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A STUDY ON BUYING BEHAVIOUR ON MOBILE PHONES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH REFERENCE TO CHENNAI CITY

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Abstract: The use of smartphones by customers is becoming an increasingly prominent topic of investigation in marketing research. Particularly important in the field of marketing has been the study of customer behaviour in the smartphone industry, from adoption motivation through post-use behaviour. Consumers' minds, energies, and routines are all altered as a result. Smartphones' rapid ascent to essential status in people's daily lives has made them a must-have in every aspect of their existence. There has been a significant change in the mentality and ambitions of customers, as well as a continuing rise in the amount of discretionary cash available to spend. The study concluded, the mobile phone buying behavior is driven by a combination of factors such as brand loyalty, convenience, features, price, and social media influence. Understanding these factors can help businesses develop effective marketing strategies to reach and engage with potential customers.
Objectives of the study: The broad objective of the study is to identify the significant factors affecting the purchase of mobile phones among college students.

Research Methodology

This is an empirical study conducted in Chennai city. The behaviour of the college students towards buying the smart phone is analyzed with a sample of 300 respondents in the Chennai City. The students studying in arts and Science College are selected purposively. The respondents are selected using simple random sampling technique. The data were collected through the Google Forms. The data were analyzed using the SPSS software.
Keywords: An examination of the Relationship between Mobile Phones, Consumer Purchasing Habits, Smartphones, and Preference for Certain Brands

Introduction

In recent years, an ever-increasing emphasis has been placed on customer behaviour within consumer-oriented marketing planning and administration. The study of consumer behaviour is an effort to comprehend not just what consumers want but also the motivations behind their desires. The whole of a consumer's choices about the purchase, consumption, and disposal of products, services, time, and ideas are reflected in their consumer behaviour, which

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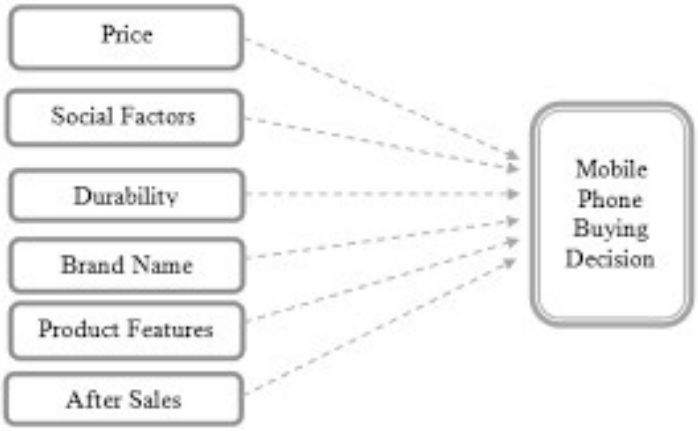
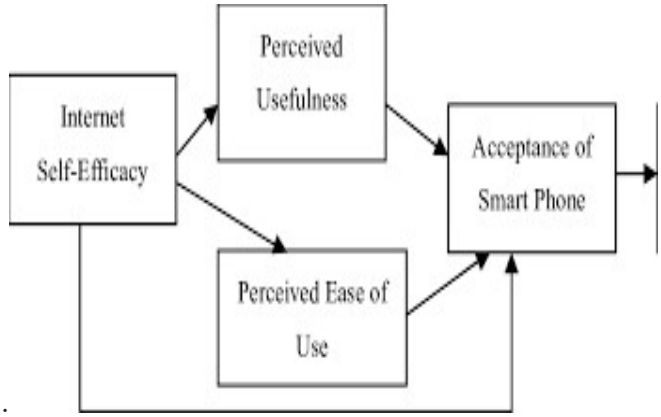
is a reflection of the totality of those decisions. It also covers whether the customer will use an offering, why they will use it, when they will use it, where they will use it, how much they will use it, how frequently they will use it, and for how long. Since success or failure in the current marketing system ultimately rests on the buying behaviour of the target customers either individually or as a group, understanding the purchasing patterns of consumers has become an absolute need in the industry. Hence, in order for the marketing management to be able to carry out the marketing programmes throughout the many segment markets, it is necessary to discover the numerous elements that effect on the purchasing choices of the customer. Throughout the process of making a choice, the characteristics of the customer, including their behaviour and attitude, are significant elements. Customers are forced to take into account a wide range of preferences when making purchase selections due to the proliferation of mobile phone brands and the growing popularity of mobile phone use.The technologies has been marked by a long history of innovations and developments that have come about as a direct result of dynamic shifts in the requirements and preferences of users. This is because mobile phones are portable and can be used almost everywhere.



Mobile phones have become an indispensable component of the routine activities and private interactions of people all over the world. In the present extremely competitive market for mobile phones, manufacturers are continuously fighting to discover new competitive edge and distinctive factors that will convince customers to choose their brand rather than a competitor's brand. Many studies have been conducted to identify the factors that provide certain organisations an edge over their competitors in terms of altering customers' purchase choices. Mobile phone buyers may be found just about everywhere, and several factors affect their choices. Chow(2012). There is a possibility that these aspects are connected to the qualities of the customer as well as the features that are linked with mobile phones. Because of this, mobile phone firms have developed a wide selection of mobiles with a choice of brands and features to choose from. Many research studies have been carried out to investigate the elements that influence the mobile phones that individuals decide to purchase. According to the findings of these research, a wide variation of factors might influence a consumer's choice of a certain product to buy.

Research background

In today's information age, the country has reaped the rewards of IT advancements just like the rest of the globe over the last two decades. Studies showed that the general improvement of information technology triggered substantial economic development in underdeveloped nations. Being a developing nation, saw an improvement in national productivity and economic development as a result of rising ICT use, which boosted both labour and capital productivity. One of the most game-changing discoveries of the information age is the cell phone, which has greatly improved our ability to stay in touch with one another. Modern technology, it's simpler than ever for individuals all over the globe to share their thoughts and ideas with one another. Mobile phones are an essential component of our everyday lives because of the widespread reliance on them for everything from professional and personal contact to parenting and education (Riyath and Musthafa, 2014). Whether it's a phone call, text message, multimedia messaging service (MMS), clock, calculator, camera, or web browser, mobile communication technology is continually developing to meet the demands of its users. Although cell phones were once a luxury, they are now commonplace across the nation. What's more, the telecommunications sector has expanded greatly during the last two decades. The overwhelming majority of mobile phone customers mainly use their devices for voice calls, Texting, and regulated web surfing. Smartphone users make up another subset; their devices are often hailed as a cutting-edge innovation and a digitally-enabled social platform well-suited to the collection, distribution, and exchange of personal and communal data. Unlike smartphones, which can run a variety of apps developed for other platforms, classic mobile phones lack an operating system. Mobile phones continue to evolve as new features and programmes are introduced to meet the requirements of its users and expand the devices' capabilities. The smartphone users' habits have changed dramatically. What's more, the cellular phone sector is always displaying significant change and growth. In an effort to stand out from the crowd, smartphone manufacturers and retailers release new models on a seemingly constant basis, creating a state of hyper competition for the industry's top spots. Chow (2012).



Literature

The rising popularity of Smartphone among consumers is the primary factor that has stoked the flames of curiosity in this phenomenon. The prevalence of smart phone addiction is rising dramatically. That's why we're doing this study: to learn more about how people in the

Indian market make purchasing decisions when purchasing a smart phone. The study's overarching objective is to uncover consumers' smart phone purchase justifications, decision-making processes, and affecting variables. As a result of their unique personalities and situations, every customer has their own unique set of influences when it comes to making purchases.

Making Choices as a Customer

Consumers' decision-making processes are a significant topic of study because of their centrality to everyday life (Moon, 2004). "Consumer behaviour patterns that precede, determine, and follow the choice process for the purchase of need-satisfying items, ideas, or services" Researchers had a deep interest in consumers' decision making for quite some time. The purchasing choice was the primary focus of early research on the decision-making process. It wasn't until after the 1950s that the current notion of marketing was included into consumer decision making research, expanding the scope of study to include a broader set of activities. Modern studies show there are more steps beyond just making a purchase. The consumer's decision to buy anything is a reaction to the occurrence of this issue. Most major corporations are fascinated by the thought process that goes into a customer's purchase choice. They're putting in a lot of effort to study consumer spending in order to learn more about shoppers' habits and preferences in terms of what they purchase, where they shop, when they buy it, why they buy it, Chow(2012). Researchers can more easily ascertain data on who buys what, when, where, and how much, but the answers to the more complex question of why people make certain purchases remain elusive. In most cases, a buyer will go through five distinct phases before making a final purchase decision. In the first stage, the customer becomes aware of the discrepancy between his actual and ideal circumstances and develops a desire or need for the product or service being offered. There are other situations in which cues from the outside world might trigger a craving. Using various means, including as word of mouth, commercials, and the media, he or she begins to gather knowledge about the product of interest. After amassing adequate data, the buyer analyses the results to rank the brands in the final selection. An individual goes through these five steps while shopping for a smartphone. The buyer is better able to make an informed decision and get the most out of their smartphone shopping experience if they follow these steps.

External Influence on Consumer Behavior Culture:

An organization's or society's culture is its accumulated body of commonly held beliefs, values, and practices. It's also a major factor in whether or not a product or service does well in the marketplace. When a product's advantages align with what people in a culture want, it has a significantly greater chance of being well received by consumers. One definition of culture is as a way of life that is transmitted from one generation to the next. The nature of culture is dynamic. It's always developing and changing, blending new and old concepts. When it comes to national, political, and economic communication, English is indispensable. The majority of Indians (81%) are Hindu, but the country also has one of the biggest Muslim populations in the world. Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Parsis are also found among the populace. They are aware that the same product or service, presented in the same way, is unlikely to resonate with individuals of varying ages, and that the same holds true for the language and visuals they use. Teenagers, those aged 18–29, people born during the “baby

boomer" era, and the elderly are all significant age groups. As adolescents make the transition from childhood to adulthood, their sense of identity may be shaky. They are open to ideas that aid in their social integration and allow them to stand on their own. Baby boomers have more influence than any other generation because of their sheer numbers and purchasing power. As this demographic has matured, so have their tastes and the marketing strategies that aim to appeal to them. The population of people who use smartphones is enormous. Consumers assign different levels of respectability to various brands and retailers based on their perceived social standing (Munson and Spivey, 1981). A product's durability or comfort are more important to the working class customer than its aesthetics or the latest trends. They are less prone to try out novel items or fashions. Consumption patterns are also affected by an individual's character or social standing. Consumer spending is a good indicator of social class, and it seems to reason that those from wealthier backgrounds would be more likely to make impulsive purchases than those hailing from lower socioeconomic brackets. Indians' discretionary earnings, especially those of the middle class, have risen dramatically because to the countries burgeoning economy, which has generated new job and business possibilities. A growing percentage of the Indian population is now considered middle class due to their increased incomes. The middle class in India is the primary target market for many businesses because of its rising purchasing power, rising aspirations, and rising tendency for a better quality of life. In light of India's massive population and land area, the country's consumer market is enormous and expanding rapidly.

1. Reference Groups: A reference group may be any real or made-up people who are thought to have a substantial impact on an individual's assessment, goals, or actions. Consumers are influenced in three ways by the reference group. Facts, practicality, and a desire to convey one's values are all factors. Although the word "group" often refers to a collection of two or more individuals, the phrase "reference group" is sometimes used more loosely to represent any external influence that serves as a source of social signals. Parents, other family members, friends, teammates, classmates, and anybody else in one's social circle might serve as influential references. A reference group might be big and official, like a club with officers and set meeting hours. As a result of their greater visibility and accessibility, smartphone manufacturers exert more sway on the formal group and its decisions.
2. Marketing Activities: Phones are heavily advertised on television and other social media platforms in an effort to sway consumers to make purchases. Manufacturers often use games and contests to get customers interested in their goods. The company used a wide range of advertising strategies, including radio, outdoor, web, exchange programmes, and promotions, to raise brand awareness. Retail giants including mobile store, and reliance digital were targeted for product placement.By contrast to the standard 6-to-10% margins in the sector, dealers in the B2C model might earn as much as 15%. The corporation was able to get more market share in metropolitan areas because it provided distributors bigger profit margins than its competitors. Blackwell (2001). The organisation was able to win over new consumers by offering them improved support after the sale.The company's market share may grow with the aid of these advertising methods since they allow the business to reach more people in

metropolitan areas. After Samsung, it gained 21% of India's GSM mobile phone market. Over 1 million mobile phones were sold each month.

Internal Factors that affect buying habits

1. Perception: The term "perception" refers to the mental activity through which an individual chooses, organizes, and interprets data in order to construct an impression of an object. Consumers' preconceived notions about smartphones have a greater impact on sales than any hard data could ever have. As a result of these three processes, it is clear why persons with different perspectives on the same thing have such varied experiences.
2. Selective attention: Due to a limited capacity for processing stimuli, humans engage in a process of selective attention to filter out irrelevant information. Taking India as an example further, the typical person there may be subjected to more than 1,500 adverts each year, highlighting the need for advertisers to work extra hard to get the attention of their target demographic. Generally speaking, people are more likely to take notice of a departure from the usual if it is substantial in comparison to the size of the stimulus, if it is related to a need that they now have, and if it is related to an.
3. Selective distortion: People have a bias towards favoring interpretations of data that back with their existing beliefs. People tend to twist facts to fit their preconceived notions and opinions. Consumers who have a good association with a brand may benefit from selective distortion in cases when they perceive otherwise neutral or confusing information favourably.
4. Selective retention: The term "selective retention" refers to the way in which individuals tend to forget the vast majority of the knowledge to which they are presented while retaining the small subset that best supports their preexisting worldview. This article discusses the importance of repletion in preventing data from being forgotten.
5. Learning: Consumers' habits may be altered via education and experience-based learning. The truth is that the vast majority of our actions and reactions are learnt. The components of learning—motivation, stimuli, signals, responses, and reinforcement—interact with one another to shape behaviour. The term "drive" refers to an intense motivation that comes from inside and causes one to take action. Little stimuli like advertisements set the stage for when, where, and how people react. Individuals act in reaction to the want by making an attempt to fulfil it materially.
6. Decision Process Problem Recognition: Needs, as discussed by Belch and Belch (2009), are not always desires, but might be necessities. In this section of the model, we focus on what motivates customers to make a purchase. When a person notices a major discrepancy between their actual situation and an ideal one, they have identified a problem. For the buyer, there is always an issue that needs fixing, no matter how big or tiny, straightforward or intricate it is. The advertising of the product, or exposure to it in some other social or physical setting, may entice the consumer to consider making a purchase. There are a variety of methods for identifying a need. When a product is unavailable, when a product is purchased but fails to meet requirements completely, or when new demands are created, the quality of a person's real condition might be

lowered. Some people may want to update their smartphones so they can take advantage of the latest capabilities, while others may want to do so they can stay connected with their professional and social networks.

7. Information Research: Consumers often do extensive online research to learn everything they can about available options. There are two main categories of information gatherers: internal and external. "External search" refers to the information gathered through commercials, acquaintances, etc. A person may obtain knowledge from a variety of places, including people they know, people they've never met, websites, sellers, in-store displays, promotional materials, and the news. In the case of a smartphone, for example, one may learn about the product from a variety of places, including recommendations from friends and family, internet reviews, and so on.
8. Evaluation of alternatives: Belch and Belch (2009), this stage of the decision-making process occurs when a client recalls the evoked set in order to see whether a different product may provide a solution to their issue. The product choices that are thought to make up an individual's evoked set are identified at the stage of assessment. The knowledge consumers find via their own searches will help them raise their own assessment bar. It's not uncommon to see members of the same set sharing comparable traits and being placed in the same broad categories. How consumers mentally categories things affects which options they'll choose, with certain brands being more firmly linked to particular mental groups. When it comes to cellphones, for example, consumers often do extensive research before making a final purchase decision. Smartphones come in a wide variety of makes, models, and price points, each of which offers its own unique set of capabilities and design aesthetics.
9. Purchase decision: According to Belch and Belch (2009), this is the "end aim," or the moment at which the buyer makes up his or her mind about which product he or she desires to acquire. At the point of purchase, the customer has determined that the product will effectively address his or her concerns and provide for his or her requirements. Many elements, including referral networks, social connections, and personal networks, all play a role in this particular buying choice.
10. Post-purchase: A consumer makes a purchase, they assess whether or not the product or service lived up to their expectations. One of the first things a customer does after making a purchase is to assess the goods based on how it has performed and how satisfied they are with their purchase. If the product falls short of the mark, the customer is dissatisfied and may look for alternatives or a refund; if it hits the mark, the customer is satisfied and will likely keep using the product; and if it exceeds the customer's expectations, the customer is delighted and is more likely to repurchase the product or another one by the same brand. In addition to having a pleasant experience with the product, the customer will rave about it to their friends and family.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study is to identify the significant factors affecting the purchase of mobile phones among college students.

1. To examine the influence of demographic factors on buying behaviour of mobile phones among the sample respondents

2. To analyze factors influencing the purchase behaviour of mobile phones users with reference to college students
3. To study the smart phone usage pattern of the college students

Methodology

This is an empirical study conducted in Chennai city. The behaviour of the college students towards buying the smart phone is analyzed with a sample of 300 respondents in the Chennai City. The students studying in arts and Science College are selected purposively. The respondents are selected using simple random sampling technique. The data were collected through the Google Forms. The data were analyzed using the SPSS software.

Findings

Buying behavior on mobile phones can vary depending on a number of factors, such as individual preferences, budget, and the type of product being considered. However, there are some general patterns that can be observed when it comes to mobile phone buying behavior.

1. Socio-economic characteristics

Table 1: Socio-Economic characteristics of the respondents

Character		Frequency	Percent
Age	<20 years	167	55.7
	20-23 years	120	40.0
	>23 years	13	4.3
Gender	Male	152	50.7
	Female	148	49.3
Annual income	<Rs. 5 lakhs	88	29.3
	Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 lakhs	198	66.0
	>Rs. 10 lakhs	14	4.7
Academic stream	Arts	272	90.7
	Science	28	9.3
Cost of mobile	Less than Rs. 10000	36	12
	Rs. 10000 to Rs. 15000	170	57
	More than Rs. 15000	94	31
	Total	300	100.0

Out the sample 300, 167 (55.7) respondents belong to the age group of <20 years and 152 (50.7) are male respondents, 198 (66%) respondents earn Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 lakhs, 227 (90.7) respondents are from Arts stream and 170(57%) spend Rs. 10000 to Rs. 15000 for mobile phone.

2. Factors

The buyers' decision will be based on the various factors attributed relating to the smart phone. The smart phones have been introducing with new features always. There are many reason to buy a smart by the college students. This study considered 6 factors i.e., social influence, Price, brand image, features of the smart phone, promotional activities like offers and advertisements and for the purpose of academic work. The level of factors considered by

the respondents is measured with the help of 5 point Likert scale. They are ranked according to the level of preference.

Table 2: Factors considered by the respondents

Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Rank	Rank
Social influence	3.72	0.598	3.63	II
Price	3.59	0.656	3.32	VI
Brand image	3.63	0.606	3.40	IV
Features of smart phone	3.75	0.523	3.71	I
Promotional activities	3.59	0.714	3.35	V
Academic compulsion	3.71	0.595	3.59	III

The result from the above table indicates that features of the smart phone like social media, camera, music and other application, games, etc are highly influencing the respondents (3.71). Secondly, the social influence, particularly the usage of the classmates and the image of using smart phone in the society (3.63) force them to buy. The academic teaching and learning process has been changed after the pandemic. Online classes, evaluation and material preparation and distribution are made with the help of electronic gadgets. The respondents have also mentioned the academic compulsion is a reason for buying the smart phone (2.59). The brand image (3.40), promotional activities (3.35) and price (3.32) are ranked subsequently in fourth, fifth and sixth ranks. The significance of the ranking result is tested as below.

Table 3: Friedman Test

N	300
Chi-Square	49.471
df	5
Asymp. Sig.	0.000

The result of the Friedman test shows that the calculated Chi-Square value (49.471) for the degree of freedom 5 is significant at 1% level. It is concluded that the college students prefer to buy smart phones for the features of the phone, influence of the society and the academic compulsion.

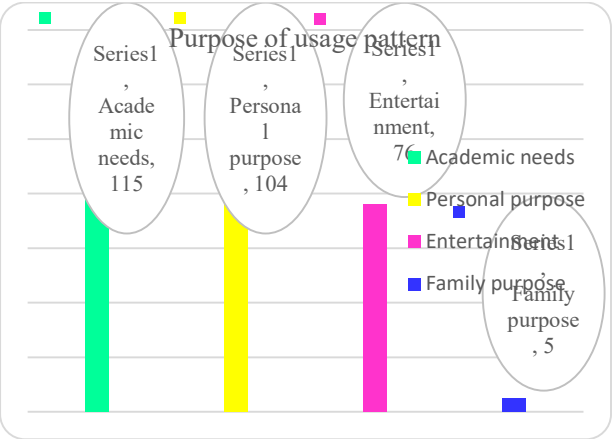
3. Usage pattern

The usage pattern of the college students is studied in two aspects as purpose of the buying the smart phone and the most frequent use for various academic purposes. The result is given below.

Table 4: Purpose

Purpose	Frequency	Percent
Academic needs	115	38.33
Personal purpose	104	34.67
Entertainment	76	25.33
Family purpose	5	1.67
Total	300	100.00

Chart: 1



The purpose of buying smart phones is basically classified into four aspects. Most of the respondents (38.33%) say they buy the smart phone for the academic purposes. 34.67% of the respondents say that they use the mobile for their personal purposes. 25.33% of the respondents have opined that they use the mobile for their entertainment purpose. Rest of the respondents 5 (1.67%) use the smart phone which have been purchased for their family purpose.The College students have been forced or compelled to use smart phone as it becomes part of the regular academic work. The study is also trying to understand the smart phone usage pattern for the academic purpose.

Table 5: Frequency use for academic purpose

Usage pattern		VH	H	N	L	VL	Total
Sharing knowledge	N	62	99	79	44	16	300
	%	20.7	33.0	26.3	14.7	5.3	100.0
Live class	N	65	93	78	49	15	300
	%	21.7	31.0	26.0	16.3	5.0	100.0
E-material download	N	67	89	89	40	15	300
	%	22.3	29.7	29.7	13.3	5.0	100.0
Sharing information	N	69	90	88	47	6	300
	%	23.0	30.0	29.3	15.7	2.0	100.0
Material preparation	N	56	92	88	50	14	300
	%	18.7	30.7	29.3	16.7	4.7	100.0

The academic activities which can be done with the help of smart phone is sharing knowledge, live online classes, providing e-materials, sharing academic information and material preparation like ppt, word files and other works. The result shows that the sharing information is the most frequently used purpose (53.0%). The smart phone connects the people very easy and share the information very fast. Downloading E-materials is another usage (22.3%) with very high frequency. The mobile phone is also highly used for the online classes (21.7%).

Discussion

The features of a smartphone are the most important consideration for customers when deciding which model to buy. The results corroborate the hypothesis that several aspects of mobile phones—including cameras, web browsers, display resolutions, wireless connection, form factors, sizes, menu layouts, and voice activation—are important to customers when making purchases. India revealed that product attributes such as beautiful and inventive designs, lengthy battery backup, and aesthetically pleasing packaging affected the purchase decisions of mobile phone customers across all income brackets. Blackwell(2001). It's also consistent with the study's results that smartphone buyers care a lot about the quantity and quality of their devices' cameras. In addition to these features, customers of smartphones also think about how heavy the phones are. That lighter phones are preferred over bulkier ones agrees with the research. Ayodele and Ifeanyichukwu (2016).Medium-sized cellphones continue to be in high demand, nevertheless. Besides product attributes, other important elements that affect customers' decisions to buy a smartphone include the price, the quality of the brand name, and the consumer's purpose to make a purchase. One of the most important factors proven to influence mobile phone users' propensity to make purchases is the prominence of the brand in question in the consumers' minds. The same group of researchers contends that customers place a high value on price as an indication of quality, with a greater price corresponding to more cutting-edge technology, sleeker design, and more useful features in their cellphones. Attractive and competitive pricing was also shown to be one of the most critical elements influencing the decisions of prospective phone purchasers. Leo et al. also report that the perceived value of a product's brand name, price, and quality all positively connect with consumers' willingness to make a purchase . Like other elements that are seen to be of more general effect on mobile customers' propensity to transfer carriers, the decision to buy a mobile phone was described as being purely subjective. All of these aspects add up to a picture of how people acquire smartphones. Lastly, the research concludes that product sacrifice is not a major contributor.

Conclusion, implications

The purpose of this research was to analyze what influences smartphone buyers' decisions. Awareness of mobile phones with a strong brand image may be increased via the recommendations of social networks (e.g., friends, family, peers, and the media). As a result, individuals from all walks of life and stages of life are able to buy smartphones for the express goal of communicating with others and fulfilling other needs that can be fulfilled only by smartphones. Gopal (2013). As an added bonus, thanks to peer pressure, consumers are more likely to choose and purchase cellphones that are cutting-edge in terms of functionality, build quality, storage capacity, battery life, and aesthetic appeal. Kim (2013).As a result, it allows consumers to lessen the likelihood that they would buy a smartphone that doesn't live up to their expectations and causes them to feel dissatisfied after making the purchase. Ayodele and Ifeanyichukwu (2016). The results of this research will provide mobile makers and marketers with a new set of marketing dynamics, notably for South-Asian countries, which will account for a significant amount of these businesses' income. As a bonus, the results of this study provide academics and researchers with a solid perspective and comprehension that can be used to their existing and future endeavours.The lack of inquiry is not the reason for its investigation. Since its sample size did not come from all sections of the nation, it is subject to

regional bias. Blackwell(2001). The use of a Likert scale as a research instrument also increases the possibility of biases such as central tendency, acquiescence, and social elegancy. Yet, our research bolsters the prior literature and deepens our understanding of the connection between variables and smartphone purchase behaviour. It is possible that further research on the elements that influence the country's professional groups to choose a certain mobile brand is warranted. And studies of the advertising and promotional methods of mobile firms that influence customers' choice of brand will be conducted.

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