

A Study on Customers' Brand Preference of Smartphones in Madurai District.

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Abstract

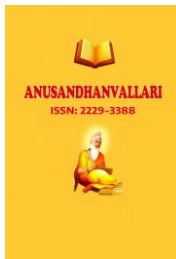
Branding has become a critical determinant of consumer decision making in highly competitive and technology-driven markets such as the smartphone industry. With rapid technological advancements and minimal functional differentiation among smartphone brands, intangible factors such as brand image, perceived quality, brand trust and brand loyalty play a significant role in shaping consumer preferences. This study aims to examine the influence of branding on consumer purchase behaviour in the smartphone market. Drawing upon established branding theories and previous empirical studies, the research key brand related constructs including brand equity, brand perception, brand loyalty. The study seeks to analyse how these factors affect consumer attitude and buying intentions toward smartphones. By reviewing existing literature and identifying the research gap, the study highlights the growing importance of branding as a strategic tool in the smartphone industry, particularly in the emerging markets. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for marketers and smartphone manufacturers in developing effective brand strategies to enhance consumer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

Keywords: strategies, smartphones, manufacturers, existing

Introduction:

A brand represents more than a name or symbol; it embodies a set of perception, associations, and values that distinguish a product or service from its competitors in the minds of consumers. Brands play a crucial role in influencing consumer choice by reducing perceived risk, assuring quality, and creating emotional connections. In a competitive market, strong brands act as strategic assets for organizations, fostering customer loyalty, enabling premium pricing, and enhancing long-term sustainability. As consumer markets evolve, branding has shifted from purely functional identifier to holistic experience encompassing trust, image and relationship building.

The smartphone industry is one of the most dynamic and competitive sectors in the global consumer electronics market. Smartphones have evolved from basic communication devices into multifunctional tools that integrate computing, internet access, entertainment and digital services into everyday life. Due to technological convergence and minimal functional differentiation across devices, branding has become a key factor influencing consumer purchase decisions in the smartphone market. Brand reputation, perceived quality, innovation, and symbolic value significantly shape consumer preferences, making smartphones an ideal context for studying brand-related constructs such as brand equity, brand loyalty, and brand perception.



Review of literature:

Nushrat Nahida Afroz, (2011) This study aims to explore the brand preference towards smartphones among students. In recent times smartphones play a significant role among the users to meet up their numerous objectives by operating their desired smart phone. 200 copies of questionnaire were given to the respondents for evaluation and analysis. The findings of the study indicated positive correlation among the variable i.e. battery backup, camera resolution, durability and price have significant impact on the overall preferences of the consumers. The result derived from cross tabulation and likelihood ratio entails that these above factors are influenced the customer brand preference and there exist a strong relationship between these factors and brand preference.

Deepa Guleria (2015) The related study conducted in Himachal Pradesh with a sample size 80 smartphone users to highlight the change in the usage and applicability of the technology from the traditional handsets to the new emerging smartphones across multiple brands, applications and prices. The study identifies factor which are responsible for building consumer preference for smartphone and various usability features. This study will indicate suggestive inferences to help the companies during selecting, targeting and positioning process of marketing their smartphones.

Singh and Goyal (2009) This study observed that there is a variation in the importance given by different age and gender groups to select factors while buying mobile handsets in India. It was found that users aged between 18 and 30 years are less price sensitive than consumers of others groups, rather they consider Physical appearance, brand, value- added features and core technical features more important than others. The mature customer on other hand, are more price sensitive.

Objectives:

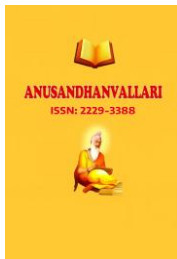
- ❖ To study the respondents Brand consciousness of smartphones in Madurai district.
- ❖ To study the reason for choosing a particular brand.
- ❖ To identify the major feature of smartphone which the respondents prefer.
- ❖ To study the frequency of changing smartphones

Hypothesis:

1. H₀: There is no significant relationship between educational qualification and the purpose of using smartphone.
2. H₀: There is no significant relationship between family income and frequency of changing smartphone.
3. H₀: There is no significant relationship between age and influence of brand popularity.

Methodology of Study:

The data collected for this research are through primary data and secondary data. Primary data includes questionnaire survey of respondents from the study area. Secondary data is collected from various published articles from journals, books, and internet websites.



Sample Design: The present study has been conducted in the Madurai district. Data has been collected from 100 respondents through questionnaire.

Sampling technique used here is Simple Random sampling **Tools:** Simple percentage method and Chi Square analysis. **Limitations of the study:**

- This study is confined to Madurai district only.
- Due to time constraints, 100 respondents were selected for the purpose of study.
- The study was conducted based the consumers' brand preference which may change in some days or years
- Conclusion of the study was made on the opinion given by the respondents only.

Analysis and Interpretations:

Age of the Respondent

Age	Frequency	Percent
less than 20	10	10.0
21-30	37	37.0
31-40	20	20.0
41-50	13	13.0
51-60	12	12.0
60 and above	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

From the above table of 100 respondents 37% are from the age group is 21-30, 20% are from 31-40, 13% are from 41-50, 12% are from 51-60, 10% are less than 20 years and 8% are from 60 and above age group

Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	48	48.0
Female	52	52.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table exhibits of 100 respondents from which 52% are female and 48% male

Family Income of the Respondents

Income	Frequency	Percent
upto 20000	9	9.0
20001-40000	26	26.0
40001-60000	37	37.0
above 80000	14	14.0
nil	14	14.0
Total	100	100.0

From the above table of 100 respondents 37% are 40001-60000, 26% are 20001-40000, 14% are from above 80000 and nil category, 9% are from upto 20000 category.

Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Education	Frequency	Percent
SSLC	5	5.0
Higher secondary	18	18.0
Graduate	41	41.0
Post Graduate	21	21.0
professional	15	15.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table postulates the educational qualification of 100 respondents they are 41% are graduates, 5% are SSLC. 18% are Higher secondary, 15% re professionals and 21% are post graduate

Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Married	65	65.0
Single	35	35.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table postulates the marital status of 100 respondents they are 65% are married and 35% are Single.

Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
private sector	46	46.0
public sector	19	19.0
self employed	17	17.0
unemployed	13	13.0
Retired	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table shows the occupation of 100 respondents of which 46% are private sector, 19% are public sector, 17% are self-employed, 13% are unemployed and 5% are retired.

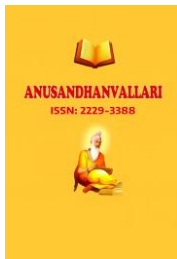
Current use of Smartphone brand by the respondents

Brand	Frequency	Percent
Apple	13	13.0
Samsung	20	20.0
Oppo	27	27.0
Xiaomi	19	19.0
Vivo	16	16.0
Google	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table showcases the current use of smartphone brand by the respondents. Of which 27% are oppo, 20% are Samsung, 19% are Xiaomi, 16% are vivo, 13% Apple and 5% are google.

Smartphone feature frequently used by respondent

Features	Frequency	Percent
Calls & messages	55	55.0
Camera	22	22.0
Games	9	9.0
Navigation	7	7.0
NFC and biometrics, and face detections	6	6.0
others	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0



The above table explains about the frequently used smartphone feature by the 100 respondents. The most used feature with 55% are calls and message feature. Least of 1% are the other features. 22% of Camera, 7% use for Navigation, 9% use for games and 6% use NFC and biometrics and face detections.

Purpose of using smartphone by the respondent

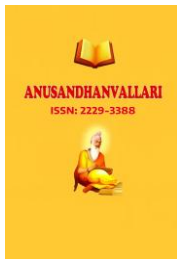
Purpose of using smartphone	Frequency	Percent
AI assistance	9	9.0
Creative purpose	24	24.0
Shopping	17	17.0
Payment	24	24.0
Social media	13	13.0
Others	13	13.0
Total	100	100.0

Apart from the frequently used feature there are some purposes for which the smartphones are used frequently by the respondents. Out of which 9% use for AI assistance, 17% use for shopping purpose. 13% use for social media. 24% use for payment and creative purposes like editing, vlogging etc. 13% use for other purposes

Frequency of changing smartphone by the respondents

Frequency	Frequency	Percent
1 - 2 years	16	16.0
2-3 years	33	33.0
3-4 years	40	40.0
More than 4 years	10	10.0
others	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table shows that 33% of the respondents change their smartphone by 2-3 years gap. 40% by 3-4 years, 16% by 1-2 years, 10% by more than 4 years and 1% by others



Favourite smartphone band of the respondent

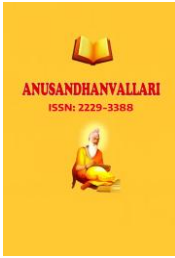
Favourite	Frequency	Percent
Apple	13	13.0
Samsung	20	20.0
Oppo	27	27.0
Xiaomi	19	19.0
Vivo	16	16.0
Google	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table explains about the favourite smartphone brand of the respondent. 27% Oppo, 20% Samsung, 19% Xiaomi, 16% are Vivo, 13% Apple and 5% Google

Favourite part of smartphone by the respondent

Favourite part	Frequency	Percent
Camera quality	14	14.0
Colour	19	19.0
Convenience	21	21.0
Design	16	16.0
Display	9	9.0
Sound	12	12.0
others	9	9.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table of explains the favourite part of the smartphone by 100 respondents. 21% like the convenience of their smartphone they use. 9% like display, 14% like camera, 16% like design, 12% sound of their phone, 9% like other parts and 19% like colour of their smartphone.



Smartphone brand awareness through medium

Brand awareness	Frequency	Percent
FamilyC friends	13	13.0
NewspaperC Magazines	23	23.0
advertisements	18	18.0
Social media	30	30.0
television	10	10.0
others	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

The above tables show the medium of awareness of smartphone brand of 100 respondents. 30% social media, 23% newspapers& magazines, 18% advertisement, 13% family & friends, 10% television and 6% others.

Brand Popularity Influence for choosing smartphones by respondents

Brand popularity	Frequency	Percent
strongly agree	38	38.0
agree	19	19.0
neutral	24	24.0
disagree	10	10.0
strongly disagree	9	9.0
Total	100	100.0

The above scaling table explains the brand popularity in choosing the smartphones of 100 respondents. 38% strongly agree, 24% neutral, 19% agree, 10% disagree and 9% strongly disagree.

Chi- Square Analysis between Education and the purpose of using a smartphone

Education	purpose of using a smartphone						Total
	AI assistance	Creative purpose	Shoppin g	Paymen t	Social media	Others	
SSLC	0	3	1	0	0	1	5
Higher secondary	2	8	2	5	0	1	18
Graduate	2	6	6	12	7	8	41
Post Graduate	0	5	7	6	2	1	21
professional	5	2	1	1	4	2	15
Total	9	24	17	24	13	13	100

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	38.979 ^a	20	.007

P value is less than 0.05. Hence Null Hypothesis is rejected, there is significant relationship between educational qualification and purpose of using Smartphone.

Chi- Square Analysis between Income and frequency of changing smartphone

Income	Frequency of changing smartphone					Total
	1 - 2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	More than 4 years	22	
upto 20000	0	4	4	1	0	9
20001-40000	6	9	9	1	1	26
40001-60000	3	9	19	6	0	37
above 80000	4	5	4	1	0	14
Total nil	3	6	4	1	0	14
	16	33	40	10	1	100

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.839 ^a	16	.536

P value is greater than 0.05. Hence null hypothesis is accepted; there is no significant relationship between income and frequency of changing smartphone.

Chi-Square Analysis between age and influence of brand popularity

Age	Brand popularity influence					Total
	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree	
less than 20	4	1	4	0	1	10
21-30	14	6	8	4	5	37
31-40	9	5	4	1	1	20
41-50	2	4	3	2	2	13
51-60	4	3	3	2	0	12
60 and above	5	0	2	1	0	8
Total	38	19	24	10	9	100

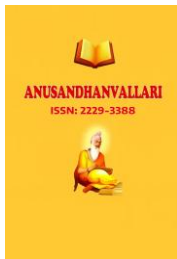
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.380 ^a	20	.811

P value is greater than 0.05. Hence null hypothesis is accepted; there is no significant relationship between age and influence of brand popularity

Findings:

- 37% are from the age group is 21-30
- 52% are female
- 37% are 40001-60000
- 41% are graduates
- 65% are married



- 46% are private sector
- 27% currently using oppo brand
- 55% use calls and message feature
- 24% use for payment and creative purposes like editing, vlogging etc.
- 40% change their smartphone by 3-4 years gap
- 27% prefer Oppo as favourite
- 21% like the convenience of their smartphone they use
- 30% are aware of the smartphone brands through social media
- 38% strongly agree the influence of brand popularity of smartphone

Conclusion:

Each brand has its own positioning in the minds of the consumers. Consumers have lots of expectations from its brand. Consumer minds are always changing even though they use a particular brand they have some cravings for some other brands too. Consumers not only like the features of smartphones, they also like its appearance like colour, texture, style, display etc. Many consumers crave for Apple brand but due to high cost and unaffordability they fail to purchase the brand. But many Chinese brands like Oppo, Vivo and Xiaomi are gaining advantage among the consumers due to its affordability with good design, colour, sound, convenience, good features, display etc. Irrespective of gender and age everyone uses smartphones nowadays. Many expressed their views on using a smartphone. Apart from phone calls and messages, many use smartphones for purposes like online payment, shopping, entertainment etc. so they are very much productive. There is a significant relationship between educational qualification and the purpose of using smartphones. And also, family income does not play key role for the frequency of changing smartphones because everyone needs a nominal price of smartphone in their day-to-day life. And also there is no significant relationship between age and the influence of brand popularity because every brand influence the consumers based on their preference not due to age This conclusion are made based on the views of the respondents.

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