

**A STUDY ON CONSUMERS' BRAND CONSCIOUSNESS OF SMARTPHONES IN
MADURAI DISTRICT**

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Abstract:

The impact of brand consciousness of smartphone is discussed in this article. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 100 respondents. This study has been conducted in the Madurai district. The basic interest of this research is to know to significance of the factors and attributes that influence the consumers to choose a particular brand of smartphone. Brand Image leads to important role in marketing activities. Although brand image was considered as a driving force of brand performance, some studies suggested about the relationship between brand image and brand equity. This article deals with the brand image and some shortcomings of this study also gives scope for the future research.

Key words:

Brand Image, Brand equity, Consumer perception and Consumer behavior.

Introduction:

In this modern era of technology there has been so many new inventions are taking place in this world. Of one such inventions, smartphones are playing a crucial role in our day-to-day life. According to the needs of people many smartphone brands bring in new technology to their products. Now AI has started to rule the world. Our networks are now upgraded to 5G. By the end of 2023, 5G network will reach every nook and corner of India. To run with this fast-growing world many smartphone brands have introduced 5G smartphones. Smartphones have many features which reduced the needs of other products like digital camera, music players etc. Because all smartphones have such features to the best our satisfaction. Almost every smartphone brands provide us with good camera, clarity voice and video call services, music and video players etc. In short, world is in our hands in the form of smartphones. It makes our work easy. In such a case, consumers are very much particular about the selection of a particular brand of smartphones. Consumers are highly conscious about the brands they use. There are four important elements in branding they are Brand Image, Brand Identity, Brand Equity and Brand positioning. Brand image leads to marketing activities. Modern day marketing is all about creation and management of brands. With the great marketing plan and huge investment awareness can be rendered quickly. But it takes time for building a brand preference. Brand image in the consumers mind stimulate the demand for the particular product of the particular brand. Which in turn increase the sales of the brand's product. Some studies suggest that consumers' perception towards a particular brand lead to brand equity. Brand preference can be achieved only by creating a positive brand image in the minds of the consumers. Because of consumer preference, the particular brand can charge high prices, command loyalty and run efficient marketing programs. Brand preference automatically leads to assets value.

Review of Literature:

Ayanwale, Alimi and Ayanbimipe (2005) quoted that brand preference does exist in the food drink industry. Many consumers do not buy whatever is available or affordable if a product is good value for its price, it will command brand loyalty. However, advertising helps to project product quality and value before the customers.

Bronnenberg, Dube, and Mathew (2010) wrote that much of consumer's observed willingness to pay for brands may reflect the influence of past experiences. Heterogeneity in brand capital explains a

substantial share of geographic variation in purchases. Brand capital evolves endogenously as a function of customer's life histories, and decays slowly once formed. Brand capital can explain large and long-lasting advantages to first movers. Brand preferences play an especially important role in categories with high levels of advertising and social visibility.

Chen and Chang (2008) found that Brand equity has significantly positive effect on both brand preference and brand loyalty. The effect of brand equity on purchase intention is also significant.

Paulo, Duarte and Mario (2010) quoted that several factors contribute to brand preference, especially those related to brand identity, personality and image and their congruence with consumer self-image. The main direct effects on brand preference are the self-image congruence and the identity/ personality and image of the brand. In addition to those, the level of involvement, social environment, risk perception, demographic profile, and product visibility also show a positive influence on brand preference.

Das (2012) conducted an empirical research based on survey method on factors influencing buying behaviour of youth consumers towards mobile handsets in coastal districts of Odisha located in India. According to the study, a handset of reputed brand, smart appearance, and with advanced value-added features, pleasurable and usability; is the choice of young consumers; females in gender group, post-graduates in level of education-group, students in occupational group, urban residents in geographical area group plays most prominent role in buying decision of a mobile handset.

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. There is no significant relationship between educational qualification and the purpose of using smartphone.
2. There is significant relationship between family income and frequency of changing smartphone.

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 purposive 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
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20-30	26	26.0
31-40	31	31.0
41-50	19	19.0
Above 50	11	11.0
Below 20	13	13.0
Total	100	100.0

From the above table of 100 respondents 31% are from the age group of 31-40 and 11% are from the age group of above 50. 26%, 19% and 13% are from the age group of 20-30, 41-50, below 20 respectively.

Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Others	2	2.0
Female	51	51.0
Male	47	47.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table exhibits of 100 respondents from which 51% are female. 2% are from others category and 47% are male.

Family Income of the Respondents

Family Income	Frequency	Percent
30000-50000	23	23.0
50001-70000	36	36.0
70001-90000	21	21.0
Above 90000	11	11.0
Below 30000	9	9.0
Total	100	100.0

From the above table of 100 respondents 36% have 50001-70000 family income. 9% have below 30000 family income. Others have 30000-50000, 70001-90000, above 90000 with percentage of 23%, 21% and 11% respectively.

Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Higher Secondary	17	17.0
Post graduate	23	23.0
SSLC	7	7.0
Undergraduate	53	53.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table postulates the educational qualification of 100 respondents they are 53% are undergraduates. 7% are SSLC. 17% are Higher secondary and 23% are post graduates

Current use of Smartphone brand by the respondents

Brand	Frequency	Percent
Apple	15	15.0
Nokia	12	12.0
OPPO	19	19.0
Others	4	4.0
Redmi	26	26.0
Samsung	15	15.0

Xiaomi	9	9.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table showcases the current use of smartphone brand by the respondents. Of which 26% use Redmi, 4% use other brands. 15% use Apple and Samsung brand, 12% use Nokia, 19 use Oppo and 9% use Xiaomi brand.

Smartphone feature frequently used by respondent

Features	Frequency	Percent
Calls and messages	22	22.0
Camera	14	14.0
Games	20	20.0
Navigation	21	21.0
Network sharing	14	14.0
Others	9	9.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table explains about the frequently used smartphone feature by the 100 respondents. The most used feature with 22% are calls and message feature. Least of 9% are the other features. 14% of Camera and network sharing feature. 21% use for Navigation. And 20% use for games.

Purpose of using smartphone by the respondent

Purpose	Frequency	Percent
AI assistance	29	29.0
Creative purpose	13	13.0
Shopping	16	16.0
Others	8	8.0
Payment	19	19.0
Social media	15	15.0
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 29% use for AI assistance. 19% use for payments. 16% use for shopping purpose. 15% use for social media. 13% use for creative purposes like editing, vlogging etc. 8% use for other purposes.

Frequency of changing smartphone by the respondents

Frequency of change	Frequency	Percent
1 - 2 years	19	19.0
2-3 years	36	36.0
3-4 years	26	26.0
Less than 1 year	6	6.0
More than 4 years	13	13.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table shows that 36% of the respondents change their smartphone by 2-3 years gap. 6% by less than 1 year. 26% by 3-4 years, 19% by 1-2 years and 13% by more than 4 years.

Favourite smartphone band of the respondent

Favourite Brand	Frequency	Percent
Apple	26	26.0
Oppo	16	16.0
Others	11	11.0

Redmi	14	14.0
Samsung	15	15.0
Vivo	12	12.0
Xiaomi	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table explains about the favourite smartphone brand of the respondent. Majority of 26% respondent's favourite smartphone is Apple. Followed by 16% like Oppo, 15% like Samsung, 14% like Redmi, 12% like Vivo, 6% like Xiaomi and 11% like other brands.

Favourite part of smartphone by the respondent

Favourite part	Frequency	Percent
Camera quality	18	18.0
Colour	4	4.0
Convenience	24	24.0
Design	12	12.0
Display	22	22.0
Others	8	8.0
Sound	12	12.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table of explains the favourite part of the smartphone by 100 respondents. 24% like the convenience of their smartphone they use. 22% like display, 18% like camera, 12% like design and sound of their phone, 8% like other parts and 4% like colour of their smartphone.

Smartphone brand awareness through medium

Awareness through	Frequency	Percent
Family and Friends	19	19.0
Newspaper	26	26.0
Online advertisement	30	30.0
Others	12	12.0
Television	13	13.0
Total	100	100.0

The above tables show the medium of awareness of smartphone brand to 100 respondents. 30% are aware through online advertisements. 26% through newspapers, 19% through family& friends, 13% through television and 12 through other medium.

Brand Popularity Influence for choosing smartphones by respondents

Scale	Frequency	Percent
Agree	24	24.0
Disagree	12	12.0
Neutral	39	39.0
Strongly Agree	17	17.0
Strongly Disagree	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

The above scaling table explains the brand popularity in choosing the smartphones of 100 respondents. 39% are Neutral, 24% Agree, 17% strongly agree, 12% disagree and 8% strongly disagree.

Chi-Square Analysis between Educational Qualification and Purpose of using Smartphone

		frequent purpose					Total	
		AI assistance	Creative purpose	Entertainment	Others	Productivity		Social media
Educational Qualification	Higher Secondary	4	3	3	2	1	4	17
	Post graduate	7	7	1	2	4	2	23
	SSLC	1	0	2	1	2	1	7
	Undergraduate	17	9	10	3	6	8	53
	Total	29	19	16	8	13	15	100

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.759 ^a	15	.697

P value is greater than 0.05. Hence Null Hypothesis is accepted, there is no significant relationship between educational qualification and purpose of using Smartphone.

Chi- Square Analysis between Family Income and frequency of changing smartphone

		Frequency mobile change					Total
		1 - 2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	Less than 1 year	More than 4 years	
Family Income	30000-50000	3	9	7	1	3	23
	50001-70000	8	15	10	1	2	36
	70001-90000	5	6	7	0	3	21
	Above 90000	1	4	1	2	3	11
	Below 30000	2	2	1	2	2	9
Total	19	36	26	6	13	100	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.839 ^a	16	.333

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

Findings:

- 31% are from the age group of 31-40
- 51% are female
- 36% have 50001-70000 family income.
- 53% are undergraduates.
- 26% currently use Redmi smartphone.
- 22% of the respondents use calls and message feature.
- 29% of the respondents use smartphone for AI assistance purpose.
- 36% of the respondents change their smartphone by 2-3 years gap.
- 26% respondent's favourite smartphone is Apple.
- 24% of the respondents like the convenience of their smartphone they use.

- 30% of the respondents are aware of the brand through online advertisements.
- 39% are Neutral about the brand influencing the purchase.

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. 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 no educational qualification needed to understand for using a smartphone. 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. This conclusion are made based on the views of the respondents.

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