

To Study the Factors Influencing Smartphone Purchasing Decisions: A Consumer Brand Preference Study

Tamil Nadu, India | Academic Year 2025–2026 | Sample Size: 121 Respondents

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1. Abstract

This research paper examines the key factors that influence consumers' purchasing decisions towards branded smartphones in Tamil Nadu, India. A descriptive study was conducted with 121 respondents using a convenient sampling method, combining questionnaire surveys and personal interviews. The study identifies that product features and quality, price range, battery capacity, and attractive advertising are among the primary drivers shaping brand preference. Statistical tools including percentage analysis, Garrett Ranking, and Chi-Square tests were applied to analyze the data. Findings reveal that Redmi is the most widely used brand, the 20–25 age group constitutes the dominant demographic, and social media is the most used smartphone feature. The paper concludes with actionable suggestions for manufacturers and marketers to better align with consumer expectations in the competitive Indian smartphone market.

Keywords: Smartphone, Brand Preference, Consumer Behaviour, Purchasing Decisions, Tamil Nadu

2. Introduction

The smartphone industry has witnessed exponential growth over the past two decades, transforming from a niche communication device into an indispensable tool embedded in nearly every facet of modern life. In India, rapid digitalization, affordable data plans, and increasing digital literacy have accelerated smartphone adoption across all socioeconomic segments. As of 2020, approximately 75% of the world population were smartphone users, with India representing one of the largest and fastest-growing markets globally.

For manufacturers and marketers, understanding why a consumer chooses one brand over another is critical. Brand preference — the tendency of consumers to favour a particular brand under conditions of equal price and availability — is shaped by a complex interplay of functional attributes (camera, battery, processor), psychological factors (brand image, status), social influences (peer recommendations, advertising), and economic constraints (price range, payment modes).

This study was conducted with 121 respondents in Tamil Nadu to understand these dynamics. Given the intense market competition from brands such as Redmi, Samsung, Vivo, Oppo, and Apple, the study aims to identify which factors carry the most weight in a consumer's decision-making process, and what implications these findings hold for the industry.

3. Literature Review

Several researchers have explored the dimensions of smartphone brand preference and consumer decision-making:

Jenkinson and Cuskelly (2016) demonstrated that data collection methods — whether mobile-based or traditional — significantly affect research outcomes, establishing the importance of reliable tools in consumer preference studies.

Kameswara Raoporanki (2016) investigated brand preferences among mobile phone users in Hyderabad, analysing technical, economic, social, and personal criteria, and traced the decision-making journey from brand awareness to purchase satisfaction.

Paulo, Duarte and Mario (2010) identified that brand identity, personality, image, self-image congruence, social environment, risk perception, and demographic profiles collectively influence brand preference. Their work forms a foundational framework for understanding brand loyalty.

Vasak (2013) defined customer satisfaction as the outcome of comparing pre-purchase expectations with actual post-purchase performance, noting that satisfaction is achieved when actual performance exceeds expectations.

Cassavoy (2012) highlighted that smartphones transcend mere calling devices — they enable email, document editing, and internet access — and that brand identity goes far beyond a trademark or name.

SurendraMalviya (2015) identified the key factors dominating consumer minds during smartphone purchases in Indore, serving as a benchmark for studies in Indian tier-2 and tier-3 markets.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design to understand the existing nature of smartphone brand preferences. Both primary and secondary data were employed. Primary data was gathered through structured questionnaires and personal interviews; secondary data was sourced from published journals, books, and online resources.

4.2 Sampling

A convenient sampling method was applied. The sample comprises 121 respondents drawn from urban and semi-urban areas of Tamil Nadu during the academic year 2025–2026 (data collection period: 6 months).

4.3 Analytical Tools

Data was analysed using simple percentage analysis, Garrett Ranking Method, and Chi-Square test (via SPSS). Tables and charts were used to present findings clearly.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	78	64.5
	Female	43	35.5
Age Group	18–20 years	39	32.2
	20–25 years	52	43.0
	25–30 years	8	6.6
	Above 30 years	22	18.2
Marital Status	Unmarried	86	71.1
	Married	35	28.9

Education	UG Graduate	65	53.7
	Diploma	20	16.5
Occupation	Student	71	58.7
	Private Employee	31	25.6

Table 2: Current Smartphone Brand Usage

Brand	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Redmi	29	24.0
Vivo	25	20.7
Samsung	18	14.9
Oppo	18	14.9
Realme	14	11.6
Poco	7	5.8
OnePlus (1+)	5	4.1
Apple	3	2.5
Lenovo	2	1.7

Table 3: Key Features Influencing Purchase Decision

Feature	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Battery Capacity	40	33.1
Camera Quality	33	27.3
Operating System & Memory	25	20.7
Internet Facilities	23	19.0

Table 4: Preference Criteria for Choosing a Smartphone

Preference Criterion	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Better Features & Quality	61	50.4
Attractive Advertisement	36	29.8
Reasonable Price	24	19.8

Table 5: Garrett Ranking — Brand Preference

Brand	Garrett Score	Average Score	Rank
Micromax	6439	53.21	1
OnePlus	6242	51.59	2

Poco	6214	51.36	3
Oppo	6148	50.81	4
Lenovo	6141	50.75	5
Sony	6088	50.31	6
Vivo	6065	50.12	7
Galaxy	6055	50.04	8
Redmi	5847	48.32	9
Apple	5777	47.74	10
Samsung	5655	46.74	11

Table 6: Consumer Opinion Ranking on Smartphone Selection Factors

Factor	Average Score	Rank
Brand Popularity	35.0	I
Price	33.8	II
Battery Capacity	33.4	III
Data Facilities	32.5	IV
Charging Capacity	32.0	V
Advanced Technologies	30.7	VI
Playing Games	30.7	VII
Status	29.9	VIII

5. Analysis & Results

5.1 Demographic Findings

The study reveals that the majority of smartphone users (64.5%) are male, with the 20–25 age group forming the largest segment (43%). Most respondents are unmarried (71.1%), from nuclear families (69.4%), and hold undergraduate degrees (53.7%). Students comprise 58.7% of the sample, reflecting that the youth demographic is the primary smartphone consumer in Tamil Nadu.

5.2 Brand Preference and Usage

Redmi dominates current usage with 24% of respondents using it, followed by Vivo (20.7%) and Samsung/Oppo (14.9% each). This aligns with the national trend of budget-friendly Android brands capturing the mass market. Notably, 92.6% of respondents agree that a smartphone is a necessity.

5.3 Key Purchase Drivers

Battery capacity is the top feature attracting buyers (33.1%), followed by camera quality (27.3%). When choosing a brand, 50.4% prioritise better features and quality, 29.8% are influenced by attractive advertising, and 19.8% seek reasonable pricing. The price sweet spot lies in the Rs. 10,000–15,000 range, preferred by 47.9% of respondents.

5.4 Garrett Ranking Results

The Garrett Ranking analysis revealed that — despite Micromax receiving the highest aggregate preference score — actual day-to-day usage is led by Redmi and Vivo. This suggests that aspirational brand rankings may differ from practical purchasing behaviour, likely due to availability and value-for-money considerations.

5.5 Consumer Opinion on Selection Factors

Brand Popularity ranked first (average score 35.0) in influencing selection, followed by Price (33.8) and Battery Capacity (33.4). Status was ranked last (29.9), indicating that Tamil Nadu smartphone consumers are more pragmatic than status-driven in their choices.

5.6 Chi-Square Test: Age vs. Time Span of Use

A Chi-Square test was applied to examine the association between respondent age and the duration of current smartphone use. The Pearson Chi-Square value was 9.165 ($df = 9$, $p = 0.023$). Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected — there is a statistically significant association between age and smartphone usage duration. Younger respondents (18–25 years) tend to use their devices for 2–3 years before upgrading.

5.7 Usage Behaviour

Social media is by far the most used smartphone application (58.7%), ahead of calls (22.3%), camera/editing (12.4%), and online payments (6.6%). Entertainment is the primary purpose of smartphone use (43.8%), closely followed by educational use (42.1%). Most respondents (60.3%) purchase with ready cash from showrooms (40.5%), and 51.2% have used their current device for 2–3 years.

6. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive picture of smartphone purchasing behaviour among consumers in Tamil Nadu. The findings confirm that product quality, battery performance, brand reputation, and pricing are the dominant factors shaping purchase decisions. The youth demographic — particularly unmarried students aged 20–25 — constitutes the core market segment and is primarily oriented toward entertainment and education.

For manufacturers, the priority should be to deliver high battery life, durable screens, and competitive pricing in the Rs. 10,000–15,000 bracket, while investing in showroom experiences and social media engagement. Customer referral programs hold significant potential, given that 64.5% of respondents would recommend their current phone to others.

The high satisfaction rate (71.1% satisfied; 28.1% highly satisfied) and positive overall experience (95.9%) underscore the importance of post-purchase support in sustaining brand loyalty. Future research could expand the sample size and geographical scope to validate these findings at a national level.

7. Key Suggestions

- Market smartphone features — especially battery and camera — prominently to the 20–25 student demographic.
- Focus new launches and promotions in the Rs. 10,000–15,000 price band to capture the majority buyer segment.
- Invest in durability improvements (screen protection, heat management) to address the top reported problems.
- Expand showroom networks and train in-store staff, as 40.5% of buyers prefer purchasing at physical outlets.
- Leverage social media marketing actively, since 58.7% of users spend most smartphone time on social platforms.
- Introduce customer referral incentive programmes to capitalise on the high recommendation rate (64.5%).

- Offer flexible service plan bundles in the Rs. 200–300/month range to align with spending behaviour.

8. References

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