and services. Cars became a need rather than a choice. It is a need of everyone to purchase luxurious commodity for their comfort. Moreover, added features attract the consumer attention. As a result, it is important that individuals gather more information to purchase a car. The product features, advertisement, design, etc. all are based on the understanding how consumers learn and perceive and keep it in memory. It is always the effort of marketer that their communication should not only be noticed but they should be believed, remembered and recalled when occasion arise to buy the product. When it came to decision based on preferences, personal needs, the top slot parameters were - the need of the business firm, peer pressure from other family members owning a car and upgraded the model to suit personal ambition. Marketers need to understand these requirements and focus their marketing strategies towards these customer requirements".

**Grover, D. P., & Mandan, R. K. (2017)** has analysed that "Changing market dynamics has led to Consumerization of Indian Automobile Industry posing innumerable challenges for the car manufacturers. The demand in the industry today is not just for a car as a product but a bundled experience package. Companies can respond to these challenges and create competitive differentiators by leveraging digital technology. In today's world of digitization, social media provides a wide platform not only to companies for their marketing and promotional activities but also to customers to conduct information search and make purchase decisions. Over the years, the internet has become a major source of consumer sponsored communication floating information, feedback, ideas and sentiments faster than the corporate communication department. It influences different aspects of consumer behavior including awareness, information, acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behavior and post-purchase communication and evaluation. Looking into the strategic role of social media in promotion of passenger cars in India, the paper tries to understand the changing consumer perception towards social media and its role in consumer decision making. At the same time, it also empirically derives a consumer-centric methodology for social media marketing by car manufacturers in India".

**Gaurav, K. (2016)** concluded that "With growing number of organizations offering wide range of choices across the industry made today's market more competitive than ever before. Fueled with LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization), the entry of multinationals encouraged the domestic organizations to move from sellers' driven marketing to buyers' driven marketing approach. Cultivating customer loyalty is often considered as the key driver for organization's long-term sustainable marketing success. Of late, Relationship Marketing has emerged as one of the most powerful marketing tools to cultivate customer loyalty, interaction and long-term engagement. Now a day, Organizations across the industry are depending upon relationship marketing to broaden their market share by strengthening customer relationships and building customer loyalty. Taking evidence from Indian Automobile Industry, this study is intended to empirically investigate the impact of relationship marketing on customer loyalty".

**Bansal, S., & Malik, G. (2015)** identified that "Marketing strategies are projected to fill market place needs and grasp market place objectives. These are vibrant and interactive and could differ from situation-to-situation in an individual business. The Indian Automobile Industry is one of the largest industries with impressive grown in last two decades. So, to remain competitive in market these companies have to come up with innovative ideas and strategies. Various marketing strategies help the companies in expansion and satisfy human needs. The most obvious objective, marketers have for promotional activities, is to convince customers to make a decision that benefits the marketer (of course the marketer believes the decision will also benefit the customer). For most for-profit marketers, this means getting customers to buy an organization's product and, in most cases, to remain a loyal long-term customer. The objective of this research paper is to understand consumer buying behaviour and effect of marketing strategies of the company on consumer buying behaviour. The main aim of the study is to identify the factors that affect customer preference for a particular automobile so that the company can focus more on this factor to increase their sales and market share in India. The results show that the significant factor that leads to the consumer preferences for automobile are style, enhance value, price of the vehicle".

**Jamal, Z. B. (2014)** explored that "In this era of Globalization companies are expanding their business activities in different countries. In this process business faces different challenges where cultural barriers play an important role. Businesses need to understand the new market's culture and its cultural elements which really matter for business to design marketing strategies. This research has described the cultural elements that affect automobile business around the world".

**Bagga, T., & Gupta, D. (2014)** gave the central idea behind this paper is "to ponder on the fact that how is Internet Marketing is being widely used as a tool in the Automotive sector in India for imparting mass scale knowledge of their products and for large scale promotions. These days Automotive companies face survival challenges in the market, specially India with quite a large number of potential buyers. Thus, Internet Marketing comes handy when it comes to selling of brand ideas and concepts. The paper deals with statistical study enlisting information about vigorous promotional activities on social media by different Automobile manufacturers. It focuses on how three different automobile companies with different origins practice Internet Marketing for sales and promotions of their product. It shows the comparison between German manufacturer Volkswagen, South Korean manufacturer Hyundai and French manufacturer Renault. The main reason for choosing these companies is because of all the three having different origins. So, to learn how the three different originating companies practice Internet Marketing in India, the German, French and South Korean Manufacturers were chosen. Moreover, these three companies are quite popular in India as a large volume of their vehicles can be seen on the roads. These company's product is in a good demand too. Hence it was a good selection to find how three different nation-based companies use social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and Google+ and the data was collected first week of January 2014 to the end of second week of February 2014."

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research paper is to study the promotional strategies adopted by the automobile companies of Udaipur.

## HYPOTHESIS

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference in the extent of promotional strategies adopted by the various brands of automobile sector.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant difference in the extent of promotional strategies adopted by the various brands of automobile sector.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**(a) Research Design:** To have a better understanding about the issue descriptive research design was used. To get the primary data close ended questionnaire was administrated.

**(b) Sample Design:** 514 employees working in automobile companies of Udaipur were selected through stratified purposive sampling.

**(c) Analysis:** The data collected was analyzed with the help of Arithmetic mean and ANOVA.

## ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATIONS

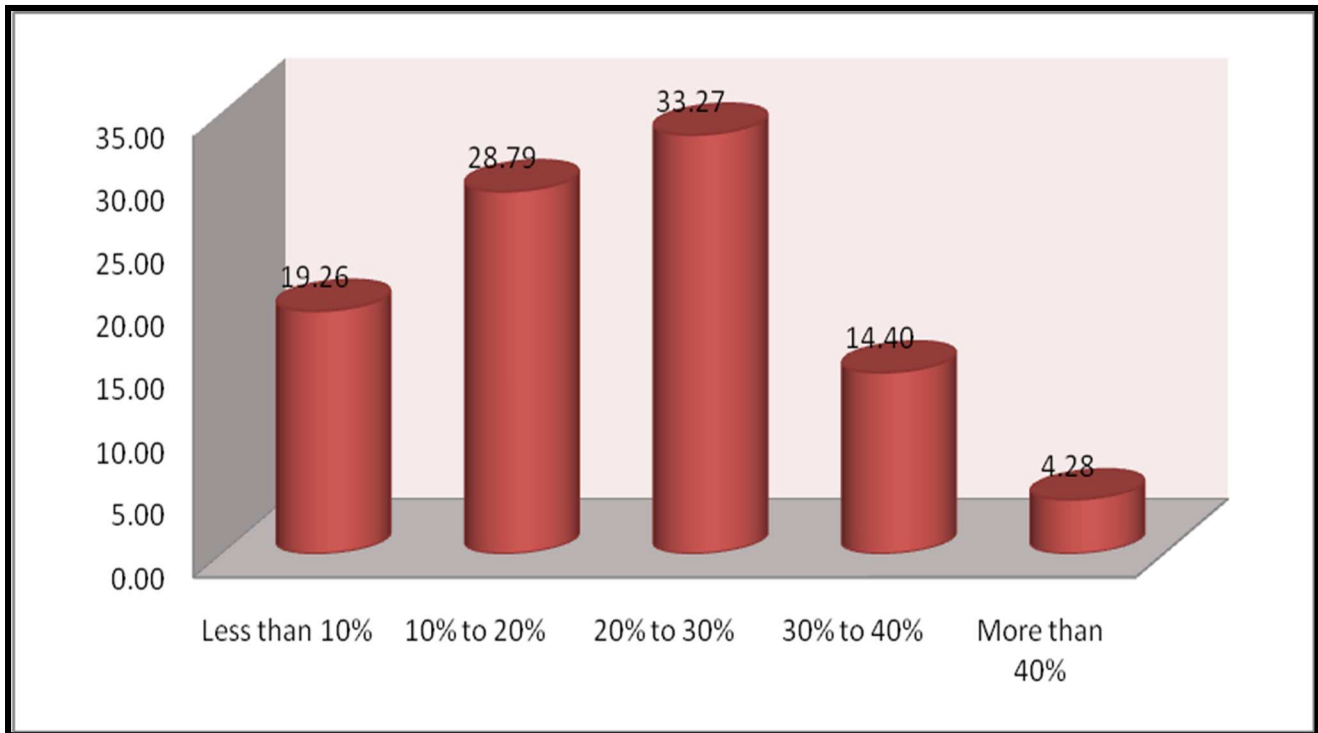
### PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE SPENT ON PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

First of all, respondents were asked that approximately what percentage of your revenue you spend on promotional strategies and results received are presented in table 1. Majority of respondents (N=171, Percentage=33.27) indicated that they spend 20% to 30% of their revenue on promotional strategies followed by 28.79% respondents (N=148) who highlighted the 10% to 20% of revenue expenses on promotional strategies. As per 19.26% employees (N=99) their companies spend less than 10% of revenue on promotional strategies and according to 14.40% employees (N=74) it is 30% to 40%. Less than 5% employees (N=22, Percentage=4.28) said that their companies are spending more than 40% of the revenue on promotional strategies..

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE SPENT ON PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Percentage of Revenue	N	Percentage
Less than 10%	99	19.26
10% to 20%	148	28.79
20% to 30%	171	33.27
30% to 40%	74	14.40
More than 40%	22	4.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100</b>

FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE SPENT ON PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES



**PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY AUTOMOBILE COMPANIES**

The Table 2 is depicting the promotional strategies used by the automobile companies. As per the results majority of companies are using electronic media advertisements (N=481, Percentage=93.58) followed by social media advertisements (N=472, Percentage=91.83), print media advertisements (N=445, Percentage=86.58) and sales promotion (N=419, Percentage=81.52). A significant number of respondents indicated the use of billboards/hoardings (N=472, Percentage=69.84) and public relations (N=259, Percentage=50.39). Only 25.10% respondents (N=129) indicated the use of yellow pages advertisements.

TABLE 2: PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY AUTOMOBILE COMPANIES

Promotional Strategies	N	Percentage
Print Media Advertisements	445	86.58
Electronic Media Advertisements	481	93.58
Social Media Advertisements	472	91.83
Billboards and Hoardings	359	69.84
Yellow Pages Advertisements	129	25.10
Public Relations	259	50.39
Sales Promotion	419	81.52

**EXTENT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES USED BY AUTOMOBILE COMPANIES**

To identify the extent of promotional strategies used by automobile companies they were asked to indicate their level of agreement of five point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The final opinion was ascertained with the help of mean score as presented in table 3. It was found that automobile companies of respondents use optimum mix of available promotional tools and they design unique brand building plan. Respondents highlighted that they are using promotional tools to build long term relationship with customers as well as they regularly focus on celebrity endorsement to increase the customer base. According to respondents their automobile companies have buy back scheme and they offer discount on every festival.

TABLE 3: EXTENT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES USED BY AUTOMOBILE COMPANIES

Statements	Mean	S.D.	C.V.	Level of Agreement
We use optimum mix of available promotional tools	4.32	0.489	0.11	Strongly Agree
We design unique brand building plan	3.49	0.518	0.15	Agree
We follow up customer purchases by Thank you letter	3.35	0.508	0.15	Neutral
We are using promotional tools to build long term relationship with customers	3.71	0.498	0.13	Agree
We regularly focus on celebrity endorsement to increase the customer base	3.98	0.471	0.12	Agree
We sponsor charity programs to create positive brand image	3.12	0.527	0.17	Neutral
We place promotional notes on envelopes	3.29	0.516	0.16	Neutral
We have buy back schemes	3.74	0.714	0.19	Agree
We offer discounts on every festival	4.06	0.659	0.16	Agree

Table 4 is presenting the overall extent of promotional strategies used by the automobile companies. As per results 31.91% respondents (N=164) were using promotional strategies to a very high extent whereas 19.65% respondents (N=101) were using promotional strategies to a very low extent. Majority of respondents (N=249, Percentage=48.44) were using promotional strategies up to medium extent and the mean score also confirmed the same results.

**TABLE 4: OVERALL EXTENT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES USED BY AUTOMOBILE COMPANIES**

Extent of Promotional Strategies Adopted	N	Percentage
Low	101	19.65
Medium	249	48.44
High	164	31.91
Total	514	100
Mean Score	28.47	
Result	Medium	

The research has focused on six automobile brands that are using different promotional strategies. So, to check the significant difference in the extent of promotional strategies used by various brands the ANOVA test was applied and results received are presented in table 5. At 5% level of significance the F-statistic is significant so it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the extent of promotional strategies adopted by the various brands of automobile sector

**TABLE 5: ANOVA RESULTS TO MEASURE DIFFERENCE IN THE EXTENT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY VARIOUS BRANDS OF AUTOMOBILE SECTOR**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Sum of Squares	F-Ratio	p-value	Result
Between Samples	45.336	5	9.067	4.099	0.002	Significant
Within Samples	1125.98	509	2.212			
Total	1171.32	514				

Level of Significance=5%

## CONCLUSION

From this research following conclusions have been drawn:

1. Automobile companies spend 20% to 30% of their revenue on promotional strategies.
2. Most commonly used promotional strategies of automobile companies are electronic media advertisements, social media advertisements, print media advertisements and sales promotion.
3. There is a significant difference in the extent of promotional strategies adopted by the various brands of automobile sector

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