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# Marketing Communication Strategies for Used Car Purchase Intention: A Case of ABC Automobile Company $^{\dagger}$

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#### Abstract

The research objectives were as follows: 1) To analyze the marketing environment, current situation, and existing problems faced by ABC Automobile Company's used car products. 2) To determine the segmentation, target, and positioning (STP), and marketing mix (4Ps) of the used car products of ABC Automobile Company and; 3) To analyze the effect of the marketing communication strategies employed by ABC Automobile Company on consumers' intention to purchase used cars. This research adopted a mixed methods approach. Qualitative data were collected by interviewing and quantitative data were collected from 100 samples randomly drawn from the consumers of ABC Automobile Company.

The results of this paper find that: 1) ABC Automobile Company operates within a dynamic marketing environment influenced by various factors such as political policies, globalization impacts, shifting consumer attitudes, and technological advancements. Analysis unveiled several existing problems across different areas including product sourcing, pricing accuracy, channel visibility, sales promotion effectiveness, personnel training, and service process efficiency. 2) Segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) have been pivotal to the success of ABC Automobile Company's used car products. Geographically, the company has focused on online sales to cater to diverse regional preferences. Demographically, its target market comprises individuals aged 31 - 50 seeking affordable options. Psychologically, consumers prioritize price and quality, while behaviorally, they exhibit varied purchasing behaviors. ABC Automobile Company has positioned itself as a market leader, emphasizing transparent pricing and reliable service. The marketing mix (4Ps) strategy involves tailored product offerings, flexible pricing, online sales channels, and comprehensive promotion strategies and; 3) Advertisement significantly influences consumers' intention to purchase used cars from ABC Automobile Company. However, despite its importance, the model's explanatory power was limited, indicating that other factors also played a crucial role. This highlights the complexity of consumer decision-making processes regarding used car purchases.

Keywords: Marketing communication, Marketing strategy, Used car purchase intention

#### Introduction

The growth of China's automobile industry over the past 2 decades has been remarkable, driven by economic development and government initiatives. Despite significant progress, China's car ownership per 1,000 people remains a fraction of that in the United States, indicating substantial room for expansion. The automobile sector has not only boosted manufacturing capabilities but also spurred employment opportunities across various industries. With an annual sale of over 28 million vehicles, automobiles contribute significantly to China's retail sector, accounting for 29 % of total consumer goods sales (Wang et al., 2023). In this context, the used car market in China has experienced rapid growth, reaching a transaction volume of 17.59 million units in 2021. This sector plays a vital role in the automotive industry's pre-owned segment, reflecting evolving consumer preferences and increasing acceptance of used vehicles. Government policies, such as those supporting convenient trading of used cars, have provided a solid foundation for the industry's standardized growth and enhanced consumer trust. Despite these

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advancements, intensified competition and the emergence of e-commerce platforms have necessitated continuous adaptation and innovation within the sector (Costa & Castro, 2021).

Situated in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Company ABC faces dynamic market challenges and diverse consumer demands. Its marketing strategy plays a pivotal role in shaping profitability, market presence, and brand image. However, amidst changing market dynamics, Company ABC has encountered challenges such as customer attrition, waning attention, and reputational issues. Moreover, factors like odor controversies and financial service charges have impacted new car sales and tarnished the brand's image, widening the gap with competitors like Mercedes-Benz and BMW (Gaim et al., 2021).

Established in 2003, Company ABC has played a significant role in the region's automobile production, with an annual output value of 25 billion yuan and a production capacity of 200,000 vehicles. The company's commitment to quality is evident in its extensive production records and contributions to the local economy. However, despite its achievements, Company ABC faces marketing challenges that require strategic interventions to maintain its market position and sustain growth.

Company ABC implements various marketing strategies to enhance its competitiveness and ensure profitability in the used car market. These strategies encompass product quality assurance, dynamic pricing mechanisms, multi-channel distribution, and targeted promotional activities. By adopting a customercentric approach and investing in professional sales personnel, Company ABC aims to strengthen its market presence and overcome prevailing challenges. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies and propose recommendations for further enhancement, contributing to the optimization of marketing practices in the used car industry.

#### **Research objectives**

1) To analyze the marketing environment, current situation and existing problems faced by Company ABC's used car products.

2) To determine the segmentation, target and positioning (STP), and marketing mix (4Ps) of the used car products of Company ABC.

3) To analysis the effect of the marketing communication strategies employed by ABC Automobile Company on consumers' intention to purchase used cars.

#### **Research hypothesis**

1) There is a certain correlation between the marketing environment, current situation of purchase intention and the marketing quality of ABC company's used cars.

2) The market segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP), and marketing mix strategy adopted by Company ABC for its used car products will affect consumers' cognition, preference and purchasing behavior.

3) The marketing communication strategies employed by ABC Automobile Company have effect on consumers' intention to purchase used cars.

#### Methodology

This research employs a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gain a comprehensive understanding of Company ABC's marketing landscape and its impact on consumer behavior.

#### **Research design**

Qualitative data will be gathered through in-depth interviews with 10 employees or managers from Company ABC. Participants will be selected based on their extensive experience (minimum 5 years) within the automotive product or sales departments, ensuring a deep understanding of the company's product development and marketing strategies. Quantitative data will be collected from a randomly selected sample of 100 consumers of ABC Automobile Company, allowing for a broad representation of consumer perspectives and behaviors.

### Sampling

Employees and managers will be purposively selected to ensure a diverse range of insights from different departments and levels of expertise within Company ABC. The consumer sample will be randomly chosen to minimize bias and ensure the generalizability of findings to the broader consumer population.

#### **Data collection**

Qualitative data will be collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to provide detailed insights into their perceptions and experiences related to Company ABC's marketing strategies and used car products. Quantitative data will be gathered through structured surveys administered to consumers, capturing their attitudes, preferences, and purchase intentions regarding ABC's used car offerings.

#### Data analysis

To analyze the marketing environment, a PEST analysis will be conducted, systematically evaluating Political, Economic, Societal, and Technological factors influencing ABC Automobile Company's marketing landscape. This analysis aims to identify key challenges and opportunities impacting the used car products. Additionally, the study will delve into Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning (STP), and the Marketing Mix (4Ps), examining characteristics and preferences within the target market to refine marketing strategies. Furthermore, a positioning analysis will be undertaken to assess how the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) collectively contribute to the overarching marketing strategy.

To explore the impact of marketing communication strategies on consumers' purchase intentions, regression analysis will be employed. This multifaceted approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of marketing communication strategies affecting Company ABC's used car products and inform strategic decision-making processes.

#### **Results and discussion**

# Marketing environment, current situation, and existing problems faced by company ABC's used car products

#### Marketing environment

In navigating the complex marketing environment, Company ABC encounters a multitude of challenges and opportunities influenced by various policy factors. It is essential for ABC to closely align with political policy directions and make timely adjustments to its business strategies. Ensuring sustainable development while maintaining service quality remains paramount in this dynamic landscape. Moreover, on an international scale, ABC Motors must contend with the impacts of globalization, including trade barriers, exchange rate fluctuations, and varying economic conditions across different countries. Internally, factors such as organizational strength, management quality, and brand reputation play pivotal roles in determining ABC's adaptability and competitiveness amidst fierce market competition and rapid changes.

Addressing the social and cultural dynamics presents another layer of complexity for ABC's used car products. Shifting consumer attitudes, evolving brand perceptions, heightened environmental consciousness, and changing safety standards and comfort expectations must all be navigated effectively. Furthermore, with the growing significance of e-commerce channels, ABC needs to remain agile and responsive to emerging trends in technology, including intelligence, electrification, internet sales, and autonomous driving. Embracing these advancements is essential for maintaining a competitive edge and ensuring sustainable growth in the long term. Analyzing ABC's position within the industry through the 5 forces model reveals critical insights into its operational landscape. Supply chain management stands out as a crucial factor, with ABC needing to carefully evaluate various procurement negotiations in light of scarcity, market demand, and potential government interventions. Despite making strides in promotion channels, product pricing, and after-sales services, ABC faces intensified competition and associated risks. It must continually enhance its management approaches, foster innovation, and fortify core competitiveness amidst macroeconomic fluctuations and government policy adjustments.

To address the bargaining power of buyers effectively, ABC must prioritize providing detailed product information, ensuring quality assurance, offering personalized recommendations, creating innovative marketing channels, and establishing a robust feedback mechanism. Furthermore, in assessing potential competitor entry, ABC must evaluate factors such as financial strength, technical capabilities, supply chain management, and brand recognition to gauge their potential impact and adjust strategies accordingly. Leveraging data collection tools, statistical analyses, predictive modeling, and continuous monitoring enables ABC to gauge market demand, comprehend shifting trends, and fine-tune marketing communication strategies for success.

In navigating the multifaceted marketing environment, Company ABC faces a plethora of challenges and opportunities shaped by various policy factors. As highlighted by Goncalves et al. (2020), aligning with political policy directions is crucial for companies to remain competitive and adaptable. This sentiment resonates with the findings of our study, emphasizing the importance for ABC to closely align with political policy directions and make timely adjustments to its business strategies. Ensuring sustainable development while maintaining service quality remains paramount in this dynamic landscape (Skowron & Szymoniuk, 2014). Moreover, on an international scale, ABC Motors contends with the impacts of globalization, including trade barriers, exchange rate fluctuations, and varying economic conditions across different countries (Prasad et al., 2003). This underscores the need for ABC to remain agile and responsive to emerging trends in technology, including intelligence, electrification, internet sales, and autonomous driving, as noted by Lopez-Vega & Moodysson (2023). Embracing these advancements is essential for maintaining a competitive edge and ensuring sustainable growth in the long term. The analysis of ABC's position within the industry through the 5 forces model reveals critical insights into its operational landscape. As highlighted by Chong & Ali (2022), supply chain management stands out as a crucial factor, with ABC needing to carefully evaluate various procurement negotiations in light of scarcity, market demand, and potential government interventions. Despite making strides in promotion channels, product pricing, and after-sales services, ABC faces intensified competition and associated risks. It must continually enhance its management approaches, foster innovation, and fortify core competitiveness amidst macroeconomic fluctuations and government policy adjustments. To address the bargaining power of buyers effectively, ABC must prioritize providing detailed product information, ensuring quality assurance, offering personalized recommendations, creating innovative marketing channels, and establishing a robust feedback mechanism (Kotler et al., 2018). Furthermore, in assessing potential competitor entry, ABC must evaluate factors such as financial strength, technical capabilities, supply chain management, and brand recognition to gauge their potential impact and adjust strategies accordingly. Leveraging data collection tools, statistical analyses, predictive modeling, and continuous monitoring enables ABC to gauge market demand, comprehend shifting trends, and fine-tune marketing communication strategies for success.

In summary, Company ABC's used car products operate within a multifaceted marketing environment, influenced by political, economic, social, technological, and industry dynamics. Adaptability, innovation, and strategic alignment with market demands are essential for ABC to thrive amidst challenges and maintain its competitive advantage in the long run.

#### **Current** situation

ABC Company, primarily operating in Yunnan's second-hand car market since 2017, has witnessed steady growth in annual transaction volumes and market expansion. However, since 2020, the growth rate of sales and operating income has decelerated due to the pandemic's impact and the emergence of online platforms. This slowdown has persisted into 2022, with a noticeable downward trend in growth rates.

In terms of business operations, ABC's acquisition arm evaluates and tests used vehicles postpurchase to determine their purchase price. The company employs a professional testing process to ensure the quality of acquired vehicles, thereby enriching its vehicle resources. In the evaluation business, ABC focuses on achieving reasonable vehicle pricing through standardized vehicle inspection processes, excluding accident vehicles, and emphasizing vehicle safety. In the sales business, the company simplifies sales processes and emphasizes correct service attitudes to enhance customer satisfaction and experience. These strategies are aimed at maintaining a competitive edge and navigating the challenging market landscape.

Operationally, ABC Company's approach to acquisition and evaluation of used vehicles plays a pivotal role in shaping its competitive positioning and resource enrichment strategies. The company's acquisition arm employs a rigorous testing and evaluation process post-purchase to ascertain the purchase price of used vehicles. This professional testing process ensures the quality and reliability of acquired vehicles, thereby enhancing ABC's vehicle resources and bolstering its competitive advantage (Tu & Wu, 2021). In the evaluation business segment, ABC prioritizes achieving reasonable vehicle pricing through standardized inspection processes, stringent quality control measures, and the exclusion of accident vehicles. By emphasizing vehicle safety and adherence to quality standards, ABC aims to instill trust and confidence among consumers, thereby strengthening its market reputation and credibility (Cao et al., 2021). Furthermore, within the sales business segment, ABC adopts streamlined sales processes and emphasizes exemplary service attitudes to enhance customer satisfaction and experience. These customer-centric strategies are integral to ABC's efforts in maintaining a competitive edge amidst the evolving market landscape and shifting consumer preferences (Rosid et al., 2023).

Overall, ABC Company's operational strategies reflect a proactive approach towards adapting to market challenges, enhancing resource efficiency, and prioritizing customer satisfaction to sustain its competitive position in Yunnan's second-hand car market. However, ongoing market uncertainties and the prevalence of external factors necessitate continuous monitoring, strategic agility, and adaptation to ensure sustained growth and profitability in the long term.

#### Existing problems

ABC Company mainly faces the second-hand car market in Yunnan. Since its establishment in 2017, the annual transaction volume of second-hand cars has increased year by year, and the market scale has also been expanding. Affected by the epidemic and the development of online platform, the growth rate of sales and operating income has been slow since 2020, and the growth rate has begun to decline, and even a downward trend has appeared in 2022. The analysis of price problems reveals several challenges faced by ABC Company (see **Table 1**).

Types	Problems
Product problems	<ol> <li>Lack of high-quality vehicle sources</li> <li>After-sales service is not perfect</li> </ol>
Price problems	<ol> <li>Price positioning is not accurate enough</li> <li>Appraisers have too much influence on the price</li> <li>Lack of supporting financial services</li> </ol>
Channel problems	<ol> <li>Lack of channel visibility</li> <li>The channel integration is low</li> </ol>
Sales promotion problems	<ol> <li>The form of advertising is single, and the publicity effect is not achieved</li> <li>The promotion structure is single, and the promotion intensity is insufficient</li> <li>Lack of innovation in sales promotion forms</li> </ol>
Personnel problem analysis	<ol> <li>Lack of professional personnel</li> <li>The training of personnel is weak</li> </ol>
Process problems	<ol> <li>Lack of standardized service process</li> <li>Low efficiency of service process</li> </ol>

**Table 1** Problems of ABC's used car products.

Firstly, inaccurate price positioning stems from issues in vehicle sourcing, potentially causing discrepancies between car conditions and prices. Additionally, the influence of appraisers on pricing adds another layer of complexity, as reliance on their assessments may lead to pricing inaccuracies. Furthermore, the lack of supporting financial services, such as cooperation with financial institutions, creates obstacles

for customers seeking loans, resulting in lost sales opportunities. Regarding channel problems, ABC faces issues such as limited visibility of retail stores and underutilization of online platforms, leading to restricted customer traffic and high acquisition costs. Furthermore, low integration among the company's retail, invitation, and online channels impedes trust-building and reduces customer arrival rates. In terms of sales promotion, ABC struggles with limited advertising impact due to narrow advertising efforts, failing to effectively capture customers' attention. Moreover, insufficient promotion intensity and a lack of innovation in promotional methods contribute to suboptimal sales performance and profit compression. Personnelrelated challenges include a lack of professional personnel and weak training programs, resulting in poor marketing effectiveness and uneven service quality. Insufficient emphasis on marketing roles and inadequate training contribute to prolonged adaptation periods for new employees and subpar service experiences for customers. Lastly, process problems such as the absence of standardized service processes and low efficiency in service delivery further compound ABC's challenges. The lack of explicitly defined sales and service processes leads to inconsistencies in service quality, while weak response to customer inquiries and inefficient time management contribute to delayed customer service and reduced service experiences. Addressing these issues comprehensively is essential for ABC to improve its performance and competitiveness in the market.

Regarding channel problems, ABC faces issues such as limited visibility of retail stores and underutilization of online platforms, leading to restricted customer traffic and high acquisition costs. Furthermore, low integration among the company's retail, invitation, and online channels impedes trustbuilding and reduces customer arrival rates. In terms of sales promotion, ABC struggles with limited advertising impact due to narrow advertising efforts, failing to effectively capture customers' attention. Moreover, insufficient promotion intensity and a lack of innovation in promotional methods contribute to suboptimal sales performance and profit compression.

Personnel-related challenges within Company ABC, including a scarcity of professional staff and ineffective training programs, have been identified as significant contributors to poor marketing effectiveness and inconsistent service quality. The absence of adequate emphasis on marketing roles and insufficient training efforts result in prolonged adaptation periods for new employees and substandard service experiences for customers (Alzyadat et al., 2017). The lack of standardized service processes and low efficiency in service delivery exacerbate these challenges, leading to inconsistencies in service quality and delayed customer service responses (Rane et al., 2023). These personnel-related issues underscore the necessity for ABC to prioritize comprehensive solutions to enhance its performance and competitiveness within the market. Furthermore, ABC encounters channel-related problems that hinder its visibility and customer engagement. The limited visibility of retail stores and underutilization of online platforms restrict customer traffic and escalate acquisition costs. Additionally, the lack of integration among the company's retail, invitation, and online channels diminishes trust-building efforts and reduces customer arrival rates (Huynh, 2021). Inadequate advertising efforts exacerbate these challenges, resulting in limited advertising impact and failure to capture customers' attention effectively (O'Malley & Tynan, 2000). Insufficient promotion intensity and a dearth of innovative promotional methods further contribute to suboptimal sales performance and profit compression. Addressing these channel-related issues is crucial for ABC to enhance its market presence and profitability (Bruggen et al., 2010).

In conclusion, the identified personnel and channel-related challenges underscore the imperative for Company ABC to implement targeted strategies aimed at enhancing its workforce capabilities and optimizing its sales and marketing channels. By addressing these challenges comprehensively, ABC can improve its overall performance and competitiveness within the market.

### Segmentation, target and positioning (STP), and marketing mix (4Ps) of the used car products of Company ABC.

#### Segmentation, target and positioning (STP)

Segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) are pivotal elements contributing to the success of Company ABC's used car products. In terms of segmentation, the company meticulously considers geographical, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral factors to comprehend consumer preferences

and behaviors comprehensively. Geographically, ABC prioritizes online sales, tailoring its approach to accommodate diverse regional preferences and restrictions. Demographically, the target market primarily consists of individuals aged 31 - 50 with moderate incomes, who seek affordable options. Psychologically, consumers place high importance on price and quality, with different segments prioritizing specific benefits such as cost-effectiveness or unique features. Behaviorally, customers exhibit various browsing and purchasing behaviors, underscoring the significance of understanding their preferences and decision-making processes. Regarding target marketing, ABC adopts a strategy centered on transparent pricing, professional evaluation, and reliable after-sales service, with the aim of addressing consumer pain points and setting itself apart from competitors. The company targets consumers in search of affordable, dependable used cars through its e-commerce platform, leveraging the trust established through transparent pricing and quality assurance.

In terms of market positioning, ABC positions itself as a market leader in providing transparent pricing and eliminating middlemen in the used car industry. The company allocates substantial resources to advertising to establish brand awareness and credibility, emphasizing its dedication to fair pricing and trustworthy transactions. Through strategic partnerships and continual innovation, ABC endeavors to uphold its position as an industry frontrunner and adapt to the evolving needs of consumers in the digital age. This positioning strategy enables ABC to differentiate itself from competitors and cultivate enduring customer relationships grounded in trust and reliability.

#### Marketing mix (4Ps) of the used car products of Company ABC

The marketing mix (4Ps) of the used car products of Company ABC can be summarized as Table 2:

Marketing mix (4Ps)	Key points
	ABC implements market segmentation based on geography, income level, age, and lifestyle to tailor products to different consumer groups' needs.
Product strategy	The company focuses on technological innovation, brand building, market positioning, after-sales service, and environmental responsibility to differentiate its products from competitors.
	ABC offers a variety of used car options to meet diverse consumer needs and preferences, with a strong emphasis on quality control.
	ABC considers market research, production costs, brand image, and government regulations when determining pricing strategies.
Price strategy	The company adopts a flexible pricing strategy based on market demand, adjusting prices accordingly.
	ABC also offers financial support options such as loans and installment payments to facilitate purchases.
	ABC establishes partnerships with major automobile manufacturers and utilizes online platforms to expand its sales channels.
Place strategy	The company actively engages in online marketing, social media promotion, and participation in auto shows to reach a wider audience.
	ABC focuses on providing convenient, transparent, and reliable purchasing experiences through its sales channels.
	ABC employs a comprehensive promotion strategy, including advertising through various media channels, online promotion, promotions, partnerships, and word-of-mouth marketing.
Promotion strategy	The company emphasizes high-quality products, flexible pricing, diversified promotion, and convenient purchasing methods to attract consumers.
	ABC ensures consistency in used car information across different communication channels through a unified information management system, standardized procedures, employee training, and attention to accuracy and objectivity.

Table 2 Marketing mix (4Ps) of the used car products of Company ABC.

The marketing mix (4Ps) strategy for Company ABC's used car products encompasses several key elements. Firstly, in terms of the product strategy, ABC employs market segmentation to cater to the diverse needs of consumers based on factors like geography, income, age, and lifestyle. This tailored approach extends to technological innovation, brand building, and a strong focus on quality control to set its products apart from competitors. Additionally, ABC offers a wide range of used car options to meet various consumer preferences while maintaining quality standards.

Secondly, the pricing strategy considers market research, production costs, and brand image, with a flexible approach to adjust prices based on market demand. Financial support options such as loans and installment payments are also provided to facilitate purchases. Thirdly, the place strategy involves partnerships with major manufacturers and the utilization of online platforms to expand sales channels, complemented by active engagement in online marketing and participation in industry events. Lastly, the promotion strategy includes a comprehensive approach involving advertising across various media channels, online promotion, partnerships, and word-of-mouth marketing. ABC ensures consistency in communication by implementing a unified information management system and standardized procedures.

Pearson's correlation coefficient of all variables

In order to better discover the relationship between ABC Company's marketing measures and consumers' purchase of the company's used car products from a quantitative point of view, this paper first analyzes the possible relationship from the perspective of Pearson coefficient. Further linear regression analysis will be carried out depending on the situation.

	Advertisement	Personal selling	Sale promotion	Public relations	Direct marketing	Used car purchase intention
Advertisement	1					
Personal selling	0.829**	1				
Sale promotion	-0.382**	-0.463**	1			
Public relations	0.325**	0.295**	0.010	1		
Direct marketing	-0.372**	-0.282**	-0.054	-0.212*	1	
Used car purchase intention	0.309**	0.279**	-0.156	0.052	-0.196	1

 Table 3 Pearson's correlation coefficient of all variables.

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

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

According to the data in **Table 3**, Pearson's Correlation Coefficients analysis elucidates the relationship between various marketing communication strategies and the intention of customers to purchase used cars at ABC Automobile Company. Advertisement exhibits a robust positive correlation with personal selling (0.829), along with moderate positive correlations with used car purchase intention (0.309) and public relations (0.325). Conversely, it demonstrates a moderate negative correlation with sales promotion (-0.382) and direct marketing (-0.372).

Personal selling demonstrates a robust positive correlation with advertisement (0.829), coupled with moderate positive correlations with used car purchase intention (0.279) and public relations (0.295). However, it manifests a moderate negative correlation with sales promotion (-0.463) and a weak negative correlation with direct marketing (-0.282). Sales promotion evinces a moderate negative correlation with advertisement (-0.382) and personal Selling (-0.463), while exhibiting no significant correlation with the other variables. public relations portray a moderate positive correlation with advertisement (0.325) and personal selling (-0.295). It displays a weak negative correlation with direct marketing (-0.212) and a weak positive but insignificant correlation with used car purchase intention (0.052).

Direct marketing unveils a moderate negative correlation with advertisement (-0.372) and personal selling (-0.282). It demonstrates a weak negative correlation with public relations (-0.212) and a weak negative but marginally significant correlation with used car purchase intention (-0.196). Used car purchase intention discloses a moderate positive correlation with advertisement (0.309) and personal selling (0.279), yet fails to exhibit significant correlations with the remaining variables.

The statistical significance levels (*p*-values) indicate that the majority of correlations, except for a select few, are statistically significant at the 0.01 or 0.05 level.

In conclusion, this analysis posits that advertisement and personal selling strategies wield a positive relationship with the intention to purchase used cars, whereas sales promotion and direct marketing strategies may engender a negative relationship or fail to exhibit significant effects. Public relations strategy appears to harbor a weak or insignificant association with the intention to purchase used cars.

For this paper, the Pearson coefficient is a preliminary result of testing the relationship between variables, and if the relationship is further analyzed, this paper believes that further regression analysis should be carried out on these variables. This part will be shown in the following chapters.

#### **Regression analysis**

In analyzing the effect of the marketing communication strategies employed by ABC Automobile Company on consumers' intention to purchase used cars, the researcher used the Enter method, yielding the results as shown in **Table 4**.

**Table 4** The effect of the marketing communication strategies employed by ABC Automobile Company on consumers' intention to purchase used cars (Enter method).

Model Summary									
	Model	R	R R Square Adjusted R Square						
1		0.333a	0.111	0.064	0.39776				
ANOVAa									
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
	Regression	1.858	5	0.372	2.349	0.047b			
1	Residual	14.872	94	0.158					
	Total	16.730	99						

				<b>Coefficients</b> <sub>a</sub>					
	Model -		dardized ficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		
		В	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF	
	(Constant)	3.746	0.627		5.972	0.000			
	Advertisement	0.135	0.114	0.214	1.179	0.241	0.286	3.498	
	Personal selling	0.024	0.070	0.063	0.345	0.731	0.284	3.516	
1	Sale promotion	-0.035	0.079	-0.051	-0.445	0.657	0.728	1.373	
	Public relations	-0.057	0.099	-0.060	-0.575	0.567	0.861	1.162	
	Direct marketing	-0.097	0.092	-0.114	-1.061	0.292	0.812	1.231	

a. Dependent variable: Used car purchase intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), direct marketing, sale promotion, public relations, advertisement, personal selling

According to the data in **Table 4**, the effect of various marketing communication strategies implemented by ABC Automobile Company on consumers' intention to purchase used cars. Employing multiple linear regression (Enter method), the analysis aims to discern the relationship between the independent variables (marketing communication strategies) and the dependent variable (used car purchase intention).

In the model summary table, critical indicators of model fitness are presented. These include the multiple correlation coefficient (R), indicating the strength of the linear relationship between predictor variables and the dependent variable, and the coefficient of determination (R Square), elucidating the proportion of variance in used car purchase intention explained by the marketing communication strategies. Furthermore, the Adjusted R Square value adjusts for the number of predictors in the model, while the standard error of the estimate provides insight into the average deviation of observed values from the regression line. The ANOVA table delves into the overall significance of the regression model, with the F-statistic and its associated *p*-value determining whether the model is statistically significant. This aids in understanding whether at least one predictor variable significantly influences used car purchase intention. The Coefficients table offers detailed information on individual predictor variables. Notably, the constant value represents used car purchase intention when all predictor variables are zero, while unstandardized coefficients and standardized coefficients shed light on the changes in the dependent variable associated with a unit change in predictor variables. Moreover, t-statistics and their corresponding *p*-values ascertain the statistical significance of each predictor variable, with tolerance and VIF values used to assess multicollinearity among predictors.

Upon analyzing the coefficients table, several observations emerge, including the insignificance of individual marketing communication strategies such as Advertisement, Personal Selling, Sales Promotion, Public Relations, and Direct Marketing on used car purchase intention when considered collectively. Nevertheless, the modest R Square value implies that a relatively small proportion of the variance in used car purchase intention is accounted for by these strategies, suggesting the involvement of other pertinent factors. The researcher changed the analysis method in the second round, using the Stepwise method, resulting in the analysis presented in **Table 5**.

According to the data in **Table 5**, the effect of marketing communication strategies employed by ABC Automobile Company on consumers' intention to purchase used cars, utilizing the stepwise regression method.

The model summary table illustrates key metrics: R (0.309) signifies a moderate positive correlation between the predictor variable(s) and the dependent variable (used car purchase intention). R Square (0.095)implies that 9.5 % of the variation in used car purchase intention is accounted for by the predictor variable(s) in the model. Adjusted R Square (0.086) adjusts for the number of predictors in the model.

The ANOVA table assesses the overall significance of the regression model: The F-statistic (10.340) and its associated p-value (0.002) signify statistical significance at the 5 % level, suggesting a substantial impact of the predictor variable(s) on used car purchase intention.

The coefficients table provides detailed insights into the predictor variable(s) in the model: The constant (3.025) represents used car purchase intention when the predictor variable is zero. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for advertisement (0.194) suggests that a one-unit increase in Advertisement correlates with a 0.194 increase in used car purchase intention, all else constant. The standardized coefficient (Beta) for advertisement (0.309) indicates a moderate positive impact on used car purchase intention. The t-statistic (3.216) and its associated *p*-value (0.002) show that Advertisement significantly affects used car purchase intention at the 5 % level. The tolerance value (1.000) and VIF (1.000) indicate no multicollinearity issues since only one predictor variable is in the model.

				Model Summa	ary					
Model	R	RS	R Square Adjusted R Square Std. Error of the Estimate						ite	
1	0.309a	0	0.095	0.086			0.39296			
				ANOVAa						
	Model	Sum o	of Squares	df		Mean So	luare	F	Sig.	
	Regression	1.597		1	1		7	10.340	0.002b	
1	1 Residual		5.133	98		0.154				
	Total	16.730		99						
				Coefficientsa						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Colline	<b>Collinearity Statistics</b>		
	mouch	В	Std. Error	Beta	- t	oig.	Tolerand	e	VIF	
1	(Constant)	3.025	0.198		15.295	0.000				
1	Advertisement	0.194	0.060	0.309	3.216	0.002	1.000		1.000	

**Table 5** The effect of the marketing communication strategies employed by ABC Automobile Company on consumers' intention to purchase used cars (Stepwise method)

a. Dependent variable: Used car purchase intention

b. Predictors in the model: (Constant), advertisement

Through the stepwise regression method, advertisement emerges as the sole significant predictor variable for used car purchase intention. This suggests that, among the considered marketing communication strategies, advertisement has the most significant positive influence on consumers' intention to purchase used cars at ABC Automobile Company. However, it's noteworthy that the R Square value (0.095) reveals that only a small fraction of the variance in used car purchase intention is explained by Advertisement. This implies that factors beyond those considered in the model may also affect used car purchase intention.

#### **Interview summary**

The whole staff of the company have a certain understanding of the second-hand industry, especially the appraisers and sales consultants have a clear understanding of various indicators, but there are still the following problems:

First, in view of product problems, the overall approach, the interviewees all believe that ABC Company's evaluation system is strict, the quality of second-hand cars is guaranteed, and the overall view is that comprehensive fuel consumption, vehicle brand, vehicle age, new car pricing, appearance and current mileage are the main consideration indicators for consumers. However, appraisers and managers agree that the current vehicle supply is insufficient, unable to focus on Japanese brands, and there are cases that cannot meet consumer demand. Second, regarding the pricing issue, respondents have different views. The management believes that the company relies too much on appraisers for pricing, while the sales consultant believes that the discount authority is insufficient and the negotiation process is not flexible enough. Thirdly, the employees of the company as a whole believe that the marketing channels are carried out both online and offline. Offline local resources are abundant, and online promotion is also actively carried out on the platforms of Tiktok, WeChat and second-hand cars, achieving good marketing effects. Fourthly, in terms of promotion, the company's employees hold the same views. The overall view is that advertising is simple, with only discount activities, less activity content and single promotion form. Fifth, in terms of personnel, the company's management believes that there is a lack of professional marketing personnel, and the company has difficulties in the designation of marketing strategies; At the same time, there is less

training, and new employees need a longer growth time. Sixth, in terms of service process, employees believe that sometimes the timeliness of service is poor, resulting in low customer feedback on service. Seventh, in terms of tangible display, most employees of the company think that the vehicle display effect in the exhibition hall is not good.

Consumers as a whole are less aware of used cars. In the interview, price, use time, brand, kilometers and model are the most important factors of car purchase. In the process of looking at and buying cars, the interviewees believe that the problems of ABC Company are summarized as follows: First, there are few related guarantee services. ABC company only provides agent transfer and 3-year warranty services at present, but nearly half of the interviewees hope to get quality testing and extended warranty services. Second, more than 50 % of the respondents hope that ABC company can provide loan services, but ABC company lacks financial supporting services for used cars, which is likely to lead to customer loss. Third, most of the interviewees came to see cars through acquaintances, followed by online platforms, and less of them went directly to stores, which shows that the company's online and offline marketing channels lack popularity. Fourth, respondents generally believe that the company's promotion is weak, and the promotional activities are not attractive to buy. Fifth, in terms of personnel service, respondents think that the company's service attitude is good and professional. Sixth, in terms of service process, respondents believe that there are slow responses to inquiries and slow handling of procedures. Seventh, in terms of tangible display, on the one hand, they think that the overall effect of the exhibition hall decoration is general, on the other hand, they think that there is no vehicle beauty in the part of the display, and the appearance of the vehicle is poor and lacks of purchase attraction.

Through interviews with ABC Company's internal staff and some car-watching customers, we can make a preliminary summary of ABC Company's existing second-hand car marketing status. The main summary is as follows: the source of used cars is unstable, and the after-sales service is relatively lacking; Pricing needs to be further optimized to reduce the dependence on appraisers. Meanwhile, ABC Company also lacks used car financial services; The way of promotion is simple and the intensity of promotion is weak; Marketing channels still need to further increase visibility; Inadequate staff training and lack of dedicated marketing professionals; Poor timeliness of service processes; In terms of tangible display, one is the poor decoration effect of the exhibition hall, and the other is that some vehicles have not carried out car beauty, and the appearance is unattractive.

The insights gathered from interviews with both internal staff and potential customers of ABC Company shed light on various challenges and opportunities within the company's second-hand car marketing landscape. These findings provide valuable context for understanding the current state of ABC Company's marketing strategies and highlight areas for improvement.

The interviews revealed concerns regarding the unstable source of used cars and the relative lack of after-sales service provided by ABC Company. This aligns with previous research emphasizing the importance of reliable supply chains and robust after-sales support in the used car industry (Adusei & Tweneboah-Koduah, 2019). Without a consistent source of high-quality used cars and comprehensive after-sales services, ABC Company may struggle to meet customer expectations and maintain customer loyalty over time. Respondents highlighted the need for pricing optimization and reducing reliance on appraisers for pricing decisions. This echoes findings from studies emphasizing the importance of transparent and competitive pricing strategies in the used car market (Nagle & Müller, 2017). By implementing pricing algorithms or guidelines that consider market demand, vehicle condition, and competitive pricing, ABC Company can enhance pricing accuracy and improve customer satisfaction.

Another key finding is the absence of used car financial services and the perceived weakness in promotional intensity. Previous research has demonstrated the impact of financial services availability on customer purchase decisions in the automotive industry (Sánchez-Iglesias et al., 2024). By partnering with financial institutions to offer loan services and designing compelling promotional campaigns, ABC Company can attract more customers and improve sales performance. Additionally, the interviews highlighted the need to increase the visibility of marketing channels and invest in staff training. Research suggests that multi-channel marketing strategies and well-trained staff are essential for attracting and retaining customers in the competitive automotive market (Ward et al., 1996). ABC Company can explore

innovative marketing channels, such as social media platforms and online marketplaces, to reach a broader audience and enhance brand visibility.

Finally, concerns were raised regarding the poor timeliness of service processes and suboptimal tangible displays in ABC Company's showroom. Studies have shown that efficient service processes and attractive showroom displays can significantly impact customer satisfaction and purchase decisions (Maheshwari et al., 2016; Ramanathan et al., 2017). ABC Company should prioritize streamlining service processes, improving response times, and enhancing the visual appeal of its showroom to create a positive customer experience and increase sales conversions.

In conclusion, the insights gained from interviews with internal staff and potential customers provide valuable guidance for ABC Company to address key challenges and capitalize on opportunities in the second-hand car market. By implementing targeted strategies to enhance supply chain stability, improve pricing accuracy, expand financial services offerings, strengthen promotional efforts, optimize marketing channels, invest in staff training, streamline service processes, and enhance showroom displays, ABC Company can position itself for sustained success and competitiveness in the dynamic automotive industry.

#### Conclusions

# Marketing environment, current situation, and existing problems faced by company ABC's used car products

The research findings shed light on several critical aspects concerning Company ABC's used car products, including the marketing environment, current situation, and existing problems:

1) Company ABC operates within a multifaceted landscape influenced by political, economic, social, technological, and industry dynamics. Factors such as government policies, globalization, shifting consumer attitudes, technological advancements, and competitive pressures significantly impact ABC's strategic decisions and market positioning. Adaptability, innovation, and strategic alignment with market demands are crucial for ABC to maintain its competitive edge.

2) Despite experiencing steady growth in the second-hand car market since its establishment in 2017, ABC has encountered a slowdown in growth rates since 2020, attributed to the pandemic's impact and the emergence of online platforms. Operational strategies focusing on vehicle acquisition, evaluation, and sales aim to maintain competitiveness amidst these challenges.

3) ABC company faces various challenges across product quality, pricing accuracy, channel visibility, sales promotion effectiveness, personnel capabilities, and service process efficiency. These challenges include insufficient high-quality vehicle sources, inaccurate price positioning, limited channel visibility, ineffective sales promotions, inadequate personnel training, and inefficient service processes. Addressing these issues comprehensively is imperative for ABC to enhance its performance and competitiveness in the market.

These research findings underscore the importance of understanding and addressing the multifaceted challenges within Company ABC's marketing environment, operations, and strategic approaches to sustain growth and competitiveness in the used car market.

# Segmentation, targeting, positioning (STP), and the marketing mix (4Ps) of company ABC's used car products

The research delves into the segmentation, targeting, positioning (STP), and marketing mix (4Ps) strategies employed by Company ABC in promoting its used car products.

In terms of segmentation, ABC meticulously analyzes geographical, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral factors to tailor its offerings to distinct consumer preferences. Online sales are particularly emphasized, catering predominantly to individuals aged 31 - 50 with moderate incomes seeking affordable options.

This segmentation approach is intricately linked to ABC's targeting strategy, where the company prioritizes transparent pricing, professional evaluation, and reliable after-sales service to address the specific needs of its target market. By positioning itself as a leader in transparent pricing and direct transactions, ABC seeks to establish credibility and differentiate its offerings from competitors.

In terms of the marketing mix, ABC meticulously crafts its product strategy to cater to diverse consumer needs, emphasizing technological innovation, brand building, and stringent quality control measures. Flexible pricing strategies, supported by thorough market research and financial support options, underline ABC's commitment to meeting consumer demands. Moreover, strategic partnerships, online platforms, and comprehensive promotional efforts amplify ABC's reach and brand visibility, ensuring consistency in communication across various channels. Through these integrated strategies, Company ABC navigates the complex landscape of the used car market, striving to meet consumer needs while maintaining a competitive edge.

### The effect of marketing communication strategies employed by ABC automobile company on consumers' intention to purchase used cars

In terms of advertising, ABC company's advertising content needs improvement compared to customer expectations. Customers generally reflect that the advertising content lacks clarity and attraction. Regarding personal sales, ABC company excels as customers can quickly obtain selected used car products, and sales staff strive to maintain good contact with customers.

In terms of promotional activities, customers generally show interest, but ABC Company's promotional activities are challenging to satisfy customers. However, customers still trust ABC company due to its positive reputation. In terms of public relations, ABC Company maintains good communication with customers, actively participates in social welfare activities, and engages in interactions in various locations, leaving customers with a positive impression. Concerning direct marketing, customers believe that leaflets, second-hand car product catalogs, and emails provided by ABC company offer better information services, increasing interest in ABC Company's products through these channels.

This research quantifies the relationship between marketing strategies employed by ABC Company and consumers' inclination to purchase the company's used cars. Pearson's Correlation Coefficients reveal that advertisement and personal selling strategies exhibit notable positive correlations with consumers' intention to purchase used cars. Conversely, sales promotion and direct marketing strategies demonstrate either negative correlations or insignificance in their effects on purchase intention. These findings underscore the importance of advertisement and personal selling in influencing consumers' decisions to purchase used cars from ABC Company. However, it's essential to acknowledge that while these strategies show significant correlations, other factors not considered in this study may also influence purchase intentions. Therefore, further research is warranted to delve deeper into these factors and their impact on consumer behavior in the used car market. Nonetheless, this study provides valuable insights for ABC Company to tailor its marketing communication strategies effectively to enhance consumer engagement and ultimately drive sales of its used car products.

The research findings underscore the effect of marketing communication strategies deployed by ABC Automobile Company on consumers' intention to purchase used cars, utilizing the stepwise regression method. The analysis reveals that advertisement emerges as the sole significant predictor variable for used car purchase intention, showcasing a moderate positive correlation. This indicates that among the array of marketing communication strategies considered, advertisement holds the most substantial positive influence on consumers' intention to purchase used cars from ABC Automobile Company. However, despite the statistical significance of advertisement, it's imperative to acknowledge the limited explanatory power of the model. The R Square value of 0.095 indicates that only a small proportion of the variance in used car purchase intention is accounted for by advertisement. This suggests that factors beyond the purview of the model may also play a pivotal role in shaping consumers' intentions to purchase used cars.

#### Practical recommendations and future research suggestions

In light of the research findings, several practical recommendations can be proposed to enhance the marketing communication strategies of Company ABC's used car products. Firstly, there is a pressing need to improve the clarity and attractiveness of advertising content to better resonate with customer expectations. This entails focusing on conveying key product features and benefits effectively to capture consumer attention and interest. Secondly, sales promotion activities should be revised to better align with customer

preferences and expectations. Tailored promotions and incentives can provide tangible value to customers while reinforcing the brand's reputation for transparency and reliability. Thirdly, ongoing training and development programs for sales staff are essential to enhance their product knowledge, customer service skills, and communication abilities. Empowering sales representatives to build strong rapport with customers and address their inquiries and concerns effectively can significantly enhance the customer experience. Additionally, leveraging direct marketing channels such as leaflets, product catalogs, and email campaigns can deliver targeted and personalized messages to customers, thereby enhancing customer engagement and interest in ABC Company's used car products. Lastly, continued engagement in social welfare activities and community outreach initiatives can strengthen ABC Company's reputation and goodwill among customers, fostering positive public relations and customer loyalty.

In terms of future research, several avenues can be explored to further deepen our understanding of consumer behavior in the used car market and refine marketing communication strategies. Firstly, conducting further research to gain deeper insights into consumer preferences and behaviors, including factors such as brand perception, product features, pricing sensitivity, and service quality, can provide valuable insights into drivers of purchase intention and loyalty. Secondly, analyzing competitor strategies in the used car market can identify emerging trends, best practices, and areas for differentiation. This comparative analysis can inform ABC Company's strategic positioning and marketing approach. Additionally, exploring the impact of technological innovations, such as online platforms and virtual reality experiences, on consumer engagement and purchase behavior, can provide opportunities for ABC Company to leverage technology to enhance its marketing communication strategies and customer experience. Lastly, cross-cultural studies comparing consumer perceptions and behaviors across different regions and demographics can inform ABC Company's efforts to tailor its marketing strategies effectively to diverse target audiences, thereby enhancing its competitive advantage in the global marketplace. Through the implementation of these recommendations and the exploration of future research avenues, ABC Company can strengthen its marketing communication strategies, enhance consumer engagement, and drive sales of its used car products to new heights.

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