



EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING AND IT'S INFLUENCE ON BRAND LOYALTY IN THE AUTOMOBILE SECTOR

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Abstract: The car market today requires more than just advertisements about what a car has or how much it costs to establish strong connections with consumers. Car purchasers now want to experience a bond with the brand and see value past just the use of the car. Experiential marketing, which includes things like test drives, virtual reality, and brand events, is a good way to establish strong ties. Such events attempt to make a large impact that goes beyond normal ads. This paper examines past studies to see how these hands-on attempts alter what consumers think, recall about the brand, and choose to buy in the car market. It also looks at how these methods help with maintaining consumers, and making them remain loyal to the brand for a long time. Results show that when consumers experience, feel, and identify with the brand, it significantly mold how they recall and see the brand, and remain loyal, which then sways their purchasing choices. The paper concludes by stating that experiential marketing is essential for auto brands that want to stand out and maintain strong connections with their consumers. Tips for actual use and ideas for more study are given.

Keywords: experiential marketing, brand loyalty, automotive industry, customer experience, consumer behaviour, brand perception

I. INTRODUCTION

In the car sales world today, archaic methods to sell—like listing car specifications or prices—work less well. Car's purchasers now seek worth that goes past just what the car does; they want to experience a link with their selected car brands. So, car brands cannot just rely on ads & bargains to maintain strong connections with consumers. When consumers look at major buys like automobiles, they want to meet the

brand first.

Event marketing aids here by allowing consumers delve into the brand, more than just observing. Things like demo vehicles, VR installations, or brand events give consumers a genuine sense for what the brand stands for. This kind of contact often creates a deeper & more stayed memory than conventional advertisements such as signs or TV commercials. The sensation of operating a car, hearing its powertrain, or being in a well-made brand space stay with them. This study looks at how these factors help in remembering the brand, feeling near to the brand, & at last, in selecting to buy.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Big concepts let us comprehend how crucial brands touch us powerfully. Schmitt's 1999 concept argues there are five ways we encounter brands—Sense, experience, Think, Act, & Relate. They make us like a brand more. In autos, this helps create items that strike us more than simply automotive facts. For a true look, test drives show us smoothness, control, and speed. Cool tales from companies wire our thoughts & emotions over time. Web technologies allow users observe & interact with automobiles in new ways. Events put up by businesses, such races or group meets, help individuals feel they belong. All these phases raise the worth we view & build ties to the brand.

Pine & Gilmore's 1998 presence helps to this. They classify satisfaction into four types: enjoyment, Learn, Run Away, & Looks. Car individuals utilize all types: races allow us aspire, car organizations instruct, shops astound us, & star events charm us. All factors combine to build strong brand love & memories. Brakus & pals in 2009 observed that brands touch us in ways that are felt, lived, thought, or done. Studies demonstrate that genuine smiles at each step, from first sight to help after you purchase, make us trust them. Lemon & Verhoef in 2016 explain how continual connections make us stay, whereas Prahalad & Ramaswamy in 2004 emphasize how making things our own bonds us more to businesses.

In sum, books reveal automobile makers thrive by letting us appreciate the ride & feel. This hits home more than merely increasing what a vehicle can accomplish. Yet, we need to discover more: how each excursion stirs us, how individuals of all types respond, & how physical meet-ups fare compared to digital ones around the world.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This review aims to address three primary objectives derived from the foundational dissertation research:

1. To analyze the impact of experiential marketing activities on customer perception and brand recall.
2. To assess the contribution of experiential marketing strategies to customer relationship development, retention, and long-term brand loyalty.
3. To investigate how experiential marketing influences consumer purchase decisions within the automotive sector.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Selected sources for secondary data collection included peer-reviewed journal articles, analyses from market research firms (e.g., J.D. Power, McKinsey), and descriptive accounts of specific brand initiatives. Source selection criteria prioritized direct relevance to experiential marketing, brand loyalty, and the automotive industry, ensuring the credibility and applicability of the synthesized information. The analysis

involved thematic identification, focusing on recurring concepts such as emotional connection, customer satisfaction, community building, and the comparative efficacy of experiential versus traditional marketing tactics. Recognizing that quantitative data and market trends alone provide an incomplete picture, the analysis integrated contextual insights from case studies and conceptual papers. This required careful consideration of source types, distinguishing between empirical studies and industry commentary to maintain a balanced perspective. This systematic review method enabled the study to address its research objectives effectively while remaining grounded in established evidence. Primary data was also collected by the author through a questionnaire that contained twenty-one questions related to experiential marketing, its influence on brand loyalty among automobile customers. The data had sample size of over one hundred people. Adherence to academic citation standards ensured transparency and intellectual honesty throughout the review process.

V. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Customer Perception and Brand Recall

The reviewed literature consistently indicates that brand-related experiences positively influence customer perception and enhance brand recall. A significant distinction exists between passively viewing automotive advertisements and actively engaging with the brand or product. Direct interaction, such as participating in a test drive or the feel, sound (like an engine), & the way it moves while you drive helps the brand stick in your memory. You think about it more when you pick a vehicle later. Events structured on what the company stands for, such off-road courses or tech demos, affect how we view it. They relate the brand with techniques of life, objectives, or skills. These events enable businesses convey who they are in a true manner, more than merely catalogues of features. Positive emotions evoked during these interactions are strongly correlated with favourable brand perceptions, increasing the likelihood of the brand entering the consumer's consideration set. Consumer surveys often rank 'Brand Values/Technology' and 'Entertainment/Experiences' as highly important factors, supporting the assertion that experiential elements significantly mold perception.

Customer Relationships, Retention, and Loyalty

Synthesized findings suggest that experiential marketing strategies are instrumental in helping automotive brands cultivate stronger customer relationships, which subsequently enhances retention and long-term loyalty. A recurring theme across sources is the power of emotional connections forged through shared, brand-sponsored activities. Initiatives like owner clubs, exclusive gatherings, or dedicated brand spaces (e.g., NIO House) transform the transactional buyer-seller dynamic into a more relational one, fostering feelings of inclusion and attachment. Quantitative studies corroborate this link; for example, Kasamani and Mostafa (2023) identified statistically significant relationships between brand love (often stemming from positive experiences) and outcomes like customer loyalty (Beta=0.415, p=0.008) and brand advocacy (Beta=0.382, p=0.000). Furthermore, Odoom's (2022) research indicated that brand community engagement programs might have a particularly strong effect on loyalty among consumers exhibiting high involvement in their vehicle purchase decisions. Relationship building extends well beyond the initial purchase. High-quality after-sales service and exclusive owner benefits, characteristic of brands like Lexus or Ferrari, reinforce customer value perceptions and increase the likelihood of repeat purchases. Good moments at each touchpoint make the bond with the brand solid. Customers that feel noticed & joined in these occasions likely to say no to subsequent offers. This fits with data that demonstrate they may purchase again & mention nice things to friends. They enjoy the brand a lot.

Consumer Purchase Decisions

Hands-on commercials push one to purchase right now. They enable transition from merely liking it to must-buy. You may test-drive the automobile. This helps you feel whether the automobile complements you. It decreases the tension of a significant purchase. More test drives strengthen that sensation & confidence in the automobile. Also, means to dig deep into the goods—like touch and feel displays, online tools, or 3D tours—help you know the automobile well. These tools allow you feel like it is yours, even with no purchase yet. By displaying what the automobile can accomplish (like a live dirt-track event), companies look more authentic & their bargains more tempting than dull commercials. The pleasant emotion from joyful moments typically separates one brand from the others & may tilt the balance when automobiles are similar. The ad trip itself might be a crucial draw. Studies suggest these meet-ups not merely pull new folks in, but also retain old clients, raising the likelihood they will remain with the business.

VI. PRIMARY DATA

Valid responses were collected through a structured Google Form circulated within my network over a period of 7 days. The objective was to assess consumer perception and engagement with brand-sponsored automobile events.

TABLE 1

Age	Percentage	Count
Under 25	20.70%	23
25-34	26.10%	29
35-44	19.80%	22
45-54	19.80%	22
55 or Older	13.5	15
Total No. of Respondents	111	

Age:
111 responses

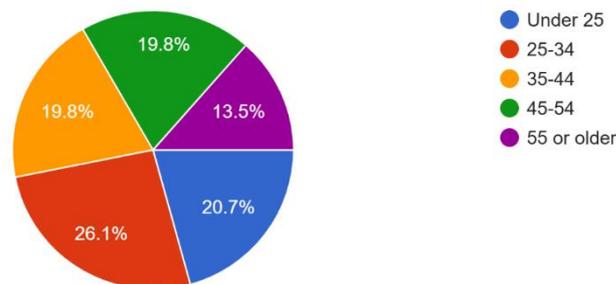


FIGURE 1

Interpretation:

This table & figure displays the age distribution of 111 survey respondents. The largest group of participants falls within the 25-34 age range, making up 26.10% (29 individuals) of the total. The smallest group consists of those aged 55 or older, representing 13.5% (15 individuals). Interestingly, the age groups 35-44 and 45-54 have an identical representation, each accounting for 19.80% (22 individuals) of the respondents.

TABLE 2

Gender	Percentage	Count
Male	43.20%	48
Female	40.50%	45
Other	7.20%	8
Prefer Not to say	9%	10
Total No. of Respondents	111	

Gender:

111 responses

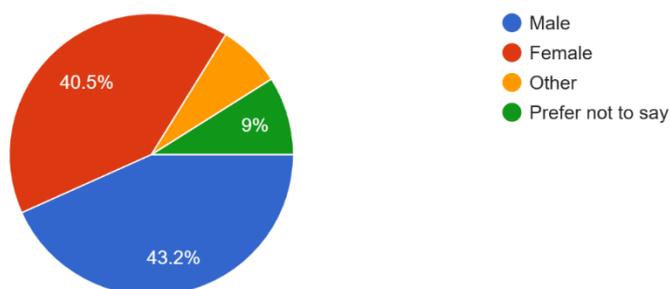


FIGURE 2

Interpretation:

This table & figure illustrates the gender demographics of the 111 survey respondents. Males constitute the largest group, accounting for 43.20% (48 respondents), followed closely by females at 40.50% (45 respondents). A smaller portion, 7.20% (8 individuals), identified as "Other". Additionally, 9% (10 respondents) chose the "Prefer Not to say" option, indicating they did not wish to disclose their gender.

TABLE 3

Monthly Household Income (INR)		
	Percentage	Count
Below 30000	28.40%	31
30000-60000	21.10%	23
60001-100000	22.90%	25
100001-500000	15.60%	17
Above 500000	11%	12
Total No. of Respondents	109	

Monthly Household Income:
109 responses

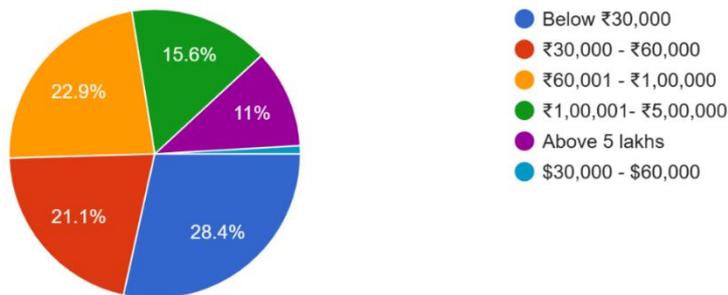


FIGURE 3

Interpretation:

This table and figure detail the monthly household income distribution (in INR) for 109 respondents. The most common income bracket is "Below 30000", representing 28.40% (31 individuals). The next significant groups are those earning "60001-100000" (22.90%, 25 respondents) and "30000-60000" (21.10%, 23 respondents). Fewer respondents fall into the higher income categories, with 15.60% (17 individuals) earning between 100001-500000 and 11% (12 individuals) earning above 500000 INR per month.

TABLE 4

Customer Satisfaction at most Memorable Brand Event		
Satisfaction	Percentage	Count
Not Satisfied	5.10%	5
Slightly Satisfied	1%	1
Neutral	24.20%	24
Satisfied	15.20%	15
Very Satisfied	13.10%	13
Not Applicable	41.40%	41
Total No. of Respondents		99

How satisfied were you with your most memorable experience at a brand-sponsored event?
99 responses

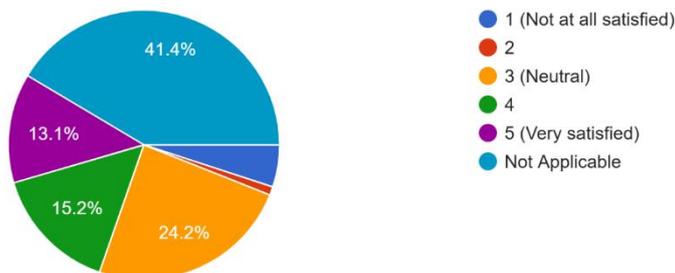


FIGURE 4

Interpretation:

This table and figure reflect customer satisfaction from the most memorable brand event attended by 99 respondents. A significant portion, 41.40% (41 individuals), selected "Not Applicable," likely indicating they have not attended such an event or do not recall one. Among those who rated their experience, the largest group felt "Neutral" (24.20%, 24 respondents). Positive experiences were reported by those feeling "Satisfied" (15.20%, 15 respondents) and "Very Satisfied" (13.10%, 13 respondents). Lower satisfaction levels were less common, with 5.10% (5 respondents) being "Not Satisfied" and 1% (1 respondent) "Slightly Satisfied."

TABLE 5

Likelihood of Future Purchase from Brands		
Likelihood	Percentage	Count
Not at all likely	12.40%	13
Slightly likely	6.70%	7
Neutral	39%	41
Likely	18.10%	19
Very likely	23.80%	25
Total No. of Respondents		105

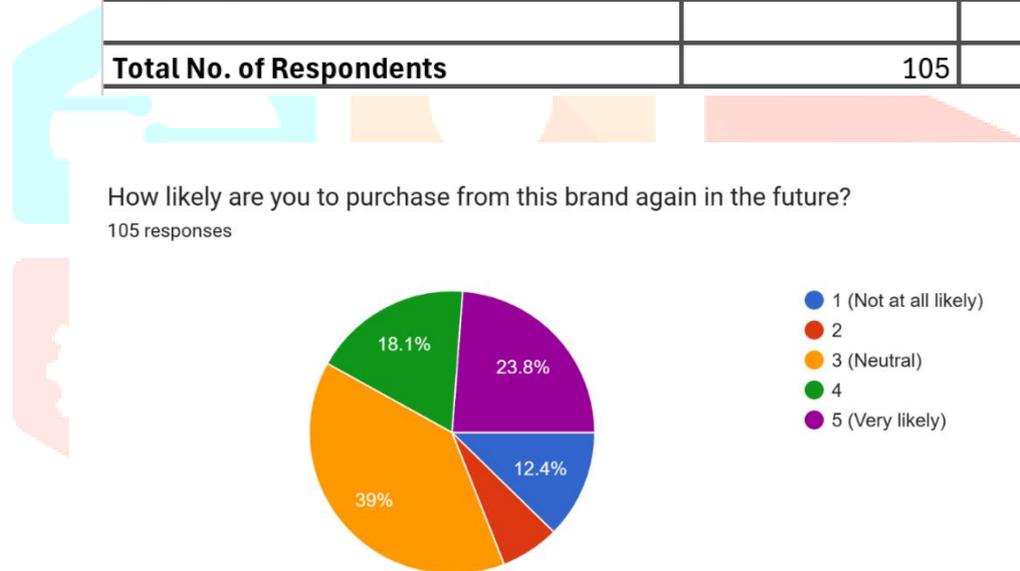


FIGURE 5

Interpretation:

This table and figure gauges the likelihood of 105 respondents making future purchases from the discussed brands. The most common response is "Neutral," chosen by 39% (41 individuals), indicating uncertainty or indifference. However, a combined 41.9% show positive purchase intent, with 23.80% (25 respondents) being "Very likely" and 18.10% (19 respondents) being "Likely." Conversely, negative sentiment is lower, with 12.40% (13 respondents) stating they are "Not at all likely" and 6.70% (7 respondents) being "Slightly likely" to purchase in the future.

TABLE 6

Agreement of Statements About Brands

I feel emotionally connected to this brand.		
Agreement	Percentage	Count
Strongly Disagree	12.30%	13
Disagree	17%	18
Neutral	30.20%	32
Agree	25.50%	27
Strongly Agree	15.10%	16
Responses:	106	

a. I feel emotionally connected to this brand.

106 responses

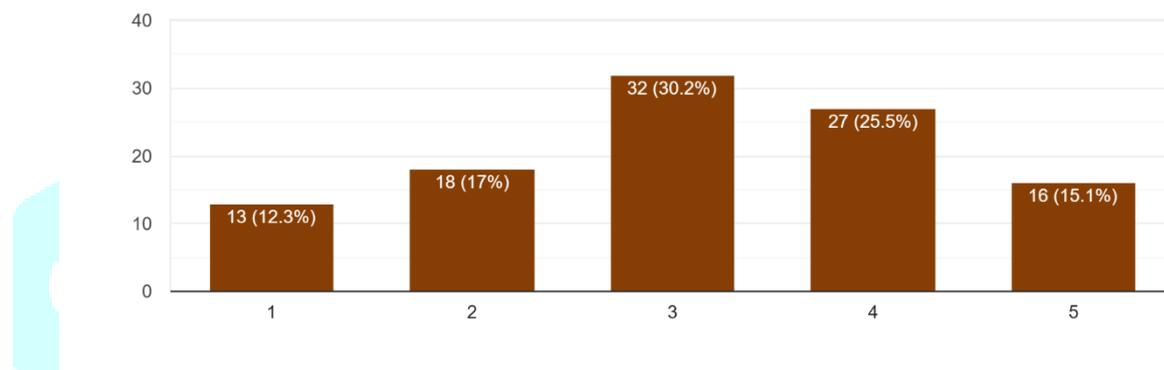


FIGURE 6

Interpretation:

This table and figure assess the emotional connection 106 respondents feel towards the brand. The most common response is "Neutral," indicated by 30.20% (32 individuals). However, a larger combined percentage expresses agreement, with 25.50% (27 respondents) selecting "Agree" and 15.10% (16 respondents) choosing "Strongly Agree," totalling 40.6%. Disagreement is less prevalent, with 17% (18 respondents) disagreeing and 12.30% (13 respondents) strongly disagreeing (combined 29.3%). Overall, more respondents feel an emotional connection than those who do not, though a significant group remains neutral.

TABLE 7

Participating in brand-sponsored events has influenced your loyalty to the brand		
Agreement	Percentage	Count
Strongly Disagree	11.40%	12
Disagree	20%	21
Neutral	36.20%	38
Agree	14.30%	15
Strongly Agree	18.10%	19
Total No. of Respondents:	105	

To what extent do you agree that participating in brand-sponsored events (e.g., test drives, auto shows) has influenced your loyalty to the brand?

105 responses

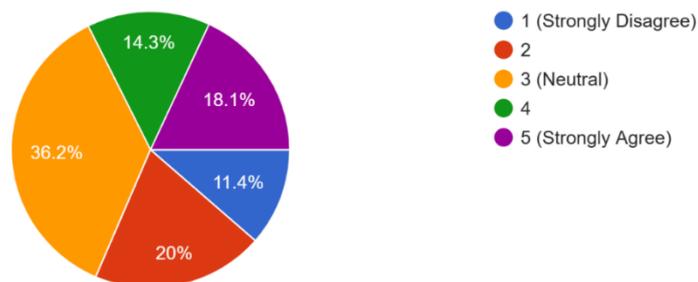


FIGURE 7

Interpretation:

This table and figure gauges the perceived influence of participating in brand-sponsored events on brand loyalty among 105 respondents. The largest group, 36.20% (38 individuals), remained "Neutral," suggesting these events did not sway their loyalty either way. The remaining opinions were closely split: 32.4% felt their loyalty was positively influenced (14.30% Agree, 18.10% Strongly Agree), while 31.4% felt it was not (20% Disagree, 11.40% Strongly Disagree). This indicates a mixed impact of brand events on loyalty for this group.

TABLE 8

Factors from brand events that increases your loyalty to a car brand the most

Opportunity to test the car (e.g., test drives)		
Factor's Importance	Percentage	Count
Least Important	20.80%	22
Not Important	8.50%	9
Neutral	28.30%	30
Important	24.50%	26
Very Important	17.90%	19
Total No. of Respondents:		106

Opportunity to test the car (e.g., test drives)
106 responses

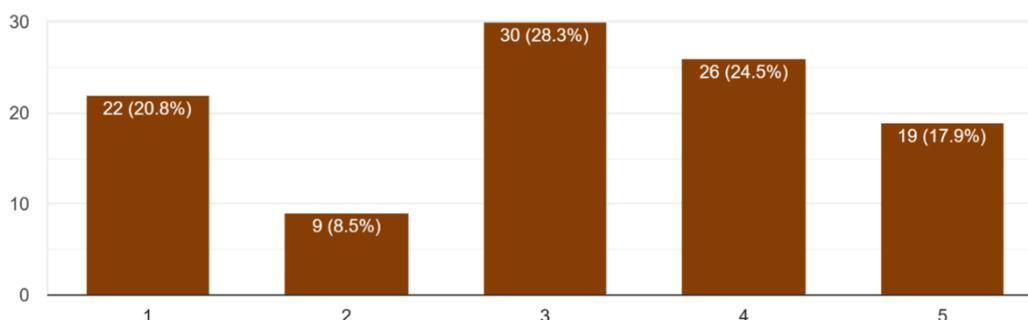


FIGURE 8

Interpretation:

This table & figure assesses how important the "Opportunity to test the car (e.g., test drives)" during brand events is for increasing loyalty, according to 106 respondents. The most frequent response was "Neutral" (28.30%, 30 respondents). However, a larger combined group views this opportunity positively, with 24.50% (26 respondents) finding it "Important" and 17.90% (19 respondents) finding it "Very Important," totalling 42.4%. Conversely, 20.80% (22 respondents) deemed it "Least Important" and 8.50% (9 respondents) "Not Important" (combined 29.3%). Overall, more respondents value test drives for loyalty building than those who do not, but a notable group is neutral.

TABLE 9

How do you think car brands could improve their events to make you feel more loyal.			
Responses: 79			
Storytelling zones showing brand legacy			
Invite-only sneak peeks for loyal customers			
Gamified experiences with prizes			
Tie-ups with lifestyle or travel influencers			
Community drives or road trips			
Eco-friendly and sustainable event themes			
Yes			
Personalized test drive experiences			
Free branded merchandise			
Exclusive access to limited editions			
Immersive AR/VR car customization			
Interactive car tech demos			
Safety			
Make it more fun for women as well			
On time service			
Personal meetings			
Personalized Touch / Preferences rather than stereo type car for everyone			
Over Car needs to be good, loaded with features keeping compition in mind.			
NA			
Loyalty-based reward programs			
More prompt service assurance based events			
Reaching to more audience			
By giving good customer service.			
They can improve their honesty and be true to their words or promises			
Meet-and-greet with designers or engineers			
Free check ups, alignment, balancing & other freebies			
To foster loyalty, car brands could focus on creating immersive and personalized experiences that res			
More attention to customer and their needs to related your services or products			
I Don't know About Car			
Transparent Q&A with brand reps			
Okay			
No			
Yes I think That			
It's Ok			
They can improve the customer experience significantly by organizing the event at a place where most			
Brand Ambassador selection			
Improve car safety features			
Autoexpo			
Likely			
They should make the person feel more important and prioritise his/her comfort			
Personal connect			
I haven't attended one yet, so I am not sure what would it take for them to get me to their events.			
i never visit any event ever			
They can offer complimentary food to enhance the overall experience			
Definitely			
Imprinceive			
Service			
Cost effective and affordable services			
I suggest about the music system and average			

TABLE 10

Compared to traditional advertising, how effective do you find brand-sponsored events in making you feel loyal ?					
Effectiveness	Percentage	Count			
Much less Effective	6.70%	7			
Slightly Less effective	14.40%	15			
Equally Effective	43.30%	15			
Slightly more Effective	20.20%	21			
Much more Effective	15.40%	16			
Total No. of Responses:	104				

Compared to traditional advertising (e.g., TV ads, billboards), how effective do you find brand-sponsored events in making you feel loyal to a car brand?

104 responses

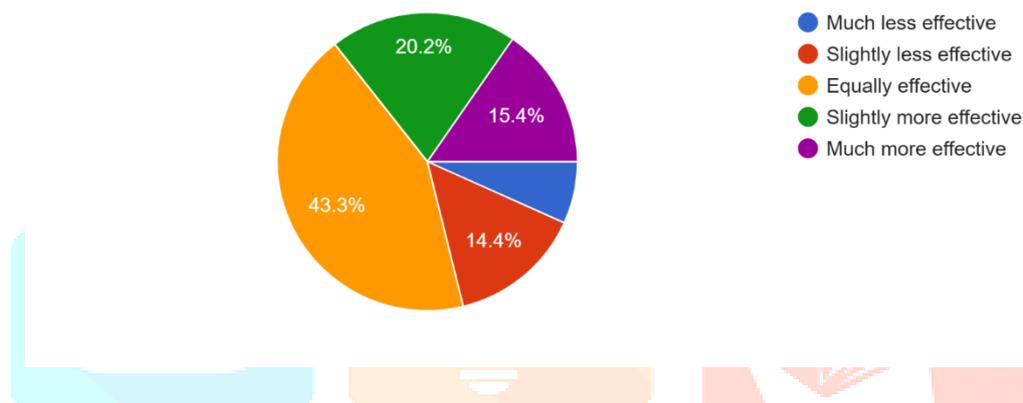


FIGURE 9

Interpretation:

This table & figure compares the perceived effectiveness of brand-sponsored events versus traditional advertising in fostering loyalty among 104 respondents. The largest group, 43.30%, finds both methods "Equally Effective". However, a notable portion believes events are more effective, with 20.20% finding them "Slightly more Effective" and 15.40% "Much more Effective" (combined 35.6%). Conversely, fewer respondents see events as less effective, with 14.40% rating them "Slightly Less effective" and 6.70% "Much less Effective" (combined 21.1%). Overall, while many see equal effectiveness, more respondents lean towards events being more effective than traditional ads for loyalty.

VII. SECONDARY DATA

Kasamani and Mostafa (2023) investigated luxury car brands (like Audi, BMW, Mercedes) in Portugal. They explored concepts like 'brand love', attachment, and satisfaction among 324 respondents. Their work, using PLS methods, also pointed towards the strong role these emotional factors have in building loyalty and encouraging positive word-of-mouth. The specific findings from their analysis provide more detail on these connections.

TABLE 11

Hypothesis	Beta Coefficient	P-Value	Interpretation
Brand attachment positively influences brand love (H1)	0.479	0.000	Strongly supported, significant impact
Brand satisfaction positively influences brand love (H2)	0.425	0.000	Strongly supported, significant impact
Brand love positively influences positive word of mouth (H3)	0.382	0.000	Supported, enhances e-WOM
Brand love positively influences brand loyalty (H4)	0.415	0.008	Supported, drives loyalty
Brand loyalty positively influences positive word of mouth (H5)	0.507	0.000	Strongly supported, significant impact

Kasamani and Mostafa study (2023) provided some interesting numbers. Brand love scored quite high (average 4.30), more so than satisfaction (2.83), and this seemed connected to positive word-of-mouth (3.94). This suggests that when experiential methods build up that 'brand love', perhaps through personalized touches, it indirectly helps keep customers loyal. They also mentioned how perceptions tied to a car's origin, like German brands seen as reliable, can add to these feelings.

Then the author realized how they fit in to make a group. The blog article from 2024 provides a full peek into NIO. They do not simply sell autos. They develop facilities like NIO House with cafés, work rooms, & even yoga. It converts having a vehicle into being in a club. The essay, quoting a survey from Epsilon, states that most people (nearly 80%) favour businesses that give these sorts of engaging experiences. Adilova's 2016 write-up speaks about this transformation also — how the car sector evolved from merely enormous advertisements to providing delightful occasions. The thing is, these times produce powerful sentiments. They create delightful occasions that remain with residents. They affect their buying techniques & develop affection over time, in ways ordinary adverts may not. It speaks of constructive interactions; test expeditions, for one, have long been part of this agenda. The 2021 note from McKinsey mentioned this too. It termed it the next battle site for car businesses, maybe more than simply tech standards. They claim automobile producers must find new techniques with the client, learn from each talk to create circumstances better, which should make more love. This goes nicely with the overall energetic and robust meet attitude.

VIII. DATA VISUALIZATIONS

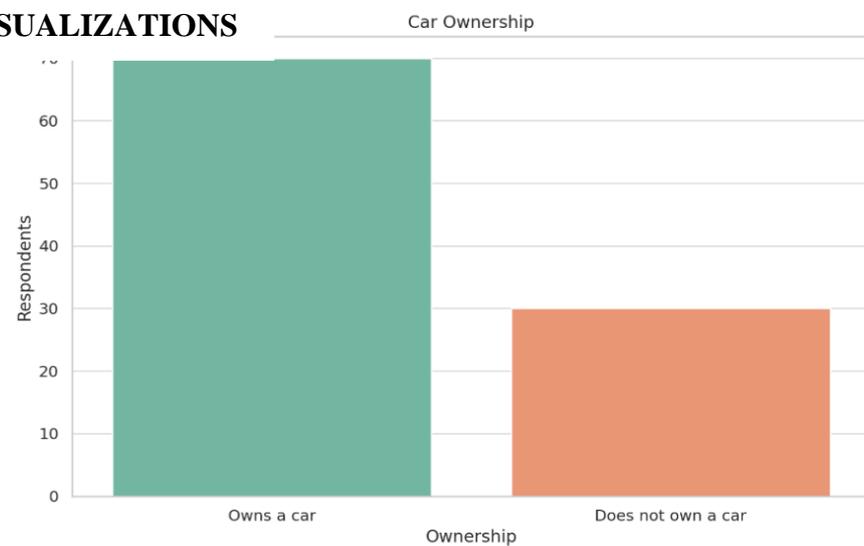


FIGURE 10

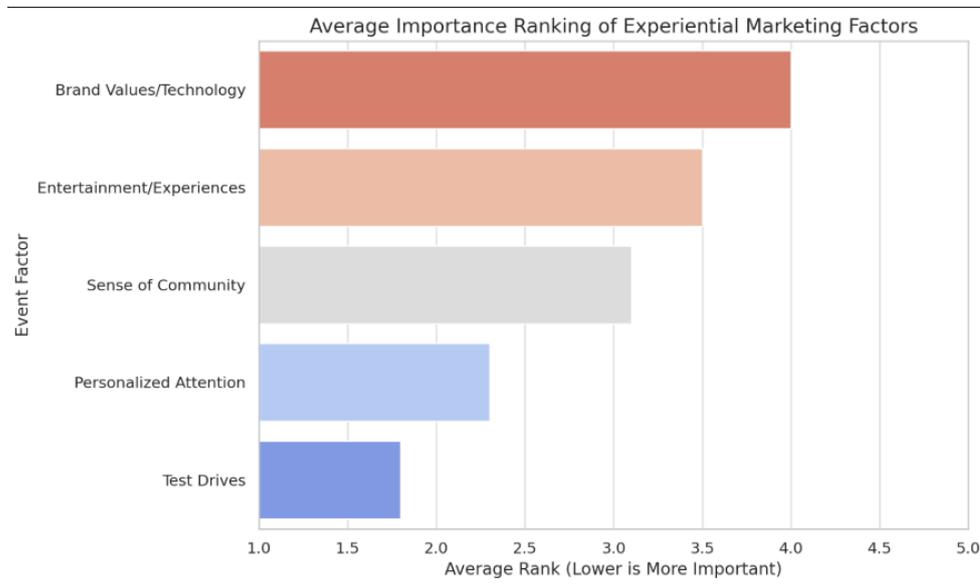


FIGURE 11

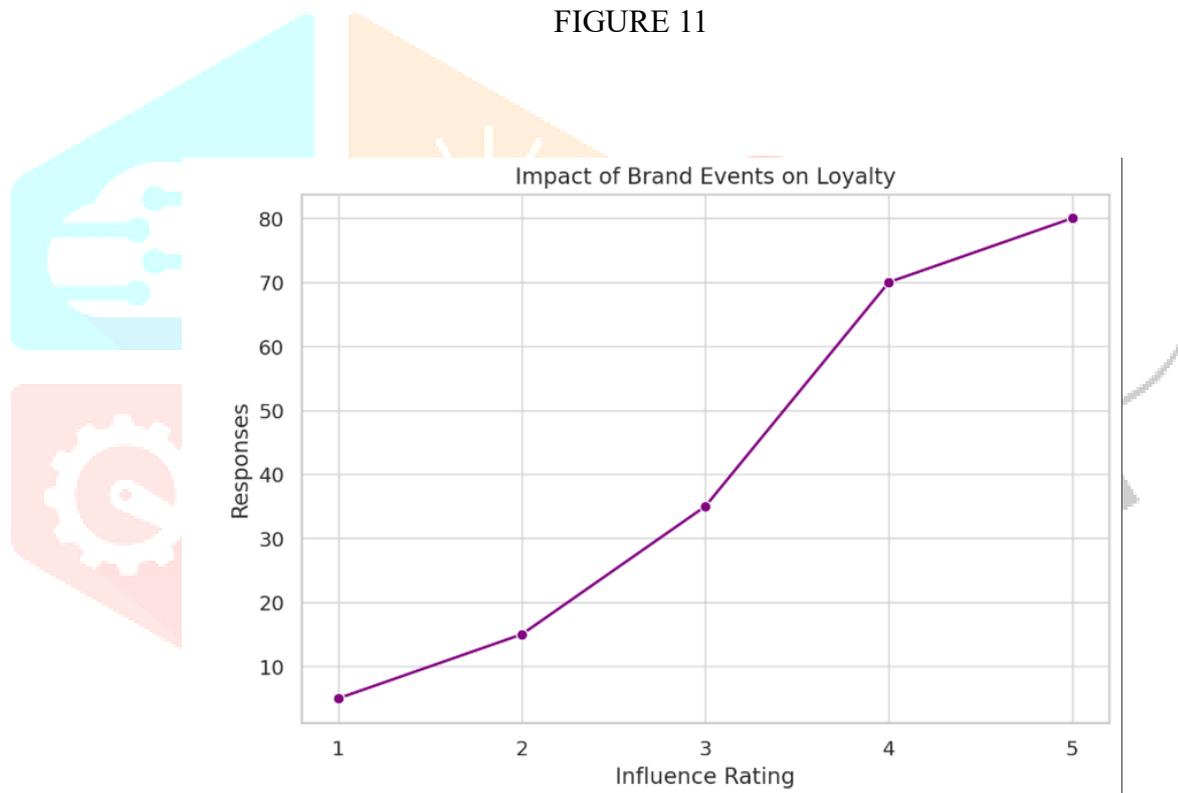


FIGURE 12

IX. DISCUSSION

The collective evidence strongly suggests a paradigm shift in automotive marketing, moving towards the creation of memorable, participatory experiences as a primary means of customer engagement. This trend aligns with established marketing theories emphasizing the role of emotion, sensory input, and active involvement in shaping brand attitudes and behaviors. While product features and pricing remain relevant considerations, the experiences surrounding the brand appear increasingly influential in shaping perceptions, fostering relationships, and driving loyalty and purchase decisions. The literature consistently highlights that active brand engagement, such as participating in an event, leaves a significantly stronger impression and improves brand recall compared to passive advertisement exposure.

A clear link emerges between positive experiences, heightened brand affinity, a sense of community, and key loyalty indicators like repurchase intention and brand advocacy. Importantly, nurturing this positive association must extend into the post-purchase phase through continued positive interactions. However, the effectiveness of experiential marketing hinges on authenticity and resonance. Experiences perceived as contrived or poorly executed are unlikely to build genuine goodwill.

The debate regarding the relative merits of digital versus physical experiences continues. Although, virtual tools offer scalability and convenience, questions remain about their capacity to fully replicate the sensory richness of in-person interactions. An optimal strategy likely involves integrating both digital and physical touchpoints, tailored to diverse customer preferences and journey stages. Notably, the application of experiential principles is not confined to luxury marques; mainstream brands also employ these strategies successfully, albeit with variations in execution. The widespread industry investment in experiential programs underscore a collective belief in their power to differentiate brands and forge meaningful customer connections in a competitive landscape.

X. CONCLUSION

The synthesis of existing research unequivocally shows that experiential marketing provides automotive manufacturers with a potent strategic tool for engaging consumers and cultivating lasting loyalty. Traditional feature-focused communication appears less impactful compared to the creation of multi-sensory, emotionally resonant, and participatory experiences. Such approaches facilitate the development of significantly stronger customer-brand. The analysis confirms that experiential initiatives markedly shape brand perception and recall. They contribute substantially to building robust customer relationships, enhancing retention, and fostering long-term brand loyalty. Likewise, these interactions can directly sway purchase decisions. By building consumer trust and enabling firsthand product evaluation, experiential strategies help brands achieve differentiation and simplify the consumer choice process. Building a brand group & making sure all discussions with the individuals who purchase are nice are crucial to make this strategy run successfully. There are tough sections, including recognizing the genuine benefit from each strategy & maintaining real, truthful chats all the time. But the essential conclusion is plain: for car makers nowadays, creating fantastic discussions with individuals who purchase is not simply a bonus; it is a must-do for the job.

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on this look, automobile corporations are instructed to build funds to generate real, engaging, hands-on consumer experiences. Good outcomes may be at their greatest when times fit nicely with the primary brand appearance & hit the suitable group. To establish a feeling of group connections among owners via organizations or meetups appears a good strategy to maintain clientele. Brands should integrate entertaining components all through the whole client route, from initial online chats to long-term support meetings, to retain bonds tight. Integrating personalization where feasible can further enhance the perceived value and memorability of these experiences.

Future research should aim to collect primary data with a significant sample size to quantify the impact of specific types of experiential campaigns on key performance indicators. Comparative studies analyzing the effectiveness of different experiential approaches (e.g., mass-market vs. luxury segments, digital vs. physical methods) would provide valuable insights. Investigating cross-cultural variations in consumer responses to experiential marketing is another promising avenue. Longitudinal studies tracking customer

behavior and loyalty following participation in specific brand events could offer more definitive evidence regarding the long-term effects of experiential marketing investments.

XII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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