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A STUDY ON FACTOR INFLUENCING BRAND PREFERENCE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS SMART PHONES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

In this modern era, a smart phone has become a basic need for each and every one. Advances in technology have made mobile phones develop into Smart Phones. It is undeniable that the has brought many benefits to users and has become an indispensable part of our daily work. This situation reflects the consumer nowadays hard to ignore the value of the Smart Phone. Hence, Smart Phone developers need to understand the value of Smart Phones, especially for immature groups. The present study was aimed at finding out the brand preference and customer satisfaction towards Smart Phones among college students in Tamil Nadu. In terms of data collection, a complete set of data received from 248 respondents via multistage sampling and analyzed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The multiple regressions analysis result revealed that influencing brand preference value and customer satisfaction in the context of Smart Phone uses. The regression results brand preference and factors such as attribute perception, brand experience, brand price and brand appearance. The result indicates that positively influence brand preference. The customer satisfaction and factors such as brand image, customer expectation, perceived brand quality and perceived value. The result indicates that positively influence customer satisfaction. It is also crucial to understand the values obtained by consumers from using the Smart Phone brand. Knowing this may assist managers to develop a strong brand in the marketplace.

Key words: Brand, Smart Phone, College Student.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today, as the Smart Phone turns into a person's key source of connectivity with family, friends, colleagues, work units, and the world, the Smart Phone industry has become the world's fastest-growing industry (Becker et al. 2012). A Smart Phone has become a need in the daily lives of people. Due to advancements in technology, the Smart Phone industry has shown fast and rapid growth and which also enables the marketers and manufacturers to obtain the information on brand preference, satisfaction and loyalty. A Smart Phone is an ultimate need for each and every human being as it helps people to connect with each other and keep them busy by browsing websites, watching movies, listening to music, playing games, learning through applications. Also, he/she can check his/her emails while travelling, track location and contacts and can work from anywhere. There are huge numbers of Smart Phones offered under various brand names and people can choose their favorite brand from the pool of brands. Earlier, cell phones were used only to make voice calls and to text messages, but the scenario has changed now; the currently available Smart Phones can connect to the internet / Wi- Fi. As a result, now people can update themselves on daily news, emails, music, games and fun filled entertainment through various applications.

Day-by-day, advancement in the Smart Phones are rapidly increasing and with the new technologies Smart Phones are launched in the market with latest technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Location based technology, Augmented reality, Syncing wearable technology, mobile devices syncing with home, Enhanced mobile security, mobile payments, transportation apps, and Biometric advancements. People switch from one brand to another brand to explore and enjoy the new features that are trending in the world of Smart Phone (Gopinath, 2019 a). They are satisfied with their brands to their particular branded Smart Phones. Brand preference concept is very essential to marketers for creating strong brands in the highly Competitive Smart Phone market (Gopinath, 2019 b). Brand preference is the essential feature that influences consumer choices and crucial factor in understanding the factors that affects brand preference. When consumers start testing new brands they gain new, mind boggling experience which result in the change of mind on their brand preference (Unnamalai & Gopinath, 2020). Therefore, it is evident that marketers and manufacturers must investigate these factors affect brand preference in order to understand the customer preferences. Brand preference refers to the choice of a brand over other brands because they have a favourable past experience with that particular brand (Perreault et al., 2014; Kavitha & Gopinath, 2020). One of the factors that influence brand equity is brand preference (Keller, 2013). Consumers tend to develop brand preferences and hence, this could become a competitive advantage for brand marketers when consumers choose or decide to buy the available brand over any other brands (Hult et al., 2012; Gopinath & Kalpana, 2019).

Customer satisfaction is the feelings of pleasure and disappointments results from the product comparison, perceived performances or outcomes in accordance with the customer's expectations (Gopinath & Irismargaret, 2019) Comparing products perceived performance or outcomes in relation with person's expectations is the state of expressed feelings which measure the level of satisfaction (Kotler,2000). Quality offered and price of the product or services results in customer's adoption decision. Customer retention is one of the antecedents of customer satisfaction (Turel *et al.*, 2007). Customer satisfaction is one of the factors of organization performance (Stank *et al.*, 1997). Customer satisfaction has become the most important element for the Smart Phone industry through which they can able to retain their customers as well as they can attract the new Smart Phone users in the competitive market (Gopinath & Kalpana, 2019)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature refers published information, collection of materials on a specific field of research or subject, such as books and journal articles. Review of literature does not contain everything that has been given in the article rather it includes the key sources related to the research topic and generally research gap has been identified (Webmaster, 2018).

2.1. Brand Preference

Niedrich & Swain (2008) in their research paper discussed the exposure order effects on brand preference and market entry information through a dual process model. The influence of attribute-based processing was in exposure order effect. It demonstrates the effect of market entry information and exposure order across two experiments. They conclude that strategic implications for managers in market brands enjoying during preference advantage over later market entrance. Attribute-based processing is likely to be harder for customers to use in Market heuristic in circumstances (Usharani & Gopinath, 2020 b). Brand preference and its impact on customer share and word-of-mouth intention. He discussed about various brands of restaurants and examines the impact of brand prestige towards the moderator such as brand preference, word-of-mouth intention, and customer involvement as investigator consumer attitudes regarding antecedents and consequences towards restaurant brands. Interactional and outcome qualities have significant effect on utilitarian and attitude regarding hedonic toward restaurants (Hwang, 2011, Usharani & Gopinath, 2020 a). Students brand preference in Smart Phone through a good knowledge helps them in understanding while making a purchase based on their preferences. Brand equity which leads to loyal to a brand, awareness towards a brand, perceived quality, associations of brands and other brand assets proprietary and developed the model. They conclude that one of the primary reasons regarding Apple brand has its higher equity on brand and identity towards brand this in turn build strong brand through the components of brand equity and brand identity (Thunman, 2012).

Isik & Yasar (2015) in their paper discussed the effect of brand name on consumer preferences. Structural equation modeling was implemented to check the relationship among brand and customer preferences. The findings of this research paper illustrates that the customers' decision making process has strong impact towards brand name. It indicates that consumer awareness and desirability is created through brand that can enhance decision making of a consumer which induce brand purchase. Sethi & Chandel (2015) in their research paper analyzed entry level Smart Phones for youth regarding the buying preference of a consumer. Both exploratory and descriptive study has been undertaken which consists of 200 respondents through stratified sampling method. Conjoint analysis has been used for finding out the relevant important attributes. Brand has more important influence followed by price and purpose. They concluded that marketers should concentrate on developing strong brand recognition. The brand preference to assess the student satisfaction and find out the key features which customer look for in a mobile before buying and factors that influence decision making while purchase of a mobile phone and impact of advertisement on buying decision of students. He concluded that in Hyderabad city most of the customer prefer Nokia branded Smart Phone Youngster's favorite brand was LG for its look, price, image and advertisement was the major factors for purchasing mobile phone. Most of the students prefer thin, light weight, and they are easily influenced by advertisements through social media, television and print media (Poranki, 2016). Consumer perception on brand awareness is important variables for purchasing household products and retail outlets.

2.2. Satisfaction

Bou-Llusar *et al.*, (2001) in their work stated that it is empirical evidence towards relationship between firm's perceived quality and overall customer satisfaction on customer purchase intention. There exist an indirect relationship between perceived quality and purchase intention where as customer satisfaction is considered to be variable that can be moderate or intervene in the relationship. It is stated that when perceived quality and satisfaction are considered as a parameters for overall assessment, the predecessor of satisfaction can be termed as perceived quality. Satisfaction is considered as intervening variable so that it has direct influence on purchase intentions, thus, the SERVQUAL model has been initiated. It is concluded that firm's perceived quality has a significant influence on purchase intention and part of its influence is accepted as overall satisfaction variable and with regard to purchase intention there is no interaction effect between perceived quality and satisfaction. Perceived quality and purchase intention is the second model which is statistically significant where as customer's satisfaction is acting as a mediating variable (Gopinath, 2011).

The relationships between customer satisfaction and perceived quality, customer expectation, perceived value were evaluated using regression analysis. It is found that coefficient of each variable and R square statistics indicates that there exists a feeble relationship between perceived quality, customer expectation, customer satisfaction and perceived value so that perceived value should be eliminated from this case. In conclusion it is found out that ACSI model was an inappropriate model, therefore the company should enhance their services to meet customer needs and expectation (Xue& Yang, 2008, Gopinath, 2019c). Anh (2015) in his article researched on factors affect customer satisfaction in mobile commerce among Vietnamese mobile users. Mobile commerce is a new commerce mode which measures customer satisfaction among wide range of firms and it is a key element to ensure firm success. The study reveals that the customers are satisfied with m- commerce and also identify the features and challenges of m-commerce. The quality of service trusted mobile technologies are the influencing factors that affect Vietnamese customer satisfaction in m-commerce. They are slightly satisfied with the mobile service in the country. Quality of service has positive impact on satisfaction of customer, quality of service, transmission of mobile data, coverage, signal, local based service. Service quality is an important factor which was identified in this study. Impact of customer satisfaction leads to the factor named trust which says that most of the respondents were afraid of being defrauded thus the customer has less trust on mobile commerce (Ramamoorthy et al, 2016).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

Study based on sample survey and interview schedule among the college students in Trichy, Tamil Nadu. Under Graduate and Post Graduate students in the affiliated colleges of all the State universities which are specialized in Humanities and sciences were taken as the population for the study. The sampling unit for this research was the college students from the affiliated college of the State Universities in Tamil Nadu. In this study "Multi-stage sampling" design was adopted. In the First stage, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli were selected using Simple random sampling by lottery method. In the Second stage, 5 affiliated colleges from State university 5 colleges were selected using Proportionate random sampling method and in the Third stage, 5 college students from the affiliated colleges was selected using Convenience sampling. Multi-stage sampling is the development of the cluster sampling principle. This type of sampling is applied when there is large geographical area where the inquiries are big and huge. There are two advantages in using multi-stage sampling. The first one is the sampling

frame in this stage is usually in partial units in single stage designs and it is easy to administer. The second advantage is sequential clustering that is possible from the given cost and large number of units can be sampled under multi-stage sampling method. The sample size for the study 248, where were derived from the by using sample size calculator (Raosoft, 2004).

The primary data are the information which has been collected for the first time from the respondents The responses were collected from the college students through questionnaire. Collection of primary data through questionnaire was quite popular, in case of big enquiries. The questionnaire was distributed to the college students individually and responses were collected. A well-structured questionnaire was constructed and all the elements related to purchase behaviour, brand preference and customer satisfaction were included in the questionnaire. The construct the questionnaire is based on the study of Churchill (1979). The first and foremost step has to define and specify the domain of the constructs by reviewing the literature and past studies. The various dimensions of brand preference, customer satisfaction and factors influencing those variables based on gender, age, course of study, stream, year of study, family monthly income, Area of residence were studied by means of tables and percentage.

3.2. Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of transforming data into useful information with conclusions and support decision-making. The collected data is transferred and tabulated using Microsoft Excel and analyzed with the help of SPSS software

3.3. Descriptive Analysis

Thus, the study has been considered and analyzed the respondents' profile such as gender, age, course of study, stream/discipline, family monthly income, and residential area and is presented through the descriptive analysis in the following section.

Table 1

Sl. No	Demographic Variable	No of Respondents	Percentage
	Male	111	44.76
1	Female	137	55.24
1	Total	248	100
	18 – 21 Years	120	48.39
	22 – 25 Years	92	37.10
2	Above 25 Years	36	14.51
2	Total	248	100
	U.G	184	74.20
3	P.G	64	25.80
3	Total	248	100
	Arts	146	58.88
4	Science	102	41.12
4	Total	248	100
	Below Rs,10000	34	13.71
	Rs 10001 - 20000	77	31.05
	Rs 20001 - 30000	48	19.35
5	Above Rs 30000	89	35.89
	Total	248	100
	Urban	128	51.62
6	Rural	85	34.27
	Semi-Urban	35	14.11
	Total	248	100

Source: Primary Data



From the descriptive table shows that, 44.76% of the respondents are male and 55.24% of the respondents are female. It obviously shows that female is more when compared to male. Followed by age 48.39% of the respondents belong to the age group 18-21 years, 37.10% of the respondents belong to the age group of 22 - 25 years and 14.51% of the respondents' age was in the age group above 25 years. Thus, it concludes that majority 48.39% of the respondents are in the age group between 18-21 years. Followed by 74.20% of the respondents are studying under graduation and 25.80 % of the respondents are studying Post graduation. Thus, it reveals that majority of the respondents are studying under graduation. Followed by 58.88% of the respondents are from Arts stream and 41.2% of the respondents are from Science stream. Hence, it is concluded that majority of the respondents are from Arts stream. The monthly income 13.71% of the respondents family monthly income falls below Rs. 10000, 31.05% of the respondents family monthly income comes between Rs. 10001 – Rs. 20000, 19.35 % of the respondents family monthly income falls between Rs.20001 – Rs. 30000 and 35.89% of the respondents family monthly income are above Rs. 30000 respectively. Followed by 51.62% of the respondents are from urban area, 34.27% of the respondents are from rural area and 14.11% of the respondents are from semi urban area. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the respondents are from urban area.

3.4. Smart Phone Brands Used by the Respondents

Table 2

Sl. No	Smart Phone Brands	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	SAMSUNG	55	22.17
2	VIVO	38	15.32
3	OPPO	20	8.06
4	REDMI MI	74	29.83
5	LENOVO	36	14.51
6	LAVA	12	4.83
7	APPLE IPHONE	03	1.20
8	MICROMAX	03	1.20
9	OTHERS	07	2.82
10	Total	248	100

Source: Primary Data

From the above table results shows that an interesting observation that 29.83% of the respondents use Redmi, MI branded Smart Phones, 22.17% of the respondents use Samsung, 15.32% of the respondents have Vivo, 14.51% of the respondents have Lenovo, 8.06% of the respondents use Oppo Smart Phone, 4.83% of the respondents use Lava, 1.20% of the respondents use Apple Iphone and Micromax Smart Phone and 2.82% of the respondents use Asus, Nokia, Jio was grouped as 'Others' respectively.

3.5. Preference of branded Smart Phone during price Increase

Table 3

Sl. No.	Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Same Brand	112	45.16
2	Cheaper Brand	98	39.51
3	Any other	38	15.32
4	Total	248	100

Source: Primary Data

From the above table reveals that 45.16% of the respondents will buy same brand even if the price of their Smart Phone increases, 39.51% of the respondents' states that they will buy cheaper brand when price of their Smart Phone increases whereas 15.32% of the respondents feel that they will purchase any other brand.

Factor Influencing Brand Preference towards the Smart Phones among the College Students

H1: Brand experience, Attribute perception, brand price and brand appearance has positive influence on brand preference.

Table 4

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.658	0.411**	0.438	436.32947

The model summary of regression analysis results shows that, the correlation coefficient of 0.658 which is significant at 0.000 which implies that the model is fit for the data. The p value is less than 0.05, the model is significant. The R2 is 0.411 which implies that 41.1% variation in the dependent variable (brand preference) is accounted by variation in independent variables.

Table 5

	ANOVA ^b						
	Sum of Squares df Mean Square F Sig.						
1	Regression	6408.586	4	1372.464			
	Residual	13852.446	213	14.499	94.65	0.000	
	Total	20261.032	248				

Dependent variable: (brand preference)

Predictors: (Constant), brand price, brand appearance, brand experience, attribute perception.

The ANOVA table represents a significant F statistic. Model acceptability is tested by ANOVA test. F statistic significance value is less than 0.05, which states that the variation explained by the model is not due to chance. Since the p value is 0.000, the regression coefficient is significant.

Regression Co-efficient

Table 6

Particulars		В	Std. Error	t	Sig
1	(Constant) Brand Preference	4.38	0.834	6.574	<0.000**
	Brand Experience	0.04	0.070	5.726	0.390
	Attribute perception	0.48	0.057	0.448	<0.000**
	Brand price	0.12	0.008	5.570	<0.000**
	Brand Appearance	0.22	0.032	3.175	<0.000**
a. Dep	pendent Variable: Brand preference				

a. Dependent variable: Brand preference

The regression co-efficient indicates that brand price (t = 5.570, p=0.000 < 0.05) thus alternate hypothesis is accepted and brand price positively influence brand preference. Brand experience (t = 5.726, p = 0.390 > 0.05), alternate hypothesis is rejected which states that brand experience negatively influence brand preference. Brand appearance (t = 3.175, p = 0.000 < 0.05) so alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that brand preference positively influence brand preference. Attribute perception (t = 0.448, p = 0.000 < 0.05) alternate hypothesis is accepted and hence it concludes that attribute perception positively influence brand preference.

Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction towards Smart Phones among College Students.

H1: Brand image, Customer expectation, Perceived Brand quality and perceived value have positive influence on customer satisfaction.

Table 7

Model Summary

	Woder Summary								
odel	del R R Square		Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate					
1	0.689	0.522**	0.538	786 1294					

The model summary of regression analysis results shows that, the correlation coefficient of 0.689 which is significant at 0.000 which implies that the model is fit for the data. The p value is less than 0.05, the model is significant. The R2 is 0.522 which implies that 52.2% variation in the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) is accounted by variation in independent variables.

Table 8

	ANOVA ^b						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	7342.586	4	1972.854			
	Residual	15864.846	213	16.567	118.48	0.000	
	Total		248				

a. Dependent variable: (customer satisfaction)

The ANOVA table represents a significant F statistic. Model acceptability is tested by ANOVA test. F statistic significance value is less than 0.05, which states that the variation explained by the model is not due to chance. Since the p value is 0.000, the regression coefficient is significant.

Regression Co-efficient

Table 9

	Particulars	В	Std. Error	t	Sig
1	(Constant) Customer satisfaction	-3.847	0.878	-5.354	<0.000**
	Brand Image	0.581	0.065	12.426	0.000**
	Customer Expectation	0.258	0.062	3.443	<0.000**
	Brand perceived quality	0.389	0.093	10.644	<0.000**
	Perceived value	0.547	0.075	5.649	<0.000**
a. De	ependent Variable: Customer sati				

b. Predictors: (Constant), brand image, customer expectation, perceived brand quality and perceived value.

The regression co-efficient indicates that brand image (t = 12.426, p=0.000 < 0.05) thus alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that brand image positively influence customer satisfaction. Customer expectation (t = 3.443, p = 0.000 < 0.05), alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that customer expectation positively influence customer satisfaction. Brand Perceived quality (t = 10.644, p = 0.000 < 0.05) so alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that brand Perceived quality positively influence customer satisfaction. Perceived value (t = 5.646, p = 0.000 < 0.05) alternate hypothesis is accepted and hence it concludes that perceived value positively influence customer satisfaction.

4. DIRECTION OF THE FURTHER RESEARCH AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concentrated only on factors that influence Smart Phone brand preference and customer satisfaction. The study can be carried out on factors such as personal and psychological factors on brand preference and customer satisfaction which help in understanding the competitive market opportunities for Smart Phone . Many open ended questions should be included in the questionnaire. This would indicate the level of interest that exists for Smart Phones and type information lacked by the people. The current study focused only the college students studying in affiliated colleges of state universities in Tirichirappali. So studies can be carried out with the college students of other universities in Tamil Nadu.

Smart Phone manufacturers can come out with in-built applications and non deletable files, focusing students' educational purposes. Smart Phones must contain only those applications which help in enhancing their skills and imparting new knowledge. Segmentation according to the needs of the students must be carried out. Smart Phones can be segmented as Age segmentation, Language segmentation, Regional segmentation etc. Students may misuse the latest features such as hi-end cameras, Video recorder, audio recorder etc.

5. CONCLUSION

This study is carried out to gain a better understanding of the factor influencing brand preference value and customer satisfaction in the context of Smart Phone uses. The regression results brand preference and factors such as attribute perception, brand experience, brand price and brand appearance. The result indicates that positively influence brand preference. The customer satisfaction and factors such as brand image, customer expectation, perceived brand quality and perceived value. The result indicates that positively influence customer satisfaction. Smart Phone features such as finger print, iris scanner, face detection helps in protecting information with high security, augmented reality, artificial intelligence makes the user friendly interface with which all the activities performed with the Smart Phone are made easier with voice recognition. New competitors are entering into the market with new features and technology and advancement to the existing ones which results in introducing varieties of handsets. Smart Phones are becoming cheaper and cheaper every day because it is replaced all other means of communication. Noticeably the network coverage has reached the nooks and corners across the country.

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M. Aishwarya

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