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EFFECTIVENESS OF SALES PROMOTION TECHNIQUES ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION: A STUDY AT JARO EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the effectiveness of sales promotion techniques on consumer purchase decisions in the context of Jaro Education, a leading Indian EdTech company specialising in executive and online higher education. The EdTech sector, characterised by high-involvement purchase decisions and intense competitive dynamics, presents a unique environment in which traditional sales promotion theories must be re-examined. Through a structured questionnaire administered to 70 respondents comprising working professionals, students, and self-employed individuals, this study evaluates the influence of four key promotional tools — discounts, referral benefits, EMI/easy payment options, and limited-time offers — on prospective learners' enrolment decisions. Employing descriptive analysis, Likert scale mean score analysis, Pearson correlation, and chi-square tests, the findings reveal that referral benefits (Mean = 3.70) and EMI options (Mean = 3.69) are the most persuasive promotional instruments, while discounts remain the most preferred technique among 37.1% of respondents. Correlation analysis indicates strong positive relationships between referral benefits and purchase influence (r = 0.623), and between promotional trust and purchase conversion (r = 0.604). Chi-square tests reveal no statistically significant associations between demographic variables and promotional awareness, suggesting homogeneous promotional preferences across the sample. The study further identifies a critical caution: 68.6% of respondents believe that excessive promotional communication erodes institutional trust, posing a strategic risk for brand-premium positioning. The findings offer actionable insights for EdTech marketers, recommending amplified referral programs, transparent EMI-centric communication, and reputation management via online reviews. This research contributes to the limited body of literature on sales promotion effectiveness within high-involvement education services and provides a replicable framework for similar studies in the EdTech domain.

Keywords: Sales promotion, consumer purchase decision, EdTech, Jaro Education, referral benefits, EMI options, executive education, marketing strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of digital transformation, the Education Technology (EdTech) sector has emerged as one of the most competitive industries in the world. With the unprecedented rise of lifelong learning, professional upskilling, and executive education, individuals are no longer seeking merely academic credentials; they are seeking demonstrable career return on investment (ROI). This paradigm shift has compelled EdTech organisations to deploy increasingly sophisticated marketing strategies to attract and convert prospective learners.

Sales promotion — a critical element of the integrated marketing communications mix — serves as a strategic bridge between brand awareness and the final transaction. In a high-involvement purchase category such as executive MBA programs or professional certifications, consumers, typically working professionals, do not make impulsive decisions. Their purchase decision process is shaped by a complex interplay of psychological triggers, financial constraints, perceived course value, institutional credibility, and social influence.

Jaro Education (legally incorporated as Jaro Institute of Technology Management and Research Limited) is a pioneering Indian EdTech company founded in 2009, headquartered in Chembur, Mumbai. The company serves as a bridge between working professionals and top-tier global and domestic academic institutions, partnering with IIMs, IITs, MIT IDSS, Wharton Interactive, and Harvard Business School Online, among others. Listed on the NSE and BSE in September 2025, Jaro Education has reported a 38.6% year-on-year revenue growth in Q3 FY26, affirming its robust growth trajectory.

Despite a strong market presence, the EdTech market in 2026 is becoming increasingly saturated, with consumers often overwhelmed by promotional noise and aggressive outreach. This study seeks to identify which specific promotional techniques — fee waivers, referral benefits, limited-time offers, or EMI options — effectively move a prospect from the consideration stage to the conversion stage, and which approaches risk eroding the brand's premium image.

1.1 Problem Statement

While Jaro Education has a robust sales and marketing apparatus, the proliferation of EdTech platforms has intensified competition, and consumers are increasingly discerning about the promotional communications they receive. A key strategic challenge facing Jaro Education is determining which sales promotion techniques genuinely influence enrolment decisions and which may be perceived as intrusive or trust-diminishing. This study addresses this gap by empirically evaluating promotional effectiveness from the consumer's perspective.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This research is significant for Jaro Education as it provides data-driven insights into buyer psychology, enabling optimization of the marketing budget. For the academic community, it contributes to the understanding of how classical sales promotion theories apply to the modern, high-value digital education market — a domain that remains under-researched in existing literature.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A comprehensive review of literature was undertaken to understand existing knowledge on sales promotion techniques and their influence on consumer purchase behaviour across various sectors.

Philip Kotler (2012) defines sales promotion as short-term incentives designed to encourage the purchase or sale of a product or service. Traditional promotional tools such as discounts, coupons, rebates, and free samples have been widely studied in the context of FMCG and retail markets, with consistent findings that price-based promotions significantly stimulate short-term demand.

Blattberg and Neslin (1990) established foundational frameworks for understanding consumer response to sales promotions, emphasising the role of price sensitivity, deal proneness, and brand loyalty in moderating promotional effectiveness. Their work highlighted that the impact of promotions varies substantially across consumer segments and product categories.

Gupta (1988) demonstrated that sales promotions exert a more pronounced effect on brand switching and purchase acceleration than on category expansion, suggesting that promotional tools are primarily competitive instruments rather than market-development tools — a finding particularly relevant in the competitive EdTech landscape.

Chandon, Wansink, and Laurent (2000) proposed a hedonic-utilitarian benefit framework for sales promotions, categorising promotional benefits as monetary savings, quality signals, convenience, exploration, entertainment, and self-expression. This framework is germane to the EdTech context, where non-monetary promotions such as webinars and career counselling sessions may provide significant hedonic and informational value to prospective learners.

Lal and Villas-Boas (1998) examined the role of limited-time offers and found that urgency-inducing promotions are effective in accelerating purchase decisions, particularly among high-involvement consumers who might otherwise defer enrollment. This aligns with the present study's finding that 60% of respondents indicate likelihood of immediate enrolment upon encountering a limited-time offer.

Ryu and Hyun (2019) explored promotional effectiveness in the online education sector, finding that perceived financial value and institutional trust are the strongest predictors of enrolment conversion. Their findings corroborate the significance of EMI options and referral programs observed in the present study.

Kumar and Rajan (2012) underscored the growing importance of referral programs as a promotional mechanism, demonstrating that referred customers exhibit higher lifetime value, greater loyalty, and superior conversion rates compared to customers acquired through traditional advertising — a strategic insight directly applicable to Jaro Education's referral benefit programs.

In the Indian EdTech context, recent studies have noted that consumers place high importance on peer recommendations and online reviews when evaluating education providers. The proliferation of social media and review platforms has amplified the influence of word-of-mouth, making referral-based promotions an especially potent tool for EdTech organisations targeting digitally connected professionals. Despite the extensive body of literature on sales promotion in product markets, there exists a significant lacuna in research examining promotional effectiveness within the executive and online education services sector. This study aims to address this gap.

3. RESEARCH GAP

A review of existing literature indicates that numerous studies have examined the relationship between sales promotion techniques and consumer purchasing behaviour across industries such as FMCG, retail, pharmaceuticals, apparel, and e-commerce. Many researchers have found that promotional tools such as discounts, coupons, rebates, and limited-time offers significantly influence consumer purchase intentions and short-term sales performance.

However, most of these studies have been conducted in product-based industries, particularly in retail and consumer goods. Limited research has been conducted in the education services sector, where purchasing decisions are influenced not only by price incentives but also by factors such as career prospects, course value, institutional credibility, and long-term investment considerations. Furthermore, existing studies primarily focus on general consumer markets and do not specifically analyse how sales promotion techniques influence enrolment decisions in professional education and executive programs. There is also a notable absence of empirical research examining the effectiveness of promotional strategies deployed by specific EdTech companies operating in the rapidly growing Indian online and executive education market. Prior literature has largely focused on short-term purchase behaviour, while limited attention has been given to how promotional strategies influence consumer perception, trust, and decision-making in high-involvement services such as education. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by empirically examining the effectiveness of sales promotion techniques on consumer purchase decisions in the context of Jaro Education, providing actionable insights into how promotional strategies influence prospective learners' enrolment decisions in the education services industry.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Primary Objective: To analyse the effectiveness of sales promotion techniques in influencing consumer purchase decisions at Jaro Education.

Secondary Objectives:

- To identify the various sales promotion techniques used by Jaro Education to attract prospective learners.
- To examine the level of consumer awareness and perception toward the promotional strategies offered by Jaro Education.
- To evaluate the influence of promotional tools such as discounts, limited-time offers, referral benefits, and EMI options on consumer enrolment decisions.
- To analyse the relationship between sales promotion activities and consumer purchase behaviour in the education services sector.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the effectiveness of sales promotion techniques on consumer purchase decisions at Jaro Education. Descriptive research is appropriate here as it focuses on understanding and systematically describing the current state of promotional influence without manipulating variables. The research aims to capture respondents' perceptions, opinions, and behavioural tendencies regarding various promotional tools deployed in the EdTech sector.

5.2 Population and Sampling

The target population comprises individuals who are aware of or have engaged with Jaro Education's programs, including working professionals, students, and self-employed individuals. A convenience sampling method was employed, yielding a sample of 70 valid respondents. While convenience sampling limits generalisability, it is appropriate for exploratory and descriptive research of this nature, particularly given access constraints within the EdTech consumer segment.

5.3 Data Collection

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The instrument was divided into four sections: (A) General Awareness, (B) Influence of Promotional Techniques (Likert scale), (C) Purchase Decision Factors, and (D) Perception and Behavioural Response. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly

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Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) was employed for attitudinal measurement. Secondary data was drawn from Jaro Education's company profile, industry reports, and academic literature on sales promotion and consumer behaviour.

5.4 Data Analysis Tools

Data was analysed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS-compatible techniques. The following analytical methods were employed: percentage analysis for demographic profiling; descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation for Likert scale items; Pearson correlation analysis for inter-variable relationships; and chi-square tests of independence to examine associations between demographic variables and promotional awareness or preference.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The sample of 70 respondents reflects a predominantly young, educated, and professionally active population, consistent with Jaro Education's target market of aspiring and practising professionals.

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	21–25 years	53	75.7%
	Below 20 / Others	17	24.3%
Gender	Male	47	67.1%
	Female	23	32.9%
Education	Postgraduate	38	54.3%
	Undergraduate	32	45.7%
Occupation	Working Professional	36	51.4%
	Student	29	41.4%
	Business/Self-Employed	5	7.1%
Monthly Income	Below ₹20,000	36	51.4%
	₹20,000 – ₹50,000	29	41.4%
	Above ₹50,000	5	7.2%

The majority of respondents (75.7%) are between 21–25 years of age, male (67.1%), postgraduate-educated (54.3%), and working professionals (51.4%) earning below ₹50,000 per month (92.8%). This demographic profile is strongly aligned with Jaro Education's core target audience of young, ambitious professionals seeking career advancement through executive education.

6.2 Awareness Analysis

Brand awareness was found to be strong, with 71.4% of respondents indicating familiarity with Jaro Education. Word-of-mouth and peer referrals emerged as the dominant awareness channel (57.1%), followed by social media (21.4%) and online advertisements (10.0%). Critically, however, only 57.1% of respondents were aware of Jaro Education's promotional offers, revealing a notable communication gap that warrants strategic attention.

6.3 Likert Scale Mean Score Analysis

Likert scale analysis was conducted to assess the perceived influence of six promotional statements (SB1–SB6) on respondents' attention and decision-making. The results are summarised in the table below.

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Code	Statement	Mean	Std Dev	Interpretation
SB1	Sales promotions attract my attention toward educational programs	3.26	1.06	Neutral
SB2	Discounts make courses appear more affordable	3.56	1.14	Agree
SB3	Limited-time offers create urgency to enrol	3.56	1.11	Agree
SB4	EMI/payment options make it easier to take decisions	3.69	1.06	Agree
SB5	Referral benefits increase my interest in enrolling	3.70	1.04	Agree
SB6	Promotional offers increase my trust in the institution	3.53	1.15	Agree

Referral benefits (SB5, Mean = 3.70) and EMI options (SB4, Mean = 3.69) received the highest mean scores, indicating these are the most influential promotional tools for the target demographic. The overall mean across all 12 Likert items was 3.52, indicating a collective 'Agree' disposition toward the effectiveness of sales promotions. Notably, SB1 (promotional attention, Mean = 3.26) received the lowest score, suggesting that promotional awareness alone does not sufficiently capture consumer interest without accompanying value-added components.

6.4 Purchase Decision Analysis

Among the four promotional techniques tested, discounts were identified as the most preferred by 37.1% of respondents, followed by referral benefits (22.9%), EMI options (21.4%), and limited-time offers (18.6%). This preference hierarchy is consistent with the income profile of the sample, where over 92% earn below ₹50,000 per month, making price-based incentives particularly salient.

Critically, 74.2% of respondents regard promotional offers as important or very important when selecting an education provider, and 50% stated they have chosen or would choose Jaro Education over competitors specifically due to its promotional offers. An additional 34.3% expressed they might consider Jaro Education for this reason, indicating significant potential for conversion through well-designed promotional campaigns.

6.5 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis revealed several strong and statistically significant relationships ($p < 0.001$) between promotional variables, as summarised below.

Variable 1	Variable 2	r Value	p Value	Strength
Referral Benefits (SB5)	Promos Build Trust (SB6)	0.655	<0.001	Strong
Too Many Promos (SD6)	Discounts ≠ Quality (SD7)	0.658	<0.001	Strong
Referral Benefits (SB5)	Purchase Influence (SC1)	0.623	<0.001	Strong
Promos Build Trust (SB6)	Purchase Influence (SC1)	0.604	<0.001	Strong
Urgency (SD12)	Value Perception (SD5)	0.610	<0.001	Strong
Promo Attention (SB1)	Limited-time Urgency (SB3)	0.591	<0.001	Strong

The strongest correlation ($r = 0.658$) exists between scepticism about over-promotion and belief in the quality-signal of discounts, suggesting that consumers who are cautious about promotional overload simultaneously maintain positive quality perceptions when discounts are offered transparently. The Trust-Purchase Link ($r = 0.604$) confirms that trust built through promotional communication is a critical lever for sales conversion, while the Referral-Purchase correlation ($r = 0.623$) validates referrals as the strongest gateway to enrolment conversion.

6.6 Chi-Square Tests of Independence

Three chi-square tests were conducted to examine associations between demographic variables and promotional awareness or behaviour. No statistically significant associations were found at the 5% level of significance ($p > 0.05$ in all tests), as summarised below.

Test	Variables	χ^2 Value	p-value	Result
Test 1	Gender vs Jaro Awareness	0.002	0.968	Not Significant
Test 2	Occupation vs Promo Awareness	3.146	0.207	Not Significant
Test 3	Gender vs Preferred Technique	3.406	0.333	Not Significant

The absence of significant demographic differences suggests that promotional preferences are uniformly distributed across gender and occupational groups within this sample. This homogeneity is likely attributable to the narrow age distribution (75.7% aged 21–25), which may suppress inter-group variation. Future studies employing larger and more demographically diverse samples may yield more differentiated findings.

7. MAJOR FINDINGS

- Jaro Education enjoys strong brand recognition, with 71.4% awareness driven predominantly by peer referrals (57.1%), underscoring the organic power of word-of-mouth in the EdTech sector.
- A significant awareness gap exists: only 57.1% of respondents are aware of Jaro Education's promotional offers, indicating the need for more robust promotional communication strategies.
- Referral benefits (Mean = 3.70) and EMI payment options (Mean = 3.69) are the most influential promotional tools, while discounts are the most preferred technique (37.1% of respondents).
- 74.2% of respondents consider promotional offers important or very important when selecting an education provider; 50% have chosen or would choose Jaro Education specifically due to its promotional offers.
- 61.4% of respondents rate Jaro Education's promotional strategies as effective or very effective; 54.3% confirm that promotions reduce their decision-making time.
- Promotional overload poses a significant risk: 68.6% of respondents agree that excessive promotional communication erodes institutional trust, a critical caution for a brand positioned in the premium executive education segment.
- Online reviews exert substantial influence: 80% of respondents state that online reviews affect their perception of promotional offers, highlighting the importance of reputation management.
- Course quality remains the primary driver: 57.1% of respondents would enrol even without promotional incentives if the course quality is high, indicating that promotions supplement rather than replace intrinsic value in driving purchase decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Amplify and Formalise Referral Programs: Given that referral benefits exhibit the highest mean influence score and the strongest correlation with purchase decisions ($r = 0.623$), Jaro Education should invest in structured, incentivised referral reward schemes. Alumni networks, corporate partnerships, and student ambassador programs can serve as high-yield referral channels.

2. Prominently Communicate EMI Flexibility: With over 92% of respondents earning below ₹50,000 per month, financial accessibility is a critical enrolment determinant. Promotional materials should lead with EMI and zero-cost financing options, framing education as an affordable career investment rather than a large upfront expenditure.

3. Bridge the Promotional Awareness Gap: Since 42.9% of respondents remain unaware of Jaro Education's promotional offers, the organisation should diversify its promotional communication through social media campaigns, campus outreach at colleges, targeted digital advertisements, and email marketing to past enquirers.

4. Maintain Promotion Frequency Discipline: As 68.6% of respondents agree that over-promotion reduces institutional trust, Jaro Education should adopt a quality-over-quantity approach to promotional communication — delivering fewer, more targeted, and more credible promotional messages rather than high-frequency generic outreach.

5. Actively Manage Online Review Presence: Given that 80% of respondents are influenced by online reviews, Jaro Education should implement a proactive reputation management strategy, encouraging satisfied learners to post reviews on Google, Quora, and education-specific portals such as Shiksha and MBA Universe.

6. Segment Promotional Outreach for Students: While chi-square tests revealed no statistically significant demographic differences, a directional trend shows students are comparatively less aware of promotional offers. Targeted campaigns through college placement cells, career fairs, and student community platforms can enhance reach within this segment.

7. Leverage Consultative Selling as a Promotional Strategy: In the EdTech context, the perceived support offered through career counselling sessions and personalised consultations functions as a significant non-financial promotional nudge. Jaro Education should position its consultative selling approach as a distinct value-added offering in its promotional communications.

8. CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive empirical assessment of the effectiveness of sales promotion techniques on consumer purchase decisions at Jaro Education. The findings confirm that sales promotions play a meaningful and statistically validated role in influencing enrolment behaviour within the executive and online education sector — a domain that has remained under-examined in existing marketing literature. Among the promotional tools examined, referral benefits and EMI payment options emerged as the most persuasive instruments, while discounts remained the most preferred by the majority of respondents. The strong correlations between promotional trust and purchase influence, and between referral engagement and enrolment conversion, provide robust empirical support for a trust-centric promotional strategy. Critically, the study reveals a dual imperative for Jaro Education: to intensify promotional reach and awareness on one hand, while exercising strategic restraint in promotional frequency on the other, to preserve the brand's premium institutional image. The finding that 57.1% of respondents would enrol without promotions if course quality is high reinforces the primacy of academic value in the purchase decision, with promotional incentives functioning as powerful complementary catalysts rather than primary drivers.

For EdTech marketers and researchers alike, this study offers a replicable methodological framework and a set of actionable strategic insights for understanding and optimising promotional effectiveness in high-involvement education services. Future research should extend this inquiry to larger and more demographically diverse samples, incorporate longitudinal enrolment data, and examine the long-term impact of promotional strategies on learner satisfaction, retention, and institutional brand equity.

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