

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE BEHAVIOR OF CONSUMERS SWITCHING BETWEEN BRANDS AND THEIR PREFERENCES IN THE MOBILE PHONE MARKET IN CHENNAI

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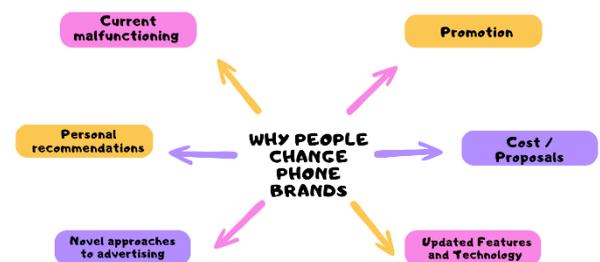
Abstract - This study delves into the complex nature of brand preferences and brand switching behavior in the Chennai mobile phone industry. Researchers and marketers alike must keep up with the rapidly developing mobile technology industry by delving into the reasons why customers choose some companies over others. Combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, the study adopts a mixed-methods technique to collect comprehensive insights. In order to identify trends and preferences in the process of switching brands, we polled a representative sample of Chennai's mobile phone customers. Also, customers' true feelings, thoughts, and reasons for being loyal or defecting can be better understood with the help of in-depth interviews. Brand dissatisfaction, perceived value for money, and peer recommendations are the main drivers of brand switching, according to key studies. Brand reputation, product characteristics, and after-sale service also play a big role in shaping consumer preferences. According to the findings, marketing methods, social influences, and individual experiences all work together to shape consumer choices.

Key Words: Brand loyalty, customer happiness, customer perceptions, product attributes, brand reputation, satisfaction, value for money, marketing tactics, Chennai

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer behavior is crucial in determining the longevity and profitability of businesses in the ever-changing mobile phone market. People in Chennai, like people all across the globe, have a lot of options when it comes to choosing a mobile phone because technology is always improving. Brand preferences and, in turn, brand switching behaviors are impacted by a plethora of psychological and social elements, in addition to technical specifications and functionalities, which contribute to the complexity of the decision-making process. Adapting tactics to satisfy consumers' ever-changing wants requires manufacturers, marketers, and researchers to understand the dynamics driving brand switching and preferences in the mobile phone market. The purpose of this study is to investigate, with an emphasis on brand switching behaviours, the complex factors impacting brand selections among Chennai mobile phone users. To better understand what motivates customers to remain loyal to a company or look for alternatives, this study attempts to integrate personal experiences, social factors, and market dynamics. We hope to capture the quantitative patterns and qualitative intricacies of consumer decision-making by using a mixed-methods research approach that combines quantitative

surveys and qualitative interviews. In an effort to better understand how to compete in the cutthroat mobile phone industry, this study conducts an in-depth analysis to determine what factors influence consumers' decisions to switch brands and what they value most in a product. We hope that by delving into consumer behaviour in Chennai's mobile phone market, we can reveal important information that will benefit businesses and academics alike, as well as provide marketers with useful takeaways and illuminate the complex relationship between brands and consumers in the modern digital era.



(Figure.1)

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Amidst the current cutthroat mobile phone market, manufacturers are always in the hunt for new ways to differentiate their products and attract customers. According to Riquelme's (2001) survey of 94 people, who had previous experience choosing a mobile phone, this influences future choices. According to Jones (2002), who surveyed 500 consumers, the characteristics of mobile phones that consumers value and the ability to organize their own schedules have an impact on their purchasing decisions. According to Liu (2002), the most important considerations when selecting a mobile phone are its brand, size, and technology. Based on their survey of 397 people, Karjaluo et al. (2003a; 2003b) found that mobile phone pricing influences decision-making factors. According to In-Stat/MDR (2002) and O'Keefe (2004), consumers are encouraged to purchase new mobile phones due to the features of new technology. Researchers and writers from a variety of fields examined the criteria that customers considered most important when selecting a mobile phone (Huang, 2004, Zhang, 2006, Zheng, 2007, Li 2010). Features such as quality, price, brand name, durability, and social aspects are among those that primarily impact the final choice decision. Karjaluo (2005) set out to discover what drives mobile phone brand switching in Finland and what variables impact

consumers' decisions to buy mobile phones. Of the 196 people who filled out the survey, 79 were graduate students. Customers' individual preferences may play a role in the selection of a mobile phone, according to this research. The study found that students were more likely to switch mobile phone brands due to technical issues. Changing mobile phone brands is also affected by new features and the innovator's status. Major determinants in the selection of a mobile brand include, but are not limited to, price, product material, interface or familiarity, and brand name. The book by Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel (2006) explains that individual and environmental factors are the two main determinants of consumer behavior. A person's knowledge, learning motivation, personality, beliefs, attitudes, and way of life are all considered individual aspects. They base their decision on these specific factors. Culture, reference groups, families, and households are all examples of external variables that could influence consumer behavior; these are known as environmental factors. According to Eric and Bright (2008), the two most important aspects of a mobile brand are its dependable quality and its user-friendliness. The significance of marketing techniques in attracting new clients and retaining current ones was elucidated by Subramanyam and Venkateswarlu (2012). According to the results, these marketing methods are quite influential on consumers' final purchasing decisions. Being technologically advanced is always their goal, regardless of the circumstances. The younger generation is always drawn to products with innovative design, technology, and functionality. In order to maximize their market share, electronic marketers should prioritize these characteristics, according to the report. A study was carried out by Sethi, A., and Chandel, A. (2015) to determine consumer preference for entry-level smartphones. . The majority of consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by advertisements. Brand preference is also affected by characteristics such as family income and education. Research on consumers' propensity to switch brands was carried out by Agha, Haider, Kakakhel, and Murtaza (2012). Researchers found that students and professionals are more influenced by technological developments when deciding which brand and model to move to. Research shows that of the many factors considered while making a purchase, brand, price, and purpose rank highest. The least important factors in deciding to buy were the camera, screen size, and RAM. An empirical study by Zeeshan Ahmed (2015) demonstrated that the influencing elements significantly affect the consumer's decision-making process. A customer's decision to stick with their current brand or try a new one is influenced by these considerations. According to this research, the most important things that can keep customers or make them transfer brands include things like advertising, innovation and attitude, demographics, the perception of technology influence, and brand name and image. The author argued that consumers would be less likely to switch brands if the company provided them with the highest quality and most recent features. YouTube views on mobile devices increased from 55% in 2015 to 80% in 2016, according to a 2017 NDTV survey. There was a 400% increase in mobile video viewing on YouTube in 2016–17. YouTube Reports 180 million Mobile Video Views in India

3.OBJECTIVE

- To learn what factors influence the decision of consumers in Chennai to switch mobile phone brands by identifying the causes behind this switch.
- To investigate what makes a brand appealing by learning which mobile phone features and specs are most important to consumers.
- To analyze how customer decisions in the Chennai mobile phone market are influenced by personal experiences, social factors, and market trends.
- To learn how elements like brand reputation, after-sale service, and perceived value for money impact customer happiness and loyalty.

4.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to understand what factors, influence consumers' decisions to transfer brands and which brands they prefer in the Chennai mobile phone market, this study uses a mixed-methods research strategy. A more complete picture of customer behavior in this fast-paced, cutthroat market can be achieved by combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews.

4.2 SAMPLING STRATEGY

To make sure that all ages, income brackets, and educational levels are represented, we shall use a stratified random selection technique. To ensure that the results are applicable to a wider population, the sample will include mobile phone users in Chennai. We will strive for statistical parity in our selection process.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION

People in Chennai who use mobile phones are the primary focus of the research. Two hundred mobile users from the Chennai area were surveyed. Information for the youngster was gathered from college students. For this research, we used a random sample technique. Data for the study comes mostly from a pre-tested structured questionnaire, although it also draws on secondary sources. Respondents' opinions on mobile phone brand preference, switching behavior, and attitude are measured using Likert's five-point scale. We had a casual chat with mobile users to find out what they thought about different aspects of mobile usage, what variables affect their preference for brands, and how often they switch brands.

4.3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age	No of respondent	% of respondent
20-30 years	66	33%
31-40 years	65	32.5%
41-50 years	55	27.5%
51-60 years	11	5.5%
Above 60 years	3	1.5%
Total	200	100%

(Table 1. Age of the respondent)

Education	No of respondent	% of respondent
HSC	27	13.5%
Graduate	103	51.5%
Post-Graduate	65	32.5%
Ph.D.	5	2.5%
Total	200	100%

(Table 2. Education of the respondent)

Gender	No of respondent	% of respondent
Male	122	61%
Female	78	39%
Total	200	100%

(Table 3. Gender of the respondent)

Among the gathered information, 33% belonged to the 20–30 age bracket; among this demographic, the majority were either recent college grads or young professionals. The age groups of 31–40 and 41–50 years old made up 32% and 27% of the total, respectively. The cross-section of demographics revealed that college-aged women, men in professional or business roles, and students from metropolitan regions were more likely to have experience with high-tech mobile phones.

The research model's variables on consumers' brand switching behavior were examined by administering the following Likert-scale questions to mobile users.

(SD= Very Disagree, D= Oppose, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Very Agree)

Importance of the mobile phone attributes influences at the time of selection or replacing the existing brand	S.D (1)	D (2)	N (3)	A (4)	S.A (5)
To Improve the Social Status	10%	4%	22%	38%	26%
To Improve the Capacity	3%	4%	12%	53%	26%
To Update the Technology	1%	4%	15%	52%	28%
To get benefit from seasonal offers / Plans	2%	15%	43%	19%	21%
Existing one is not Functioning Correctly	1%	2%	10%	28%	59%
Brand Name & Image /Brand Uniqueness	2%	2%	5%	48%	43%
Special Advance features, (Camera, Quality & performance etc...)	0%	2%	8%	43%	47%
Durability & Reliability	0%	1%	9%	37%	53%
Price	1%	3%	21%	41%	32%

5. CONCLUSIONS

The research indicates that there are numerous elements that significantly impact the behavior of choosing a mobile phone brand. All of these things make them want to replace the current one. Many factors inspire mobile users to switch brands, according to the informal debate. Within three to four months, new technology is introduced in the telecom business. According to the data, the maximum time a mobile phone can be used is three years. For a variety of reasons, most mobile phone users would like to upgrade their current device after three years. Companies in the mobile manufacturing industry are always innovating to stay ahead of the competition and attract customers. All of these things make them feel like their old cell phone is missing out on all the cool new capabilities. They are influenced to change their mobile device. A lot of firms come out with fresh marketing strategies that make people want to buy mobile phones with the same specs. Despite already owning a decent mobile phone with 4G capabilities, many customers bought 5G mobile sets to take advantage of Jio telecom's free internet services and free voice calling facilities. Personal recommendations, When choosing a new mobile or replacing an old one, many factors come into play, including social status, new features (particularly in terms of camera resolution and storage capacity), battery backup, new design, low price, after sales services, net plans, celebrity endorsements, popularity, and brand image. Social, technological, promotional, pricing, and quality variables were determined to have the most impact on consumers, according to the research.

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