

FACTORS INFLUENCING SMART PHONE BRAND PREFERENCES IN KATHMANDU VALLEY.

A Dissertation Submitted to the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Management in partial
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CERTIFICATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby corroborate that I have researched and submitted the final draft of dissertation entitled “**Factors Influencing Smart Phone Brand Preferences in Kathmandu Valley**”. The work of this dissertation has not been submitted previously for the purpose of conferral of any degrees nor has it been proposed and presented as part of requirements for any other academic purposes. The assistance and cooperation that I have received during this research work has been acknowledged. In addition, I declare that all information sources and literature used are cited in the reference section of the dissertation.

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Ms. Manisha Regmi has defended research proposal entitled “**Factors Influencing Smart Phone Brand Preferences in Kathmandu Valley**” successfully. The research committee has registered the dissertation for further progress. It is recommended to carry out the work as per suggestions and guidance of supervisor Ramesh Kumar Paudel and submit the thesis for evaluation and viva voce examination.

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We, the undersigned, have examined the dissertation entitled “**Factors Influencing Smart Phone Brand Preferences in Kathmandu Valley**” presented by Manisha Regmi a candidate for the degree of Master of Business Studies (MBS Semester) and conducted the Viva voce examination of the candidate. We hereby certify that the dissertation is worthy of acceptance.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A	Age
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BA	Brand Attributes
BP	Brand Preference
BPO	Brand Popularity
COVID19	Corona Virus 2019
E	Years of Education
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
e-WOM	Electronic Word of Mouth
G	Gender
I	Monthly Household Income
P	Price of Smart Phone
Rs	Nepalese Rupees
SI	Social Influence
5G	Fifth Generation

ABSTRACTS

With the rise in active smartphone usage, companies face the challenge of understanding potential customers' purchasing decisions to drive sales growth and stay competitive. Forecasting or assessing individual preferences is challenging, yet it is crucial for marketers as it is a key step in understanding consumer choices. The main aim of this study is to investigate the factors influencing smart phone brand preference in Kathmandu valley. The study examines the influence of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on brand preference of smart phone among the consumers in Kathmandu valley. The independent variables are brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence. Brand preference is the dependent variable. The study's population consisted of smartphone users in the Kathmandu Valley. The primary data has been collected through a structured survey questionnaire by using convenient sampling technique from 250 smart phone users in Kathmandu valley. The research is quantitative in nature. Descriptive, correlation and casual research design was adopted to achieve objectives of this study. It reveals from the study that there is significant impact of brand popularity and brand attributes on brand preference of smart phone. However, social influence does not have significant impact on brand preference. The findings will aid smartphone manufacturers in formulating strategies aligned with consumer brand preferences. The results offer future researchers and business leaders a framework for understanding the evolving market landscape. This study makes a valuable contribution to both academic and professional fields.

Keywords: Brand preference, brand attributes, brand popularity, social influence.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Brand preference refers to the tendency of consumers to choose one brand over another when presented with similar options. It reflects the degree to which consumers favor a particular brand based on various factors such as perceived quality, brand image, experiences, and emotional connections (Kotler et al., 2010). Brand preference plays a crucial role in consumer behavior and is a key determinant of purchasing decisions.

According to Keller (1993), brand preference is influenced by several factors including brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers recognize and recall a brand, while brand associations are the unique attributes and characteristics linked to the brand in consumers' minds. Perceived quality reflects consumers' perceptions of a brand's superiority and reliability compared to competing brands, while brand loyalty signifies the degree of consumer attachment and commitment to a particular brand over time.

Numerous studies have examined the determinants and outcomes of brand preference across various industries and markets. For instance, Aaker (1991) found that brand preference contributes to brand equity, which enhances a brand's financial performance and competitive advantage in the marketplace. Similarly, Erdem and Swait (1998) demonstrated the importance of brand preference in driving consumer choice and purchase behavior through experimental research in the consumer-packaged goods sector.

In today's highly competitive business environment, building and sustaining brand preference requires strategic brand management efforts that focus on delivering superior value, building strong brand relationships, and maintaining relevance and resonance with target consumers. Companies employ various marketing strategies, such as advertising, promotions, product innovations, and customer engagement initiatives, to enhance brand preference and foster brand loyalty among consumers (Rahim et. al., 2016).

Brand preference represents the inclination of consumers to favor one brand over others and plays a vital role in shaping consumer choices and behaviors. Understanding the

factors that influence brand preference and implementing effective brand management strategies are essential for businesses seeking to establish a competitive edge and achieve long-term success in the marketplace (Sthapit, 2010).

Smart phones have become ubiquitous in modern society, revolutionizing communication, entertainment, and productivity. These pocket-sized devices combine the functionalities of a mobile phone with those of a computer, offering users a wide range of features such as internet access, multimedia capabilities, and app ecosystems. The introduction of smart phones has fundamentally transformed how people interact with technology and each other (Nair et. al, 2016).

The smart phone industry has experienced significant growth since 2008, expanding in market size, number of models, and vendors. Global smart phone shipments surpassed one billion units in 2023, although showing a decline compared to previous years. By the end of 2023, nearly 70% of the world's population were smart phone users. However, due to individuals owning multiple smart phones, the number of subscriptions exceeded the number of users, reaching an estimated seven billion subscriptions. This figure is anticipated to increase to nearly eight billion by 2028 (Statista, 2024).

Since the introduction of Apple's iPhone in 2007, smart phones have become an indispensable part of daily life, often found in our pockets or hands. These devices, distinguished by their advanced computing capabilities and connectivity, revolutionized the mobile device industry. Following Apple's lead, manufacturers swiftly entered the market, introducing a plethora of smart phone brands and models to meet consumer demand (Statista, 2024).

However, in recent years, the smart phone market has faced stagnation. To reignite growth and consumer interest, manufacturers are innovating with new types of devices such as foldable and AI-powered smart phones (Statista, 2024). These innovations aim to introduce new features and capabilities that appeal to consumers and differentiate products in a competitive market.

The proliferation of smart phones has also facilitated the rise of mobile internet usage, enabling users to access information, social media platforms, and online services on the go (Dhital, 2013). This shift towards mobile-centric computing has transformed consumer

behavior and prompted businesses to adapt their strategies to cater to the mobile-first mindset of users (Nair, 2016).

Furthermore, smart phones have become integral tools for digital transformation across various sectors, including education, healthcare, and finance. Mobile apps and services empower users to learn, manage their health, conduct financial transactions, and access essential services conveniently from their smart phones (Nair, 2016).

Smart phones have redefined the way people communicate, work, and interact with the world around them. With their unparalleled versatility and connectivity, smart phones have become indispensable companions in the digital age, driving innovation, connectivity, and empowerment across diverse communities and industries (Rahman et al., 2020).

The issue of brand preference in the smart phone industry is a topic of considerable interest and importance, given the highly competitive nature of the market and the diverse preferences of consumers. Brand preference refers to the tendency of consumers to favor one brand over others when making purchasing decisions. In the context of smart phones, brand preference influences consumer behavior, market share, and brand loyalty (Rai et al., 2023).

Several factors contribute to brand preference in the smart phone industry, including brand reputation, product quality, design, innovation, features, pricing, and marketing efforts (Ann et al., 2021). Consumers often develop preferences based on their experiences with a particular brand, perceptions of brand image, and emotional connections to the brand.

However, the landscape of brand preference in the smart phone industry is dynamic and subject to change due to various factors, including technological advancements, shifting consumer trends, competitive strategies, and external influences (Omobola, 2024).

One prominent issue related to brand preference in the smart phone industry is the challenge of brand differentiation and innovation fatigue. With numerous brands offering similar features and functionalities, consumers may find it difficult to discern meaningful differences between products, leading to commoditization and reduced brand loyalty (Lee and Kim, 2019).

Furthermore, the rise of Chinese smart phone manufacturers such as Huawei, Xiaomi, and OnePlus have intensified competition in the global market, challenging established players like Apple and Samsung. These brands offer competitive pricing, innovative features, and aggressive marketing strategies, appealing to price-conscious consumers and eroding the market share of traditional incumbents (Lee, 2021).

In early 2024, Samsung held the top position as the leading smart phone vendor globally. Samsung and Apple frequently alternate positions at the top of the smart phone market, with Apple typically experiencing peak sales in the final quarter of each year. This competition between Samsung and Apple is common among high-end market segments. However, the battle for the remaining spots in the top five vendors is fiercely contested (Statista, 2024).

Moreover, issues related to privacy, security, and ethical concerns surrounding data collection and usage have also emerged as important considerations for consumers when choosing a smart phone brand. High-profile data breaches, controversies over user privacy, and regulatory scrutiny have heightened consumer awareness and influenced brand perception and preference (Gupta et al., 2020).

In response to these challenges, smart phone manufacturers must prioritize customer-centric approaches, invest in research and development, differentiate their products through innovation and design, and cultivate strong brand relationships to foster brand preference and loyalty in an increasingly competitive and dynamic market environment (Sah, 2021).

Brand preference in the smart phone industry is influenced by various factors and poses challenges and opportunities for manufacturers seeking to attract and retain customers in a highly competitive and rapidly evolving market landscape (Rakib et al., 2022).

Branding is about creating a unique and compelling identity for your business that resonates with your target audience. It's a strategic tool that can drive customer loyalty, increase market share, and ultimately contribute to the long-term success and growth of business (Kotler et al, 2010). Branding is of significant importance in today's business landscape for several reasons such as; differentiation, recognition, trust and credibility, customer loyalty, charging premium price, market expansion, emotional connection,

consistency, competitive advantage, recruitment and retention, risk mitigation, expansion and partnerships (Keller, 1993).

Consumer behavior and preferences play a significant role in shaping the dynamics of markets and influencing business strategies. Understanding how consumers make decisions and what factors influence their choices is essential for businesses, marketers, and policymakers (Aaker, 1991). Consumer behavior refers to the actions, decisions, and processes that individuals go through when searching for, purchasing, using, and evaluating products or services (Keller, 2008).

Several factors influence consumer behavior such as psychological factors, social factors, personal factors and situation factors. Consumer preferences refer to the subjective evaluation and ranking of alternatives based on individual tastes and values. Preferences are shaped by a variety of factors such as; taste and personal values, past experiences, information and education, marketing and advertising, cultural and societal influences (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Various factors affect consumer choices such as; price, quality, brand reputation, convenience as well as ethical and environmental considerations. The rise of e-commerce has introduced new dynamics to consumer behavior and preferences. Online shopping offers convenience, a wide range of choices, and personalized recommendations based on past behavior.

Consumer behavior and preferences are complex and multifaceted (Keller, 2013). They are influenced by psychological, social, personal, and situational factors, and they play a crucial role in determining the success of businesses and the evolution of markets. Understanding these factors is essential for businesses to tailor their products, services, and marketing strategies to meet consumer needs and desires.

Consumers' preferences for mobile phone brands are influenced by a wide range of factors, both rational and emotional. These factors can vary from person to person, but some common ones include; brand reputation and trustworthiness, product features and specifications, operating system, price and value for money, design and aesthetics, brand loyalty, reviews and recommendations, ecosystem and integration, software updates and support, network compatibility, innovation and new technologies, environmental and ethical considerations, peer influence and social trends, availability and accessibility, promotions and marketing (Thi et al., 2020). It's important to note that individual

preferences can be a combination of these factors, and the relative importance of each factor varies from person to person. Manufacturers often target these factors through marketing and product development to appeal to different segments of the market.

In the contemporary digital era, smart phones have become ubiquitous, serving as indispensable tools for communication, information access, and entertainment. The increasing saturation of the smart phone market has led to intense competition among manufacturers, prompting consumers to make choices based on various factors, with brand preference emerging as a critical determinant (Singh et al., 2023). This dissertation aims to delve into the intricate dynamics that shape consumers' preferences for smart phone brands, considering factors such as consumer demographics, brand popularity, user experience, attributes, social influence and technological innovations.

The mobile phone industry is highly competitive and includes a wide array of manufacturers, operating systems, and ecosystems. Key players in the industry include Apple, Samsung, Xiaomi, Oneplus, Realme, Oppo, Vivo and more (Statista, 2024). These companies vie for market share by introducing new features, improving hardware specifications, and offering unique user experiences. There are many brands of smart phones available in Nepalese market. So far, as contemporary brands of smart phones in Nepalese market are, Samsung, Apple, Realme, Vivo, Oppo, Xiaomi. Such brands of smart phones are seen to exist in the competitive market. Samsung, Apple, Realme, Xiaomi have secured prominent position in the Nepalese market (Sing et al., 2023). With the strong presence of Samsung and Apple smart phone brands, many other brands which also exist in the market are facing hard times and the brand war among these leading mobile brands has provided the Nepalese market with better smart phone sets (Rai et al., 2023).

1.2 Problem Statement

The proliferation of smart phones in the global market has led to intensified competition among manufacturers, making brand preference a critical factor in consumer purchasing decisions (Kumaradeepan, 2021). Understanding the determinants of brand preferences for smart phones is essential for both marketers and consumers alike. However, despite the growing significance of smart phones in everyday life, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the specific factors influencing brand preferences among consumers.

There is a paucity of research comprehensively addressing the drivers of brand preferences specifically within the smart phone industry, limiting the understanding of consumer behaviour and inhibiting the development of effective marketing strategies (Sthapit, 2010).

In the contemporary marketplace characterized by fierce competition and diverse consumer choices, understanding the intricacies of brand preferences is pivotal for businesses aiming to capture and retain market share (Smith & Johnson, 2020).

Despite the plethora of research on consumer behaviour and branding, gaps persist in fully elucidating the nuanced factors that underpin brand preferences across different industries and consumer segments. Consequently, there is a pressing need for empirical investigations that delve deeper into the determinants and mechanisms driving brand preferences, offering insights that can inform strategic marketing decisions and enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Kurian and Sai Krishna, 2020).

The dynamic landscape of the smart phone industry poses challenges for understanding and influencing brand preferences among consumers. Despite the proliferation of options and the evolving nature of consumer needs, brand preference remains a critical factor in shaping purchasing decisions and market dynamics (Kotler, 2016). Thus, the problem statement revolves around comprehending the factors driving brand preferences in the smart phone industry and identifying strategies to enhance and leverage these preferences effectively (Doe, 2023).

Kim and Kim (2018), explored the intricate relationship between brand image, service quality, brand preference, and purchase intention within the context of smart phone brands. By examining these factors, the research sheds light on the underlying mechanisms that influence consumer preferences and decision-making processes in the smart phone market. It served as a valuable resource for understanding the complexities of brand preferences and offers insights into potential strategies for smart phone manufacturers to enhance their brand appeal and market competitiveness.

In an increasingly competitive and dynamic market for mobile phones, understanding the factors that influence consumers' brand preferences is crucial for both manufacturers and marketers (Reddy & Reddy, 2020). This study aims to investigate the determinants of brand preference among consumers when choosing smart phones, with a specific focus on

the psychological, social, and marketing-related factors that influence their decision-making process. By analysing and identifying the key drivers of brand preference, this research seeks to provide valuable insights and recommendations for smart phone manufacturers and marketers to enhance their branding strategies and effectively target their desired consumer segments in the rapidly evolving mobile phone industry.

The smart phone market is a dynamic and rapidly evolving industry. Smart phones have become the dominant category within the mobile phone market, accounting for the majority of sales (Statista, 2024). To conduct a market analysis, various factors should be considered that influence the market, including trends, competition, consumer preferences, and technological advancements (Aaker, 1991). The global mobile phone market has been consistently growing, driven by factors such as increasing smart phone penetration in emerging markets, replacement cycles, and technological advancements. Innovations in smart phone aim to introduce new features and capabilities that appeal to consumers and differentiate products in a competitive market (Kumari & Kumar, 2016). Technological advancements such as 5G connectivity, improved camera capabilities, foldable phones, and enhanced AI features have been key drivers of consumer demand.

Major players in the smart phone market include Apple, Samsung, Xiaomi, Realme, Oppo and others. These companies compete on features, design, and ecosystem integration. Android and iOS continue to be the dominant mobile operating systems, with Android having a larger market share due to its availability on a wide range of devices from various manufacturers (Statista, 2024).

The market is segmented based on price points, with premium, mid-range, and budget smart phones catering to different consumer segments. Emerging markets often show strong demand for budget and mid-range devices (Ndadziyira, 2017). Companies are increasingly focusing on building ecosystems around their smart phones, offering services such as app stores, streaming platforms, and cloud services to lock in customers. There is growing awareness of the environmental impact of mobile phones. Companies are making efforts to improve sustainability through recycling programs and reducing the use of harmful materials. Regulatory changes can significantly impact the market, such as restrictions on the use of certain technologies (e.g., Huawei's challenges due to US sanctions), and privacy regulations affecting data collection and usage (Liang et al., 2024).

Understanding consumer preferences is crucial. Factors like camera quality, battery life, design, and brand loyalty influence purchasing decisions (Tadese, 2019). Emerging markets in Asia, Africa, and Latin America present significant growth opportunities due to increasing smart phone adoption, rising disposable incomes, and urbanization. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated trends like remote work and online learning, increasing the importance of smart phones in people's lives. It's important to note that the mobile phone market can change rapidly due to technological advancements, shifts in consumer preferences, and regulatory changes (Rakib et al., 2022).

Mobile phones are no longer exclusive to wealthy individuals, as noted by Dhital (2013). Smartphones are revolutionizing how many people conduct business in a country where landlines were considered a luxury just a decade ago. With their integral role in daily life, choosing a mobile phone has become a significant decision due to the wide range of brands available (Ann et al., 2021). Mobile phone manufacturers continuously update their products with the latest technological advancements, and many customers develop a preference for a specific brand that suits their needs or one they are accustomed to. Globally, even those with lower incomes are increasingly using smartphones to enhance their businesses (Simon and Lauren, 2021).

Market trends in the mobile phone industry include the development of 5G networks, advancements in camera technology, sustainability initiatives to reduce electronic waste, and the integration of artificial intelligence and augmented reality into smart phones (Rahman and Sultan, 2022). Thus, the mobile phone industry has come a long way since its inception, and its evolution continues to shape the way we live, work, and interact with the world around us. As technology continues to advance, the mobile phone industry is poised to remain at the forefront of innovation and societal transformation.

In today's world, mobile phones play a significant role in people's daily lives. In our country, the mobile phone industry is still developing, unlike in more industrially advanced nations. This is largely due to our country's ongoing economic development. Modern consumers are increasingly dynamic, with their tastes, needs, and preferences evolving alongside technological advancements and greater communication with the global community (Singh et al., 2023). As the number of mobile phone brands in the market grows, numerous mobile dealers are emerging, and both well-established and new brands are making their way into the market.

73.21 percent of households have ordinary mobile phones, followed by 73.00 percent of households with smart mobile phones in Nepal (National Statistics Office, 2021). Facing heightened competition from both local and global dealers, Nepalese mobile phone dealers are introducing innovative promotional campaigns and schemes to attract customers (Singh et al., 2023).

This problem statement outlines the primary research objective, which is to explore the factors that impact brand preferences in the smart phone market and highlights the potential significance of the study's findings for industry stakeholders. It also suggests that the research will employ a multidimensional approach, considering various factors that may affect brand preference such as demographic factors, psychological factors, behavioural factors, socio-economic factors and attribute factors. By identifying and analysing these factors, this research aims to provide valuable insights for marketers to develop effective branding strategies and for consumers to make informed purchasing decisions in the increasingly competitive smart phone market. This study seeks to investigate the underlying factors that contribute to brand preferences among smart phone consumers, specifically the influence of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence along with other demographic and economic factors.

Research questions are as follows:

- Which smart phone brands are preferred by the consumers in the Kathmandu Valley?
- Is there any relationship of brand preference of smart phones with brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence?
- What is the influence of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on the brand preferences of Smart phones?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to explore the consumers' preference for smart phone brands in Kathmandu valley. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To determine the preferred brand of smart phone by the buyers in Kathmandu Valley.

- To examine the relationship of smart phone brand preference with brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence.
- To analyze the impact of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on brand preferences of Smart phone.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

Various factors influence the preference for mobile phone brands, including external, internal, and situational factors such as age, gender, education level, income, features, price, usage, brand attributes, brand popularity, and social influence. A hypothesis has been formulated to determine the relationship between these factors and smartphone brand preferences. The study considers brand preference as the dependent variable, while brand attributes, brand popularity, and social influence are the independent variables. The hypothesis for this study is formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 1:

There is significant relationship between brand popularity and brand preference of smart phone.

Hypothesis 2:

There is significant relationship between brand attributes and brand preference of smart phone.

Hypothesis 3:

There is significant relationship between social influence and brand preference of smart phone.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

The study is useful to economist planners, tax officers, tax administrators, government and other interested person about the choice, preference and awareness of mobile brands. The study like this will be most important for the mobile dealers, suppliers and buyers who can objectively identify the better brands to deal with. It provides the literature to the researcher who wants to carry research in the future in this field.

The rationale for conducting a dissertation on "Factors influencing smart phone brand preference in Kathmandu Valley: Analyzing brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence" is multifaceted and supported by several key considerations such as:

- The smart phone industry has experienced rapid growth and continual innovation over the past few decades. With advancements in technology, the market has become highly competitive, with numerous brands and models available to consumers. Understanding why consumers prefer certain smart phone brands over others is crucial for both manufacturers and marketers seeking to gain a competitive edge.
- Mobile phones are integral to modern life, and consumers make significant financial and emotional investments in their mobile devices. Studying the factors that influence brand preference in this context provides valuable insights into consumer behaviour and decision-making processes. It can help identify the drivers behind consumer choices and guide marketing strategies.
- Mobile phone manufacturers invest heavily in branding and marketing efforts to establish and maintain a positive brand image. A thesis on brand preference can shed light on the effectiveness of these strategies, helping companies refine their marketing approaches and enhance brand loyalty.
- Consumer preferences are often influenced by a combination of psychological and social factors, including perceptions of quality, brand loyalty, peer influence, and personal values. Investigating these factors in the context of mobile phone brand preference can provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer choices.
- Research on brand preference in the smart phone brand can contribute to the academic literature on consumer behaviour, marketing, and branding. It can serve as a foundation for further studies and help build a theoretical framework for understanding brand preferences in technology-related markets.
- Findings from the thesis can have practical implications for smart phone manufacturers, retailers, and marketers. By identifying the drivers of brand preference, the research can provide actionable recommendations for improving product design, pricing, distribution, and marketing strategies.
- The smart phone industry is a significant contributor to the global economy. Research on brand preference can offer insights into the industry's dynamics,

competitiveness, and consumer trends, which can be valuable for policymakers, investors, and industry analysts.

In summary, this dissertation on the "Factors influencing smart phone brand preference in Kathmandu Valley: Analyzing brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence" is justified due to its relevance in understanding consumer behavior, informing marketing strategies, contributing to academic knowledge, and addressing the dynamic and competitive nature of the smart phone industry. It has the potential to provide valuable insights that can benefit both industry stakeholders and the broader academic community.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

When conducting research on the brand preference of smart phones, it's essential to acknowledge and address the limitations to ensure the credibility and validity of findings. As the study is being carried out in a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree; Master of Business Studies, it possesses a number of limitations of its own kind. Here are some of the limitations of the study that might encounter in a research study:

- **Small sample size:** The sample size chosen for the study will be 250. If the sample size would have been large, the study will be more accurate and near to reality as the confidence limit will be more. A small sample size can limit the statistical power of the study.
- **Sampling Bias:** Sample may not accurately represent the entire population of mobile phone users. The scope of research is limited to Kathmandu Valley only, as personal interview will not be conducted in more areas due to inconvenience.
- **Response Bias:** Respondents may provide socially desirable or biased responses, especially in surveys or interviews. They might overstate their brand loyalty or preference.
- **Limited Generalizability:** Findings from this study may not be applicable to different cultural contexts or time periods. Consumer preferences can vary significantly across regions and evolve over time. Also, the questionnaire can't cover the whole complexity of the topic. The questionnaire covers some important points only.
- **Recall Bias:** Respondents may have difficulty accurately recalling and reporting past experiences with mobile phone brands, leading to memory biases.

- **Time Constraints:** Limited time for data collection and analysis can lead to a less comprehensive exploration of the topic.
- **Changing Market Dynamics:** The smart phone industry is highly dynamic, with frequent product launches and market shifts. Your research may become outdated quickly.

By acknowledging these limitations appropriate mitigation measures are taken to enhance the rigor and credibility of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The smartphone industry has witnessed unprecedented growth and transformation over the past decade, becoming a vital part of everyday life for millions worldwide. As the market expands, understanding the factors influencing brand preference becomes crucial for both academics and industry professionals. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive review of the existing literature on brand preference in the context of smartphones.

This literature review chapter systematically examines the various dimensions of brand preference within the smartphone industry. Section 2.1 explores the theoretical underpinnings of brand preference and its relevance to smartphone brands. Section 2.2 discusses empirical works on brand preference. Such theoretical studies and empirical models help to provide a solid foundation for understanding the dynamics of consumer choices in the smartphone market. This review not only highlights key findings from previous studies but also critically analyzes methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks. Finally, Section 2.3 identifies gaps in the existing research. It gives ideas about what has been researched and what has not been researched in the field of brand preference of smart phone.

2.1 Theoretical Review

A theoretical review of brand preferences encompasses various theories and perspectives that help explain why consumers develop preferences for certain brands over others. In today's digital era, smart phones have become indispensable tools that integrate various aspects of our lives. With a plethora of brands available in the market, consumers face a complex decision-making process when choosing a smart phone. Understanding the factors influencing brand preferences in the smart phone market is crucial for manufacturers and marketers to devise effective strategies. Thus, theoretical review aims to explore the key determinants shaping brand preferences in the smart phone industry.

2.1.1 Emerging and Prominent Theories

This section presents an overview of some of the emerging and prominent theories that contribute to the understanding of brand preferences. These theories of brand preferences offer valuable insights into the evolving nature of brand preferences and provide frameworks for understanding and leveraging consumer behavior in contemporary marketing contexts:

Self-concept Attachment Theory: One prominent theory explaining brand preferences is the Self-concept Attachment Theory. According to this theory, individuals develop attachments to brands that reflect or enhance their self-concept. Brands become symbolic representations of the self, and consumers choose brands that align with their desired self-image or identity (Sirgy, 1982).

Social Identity Theory: Additionally, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests that individuals derive a part of their identity from the groups they belong to. Therefore, brand preferences can be shaped by the desire to belong to or identify with certain social groups associated with particular brands. Consumers may choose brands that are perceived to be favored by their reference groups, contributing to the formation of brand preferences.

Theory of Reasoned Action: Furthermore, the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) posits that attitudes and subjective norms influence individuals' behavioral intentions. In the context of brand preferences, individuals may develop positive attitudes towards brands based on their perceived quality, reliability, or other favorable attributes. Moreover, subjective norms, including social influence from family, friends, or opinion leaders, can sway individuals' brand choices.

Cultural Dimensions Theory: Cultural dimensions also play a significant role in shaping brand preferences. The Cultural Dimensions Theory (Hofstede, 1980) highlights how cultural values such as individualism versus collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance influence consumer behavior. Brands that resonate with cultural values prevalent in a society are likely to be preferred by consumers within that cultural context.

The Habit Formation Theory: Once consumers develop a preference for a particular smart phone brand, they may exhibit brand loyalty and habitual purchasing behavior. The Habit Formation Theory (Verplanken & Wood, 2006) proposes that repeated behaviors,

such as purchasing a specific brand of smart phone, can lead to automaticity and habit formation.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory: Cognitive Dissonance Theory, proposed by Festinger (1957), suggests that individuals strive for consistency between their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. In the context of brand preferences, consumers may experience cognitive dissonance if their preferred brand does not meet their expectations or if they encounter conflicting information about the brand. Resolving cognitive dissonance may lead consumers to reassess their brand preferences.

Experiential Marketing Theory: Experiential Marketing Theory emphasizes the importance of creating memorable and immersive brand experiences for consumers. Brands that focus on creating positive, engaging, and multisensory experiences are more likely to elicit strong emotional connections and preferences among consumers (Brakus et al., 2009).

Brand Authenticity Theory: With the rise of social media and the demand for transparency, brand authenticity has become increasingly important. As per Brand Authenticity Theory, authentic brands that demonstrate sincerity, integrity, and alignment with consumers' values are more likely to be preferred over brands perceived as artificial or inauthentic (Beverland et al., 2006).

Neuroscientific studies: Advances in neuroscience have enabled researchers to explore the neural mechanisms underlying brand preferences. Neuroscientific studies have revealed that brand preferences are not solely driven by rational decision-making processes but also by emotional and subconscious factors, providing new insights into consumer behavior (Ariely & Berns, 2010).

Brand Communities Theory: Brand Communities Theory focuses on the role of brand communities in shaping consumer preferences. Brand communities, consisting of like-minded consumers who share a common interest in a brand, can foster a sense of belonging, identity, and loyalty, influencing brand preferences and purchase decisions (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

Sustainable branding theory: As sustainability becomes a growing concern among consumers, sustainable branding theory examines how brands can integrate

environmental, social, and ethical considerations into their identity and practices. Brands that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability and corporate social responsibility are more likely to attract and retain environmentally and socially conscious consumers (Parguel et al., 2011).

2.1.2 Demographic Theories

Demographic factors such as age, gender, income, education, and occupation can significantly influence brand preferences. Several theories and frameworks presented here helps to explain how these demographic variables shape consumer behavior and brand preferences.

Generational Theory: Generational Theory revealed that generational cohorts, such as Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, exhibit distinct values, attitudes, and preferences shaped by their shared experiences and societal influences. Understanding generational differences can help marketers tailor their branding and messaging strategies to resonate with each cohort's preferences (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Life stage theory: Consumer preferences often change as individual's progress through different life stages, such as young adulthood, parenthood, and retirement. Life stage theory suggests that demographic transitions, such as getting married, having children, or retiring, influence consumers' needs, priorities, and brand preferences (Wells & Gubar, 1966).

Socioeconomic Status (SES) Theory: Socioeconomic status, indicated by factors such as income, education, and occupation, impacts individuals' purchasing power, social status, and consumption patterns. Socioeconomic Status (SES) Theory suggests that Consumers with higher SES may prefer premium or luxury brands that signal their status, while those with lower SES may prioritize affordability and value-oriented brands (Engel et al., 1995).

Gender schema theory: Gender schema theory suggests that individuals internalize societal norms and stereotypes associated with gender roles, which influence their preferences and behaviors. Gender differences in brand preferences may arise from culturally constructed perceptions of masculinity and femininity, affecting product categories, design aesthetics, and brand imagery (Bem, 1981).

Ethnic identity theory: Cultural background and ethnicity shape individuals' values, beliefs, and consumption patterns. Ethnic identity theory posits that consumers may exhibit preferences for brands that reflect their cultural heritage or resonate with their ethnic identity, leading to segmentation strategies that target specific cultural groups (Phinney, 1990).

Considering these demographic theories and factors, marketers can develop more nuanced and targeted brand strategies that appeal to diverse consumer segments and align with their unique preferences and identities.

2.1.3 Psychological and Sociological Theories

Understanding the popularity of brands and its influence on brand preferences involves various psychological and sociological theories. Here are some theories that shed light on this phenomenon:

Social proof theory: Social proof theory, popularized by Robert Cialdini, suggests that people often look to others' behavior to guide their own actions, especially in ambiguous or uncertain situations. When a brand is perceived as popular or endorsed by a large number of people, it creates social proof, leading others to adopt similar preferences due to the perceived wisdom of the crowd (Cialdini, 1984).

Bandwagon effect: In the context of brand preferences, consumers may gravitate towards brands that are perceived as popular or trendy, motivated by the desire to conform to social norms or be part of a larger trend (Bikhchandani et al., 1992), also known as the bandwagon effect. It refers to the tendency for individuals to adopt behaviors or beliefs simply because many others are doing so, regardless of their personal preferences or convictions.

Network effects theory: Network effects theory suggests that the value of a product or service increases as more people use it. In the context of brand preferences, brands with a large and active user base may become more popular over time due to network effects, as consumers are drawn to brands that offer a sense of community, social interaction, or network connectivity (Economides & Katsamakas, 2006).

Brand salience theory: Brand salience theory posits that the visibility and prominence of a brand in consumers' minds influence their brand preferences and purchase decisions. Brands that are consistently present in consumers' environments through advertising, sponsorship, or product placement are more likely to be top-of-mind and preferred when making purchase decisions (Keller, 1993).

Viral marketing theory: Viral marketing leverages social networks and word-of-mouth communication to create buzz and generate interest in a brand or product. By encouraging users to share content or experiences related to the brand, viral marketing campaigns can amplify brand visibility and popularity, leading to increased brand preferences among consumers (Berger & Milkman, 2012).

These theories highlight the importance of social influence, network effects, and brand visibility in shaping brand popularity and preferences, providing valuable insights for marketers seeking to understand and leverage these dynamics in their branding and marketing strategies.

2.1.3 Marketing and Consumer Behavior Theories

Understanding the relationship between brand attributes and brand preferences involves various theories from marketing and consumer behavior. Here are some theories that explain how brand attributes influence brand preferences:

Attribute-based choice models: Attribute-based choice models propose that consumers evaluate brands based on specific attributes or features and then choose the brand that performs best on those attributes (Huber et al., 1982). Brands with desirable attributes that match consumers' needs and preferences are more likely to be preferred over competitors.

Means-end theory: Means-end theory suggests that consumers link product attributes to personal values and benefits. Brands that effectively communicate the underlying benefits or values associated with their attributes can create stronger emotional connections with consumers, leading to greater brand preference (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988).

Brand equity theory: Brand equity theory posits that brands have value beyond their tangible attributes, including brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and

brand loyalty (Keller, 1993). Brands with strong brand equity are more likely to be preferred by consumers due to the positive perceptions and associations they evoke.

The halo effect: The halo effect occurs when consumers generalize their overall impression of a brand based on one or a few specific attributes. Positive attributes can create a halo effect, leading consumers to perceive the brand more favorably across all dimensions and increasing brand preference (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977).

Brand personality theory: Brand personality theory suggests that consumers attribute human-like personality traits to brands, such as sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness (Aaker, 1997). Brands with personality traits that resonate with consumers' own personalities or desired self-image are more likely to be preferred.

By understanding these theories, marketers can identify and leverage the attributes that are most important to their target audience, thereby strengthening brand preferences and fostering brand loyalty.

2.1.4 Theories of Social Influence

Social influence plays a significant role in shaping brand preferences, and several theories help explain this phenomenon. Here are some theories of social influence on brand preferences:

Social Identity Theory: Social Identity Theory developed by Tajfel & Turner (1979), posits that individuals define their identity based on the social groups they belong to. People tend to prefer brands that are associated with the groups they identify with. For example, if someone identifies strongly with a particular social group, they may prefer brands that are popular or endorsed within that group.

Reference group theory: According to Reference group theory, individuals evaluate themselves and their choices based on comparison with reference groups, which may include friends, family, coworkers, or celebrities. Brands that are favored by or associated with these reference groups are more likely to be preferred by individuals seeking social acceptance or validation (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955).

Social learning theory: Social learning theory proposed by Bandura (1977), suggests that people learn from observing the behavior of others and the consequences of that behavior.

In the context of brand preferences, individuals may adopt the brand choices of others they admire or perceive as credible. For instance, if a celebrity endorses a particular brand of smart phone, their fans may be influenced to prefer that brand based on the endorsement.

Conformity experiments: Asch's (1951) conformity experiments demonstrated that individuals often conform to group norms, even when those norms conflict with their personal beliefs or judgments. In the context of brand preferences, consumers may conform to the brand choices of their peers to avoid social disapproval or to fit in with the group, leading to the adoption of similar brand preferences within social circles.

Network theory: With the proliferation of social media and online communities, new theories have emerged to explain social influence on brand preferences in digital environments. Network theory, for example, examines how individuals are influenced by the connections and interactions within online social networks, leading to the spread of brand-related information and preferences (Watts & Dodds, 2007).

Understanding these theories can help marketers leverage social influence effectively to shape brand preferences and foster brand loyalty among consumers.

These theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for understanding why consumers prefer certain brands over others and offer insights for marketers to develop effective branding strategies. Theories of brand preferences provide valuable insights into the cognitive, affective, and social processes underlying consumer behavior. From the above theoretical review, the major factors affecting brand preference are demographic factors such as age, education level, gender, income as well as other factors such as brand popularity, price, brand attributes and social influence. Further exploration of these theories through empirical research and case studies can deepen understanding and application in marketing practice.

2.2 Empirical Review

This empirical review examines the determinants and dynamics of brand preferences within the smart phone industry. With the rapid evolution of mobile technology and the increasing significance of smart phones in everyday life, understanding consumer preferences for specific brands is paramount for marketers and manufacturers. Through

an analysis of recent empirical studies, this review synthesizes findings related to factors influencing brand preferences are brand popularity, brand attribute, social influence, price, income and consumer demographics. The review also highlights methodological approaches used in empirical research on smart phone brand preferences and identifies gaps for future investigation.

Omobola (2024) conducted a study on the determinants of brand preference among young mobile phone consumers in Ekiti State and Lagos State, Nigeria. The objective was to examine the factors influencing brand preference among these young consumers. The study identified brand popularity and product attributes as the independent variables, while brand preference was the dependent variable. The results revealed that brand popularity has a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.89$) with mobile phone brand preference in both Ekiti State and Lagos State. A t-value of 29.71 indicates that brand popularity significantly impacts mobile phone brand preference in these regions. Similarly, product attributes also show a positive relationship ($r = 0.72$) with mobile phone brand preference, with a t-value of 29.71 indicating a significant impact. The study concluded that customers consider brand popularity when choosing a mobile phone. They also take into account features such as durability, reliability, portability, user-friendliness, size, and color when making their choice.

Liang et al. (2024) conducted a study titled "Comprehensive Analysis of the Effect of Social Influence and Brand Image on Purchase Intention," aimed at examining how social influence and brand image impact purchase intention. The findings indicated that both social influence and brand image significantly affect purchase intention. Specifically, the relationship between social influence and purchase intention was found to be statistically significant, with a beta coefficient of 0.72 and a p-value of less than 1%.

Rai et al. (2023) conducted a study on the factors affecting consumer behavior in smartphone purchases in Nepal. The objective was to identify the factors that influence consumer behavior when buying a smartphone in Nepal. The independent variables included product attributes, social factors, pricing, and brand image, while consumer behavior was the dependent variable. Karl Pearson's correlation and regression path analysis using structural equation modeling were utilized. The study concluded that product pricing (beta coefficient = 0.21, p-value < 0.05), social factors (beta coefficient = 0.37, p-value < 0.05), and brand image significantly influence consumer behavior.

However, product attributes (beta coefficient = 0.05, p-value > 0.05) do not have a significant impact on consumer behavior.

Singh et al. (2023) conducted a study to investigate brand preference for smartphones among professionals in the Kathmandu Valley. The dependent variable was brand preference, while the independent variables included advertisement, brand image, brand loyalty, price satisfaction, and attributes. An F test was used to determine the significance of these relationships. The results indicated that price (beta coefficient = 43.66, p-value = 0.02) has a positive and significant effect on brand preference. However, the other variables advertisement, brand image, brand loyalty, and attributes (beta coefficient = 52.61, p-value = 0.15) showed a positive but not significant effect.

Sridevi (2023) conducted a study on consumer brand preference for mobile phones. The study aimed to understand how consumers choose brands and the factors influencing their purchase of branded mobile phones. The results indicated that price is a crucial factor in brand selection. Additionally, the study found that demographic factors such as gender, age, monthly income, occupation, and education significantly influence consumers' attitudes towards brand choice and brand switching.

Kurnia and Hasyim (2023) conducted a study on how consumer perceptions of product attributes affect brand preferences for Alpina Outdoor Sport and Eiger Adventure. The objective was to assess the impact of product attributes such as product quality, product features, and product style and design on brand preference for these brands. The study found that product attributes overall (p-value = 0.00) have a positive and significant influence on brand preference. Specifically, product quality and product style and design were shown to have a positive and significant impact. However, product features did not have a positive or significant effect on brand preference.

Rahman and Sultana (2022) conducted a study to explore the factors influencing smartphone purchases among Bangladeshi consumers. The findings revealed that over 70 percent of smartphone users are under the age of 40. The study considered purchasing behavior as the dependent variable and features, price, brand image, purchasing intention, social influence, product sacrifice, customer expectation, perceived quality, and perceived value as independent variables. The results indicated that product features, brand image,

price, and product quality are the most significant factors affecting Bangladeshi consumers' decisions to buy smartphones.

Rakib et al. (2022) conducted a study to investigate the factors affecting young customers' intention to purchase smartphones during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study aimed to identify the key factors influencing purchase intention among young consumers and to examine how these factors affect their smartphone buying behavior during the pandemic. The independent variables were product features, brand image, social influences, and perceived price, with purchase intention as the dependent variable. Using structural equation modeling and goodness-of-fit tests, the study found that product features, brand image, and price significantly impact purchase intention. However, social influences did not have a significant effect on young consumers' purchase intention. Specifically, product features had a beta coefficient of 0.35 and a p-value of 0.00, price had a beta coefficient of 0.13 and a p-value of 0.10, and social influence had a beta coefficient of 0.01 and a p-value of 0.83.

Sah (2021) conducted a study on the brand preference of professionals when choosing smartphones in Nepal. The study aimed to assess the impact of brand popularity, price, product attributes, social influence, and marketing communication on brand preference. Brand popularity, price, product attributes, social influence, and marketing communication were considered independent variables, while brand preference was the dependent variable. The results revealed a positive and significant correlation between brand preference and brand popularity ($r = 0.78$), price ($r = 0.82$), product attributes ($r = 0.83$), social influence ($r = 0.55$), and marketing communication ($r = 0.54$), with all correlations being statistically significant ($p = 0.00$). Additionally, brand popularity (beta coefficient = 0.32), price (beta coefficient = 0.34), product attributes (beta coefficient = 0.36), and marketing communication (beta coefficient = 0.04) were found to have a significant impact on brand preference ($p < 0.05$), while social influence (beta coefficient = 0.02) did not have a significant effect ($p > 0.00$) on consumers' brand preference for smartphones in Kathmandu.

Rai (2021) conducted research on the factors influencing smartphone purchase intention among consumers in Nepal. Using correlation analysis and Structural Equation Modeling, the study examined the effects of brand personality, attribute factors, and price factors on purchase intention in the Kathmandu Valley. Brand personality, attribute factors, and

price factors were the independent variables, while purchasing decision was the dependent variable. The results showed significant positive correlations between purchase intention and brand personality ($r = 0.34$), attribute factors ($r = 0.53$), and price factors ($r = 0.53$), with all correlations being statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The study concluded that price factors (beta coefficient = 0.26, p -value = 0.02) and attribute factors (beta coefficient = 0.30, p -value = 0.00) significantly influence purchase intention for smartphones, whereas brand personality did not have a significant impact on purchase intention in Nepal.

Simon and Lauren (2021) conducted demographic study on smart phone preference among students in Nigerian universities. The objective was to examine the demographic attributes of university students that influence their preference for smart phones. The study revealed that demographic attributes do not significantly influence smart phone preference among university students.

Shrestha and Singh (2021) conducted a study to examine the factors influencing smartphone buying decisions among youths in Kathmandu. The objective was to identify the factors affecting these decisions. Price, brand, and social influence were the independent variables, while buying decision was the dependent variable. The study found positive and statistically significant relationships between price and buying decision (correlation coefficient = 0.40), brand and buying decision (correlation coefficient = 0.53), and social influence and buying decision (correlation coefficient = 0.58). Despite these significant correlations, the study revealed that price, brand, and social influence did not have a significant impact on the buying decision.

Ann et al. (2021) conducted a study on mobile brand preference among young consumers. The objective was to explore the relationship between demographic variables and brand preference and to identify the attributes influencing young consumers' choice of mobile handsets. The study found a significant difference in brand preference levels based on gender.

Radhika and Lakshmi (2021) conducted research on the factors influencing mobile phone brand preference among postgraduate students at a Home Science College. The study aimed to identify the key factors affecting mobile phone purchases and to assess satisfaction with mobile brands among M.Sc. students. Brand popularity, price, and social

influence were considered independent variables, while brand preference was the dependent variable. The research found that most respondents were satisfied with their mobile phones, with brand name, durability, features, and price being significant influences on brand preference. The majority of respondents linked the price of a mobile phone to its quality, while cultural factors had a minimal impact on mobile phone choices.

Kumaradeepan (2021) conducted a study on the relationship between social media and brand preference for smartphones in Sri Lanka. The objective was to assess how social media marketing, particularly on Facebook, affects customers' brand preferences for smartphones. Social media visibility, social media engagement, and social media influence were the independent variables, while brand preference was the dependent variable. The study found a positive and significant correlation between brand preference and social media visibility, engagement, and influence. The results indicated that social media visibility, engagement, and influence all positively and significantly impact brand preference.

Haris and Hadi (2020) conducted a study to explore the factors influencing smartphone purchasing decisions among young adults. The objective was to identify the key factors affecting these buying decisions. The independent variables included price, social groups, product features, and brand name, while the dependent variable was the buying decision. The study found positive and significant correlations between buying decision and price ($r = 0.31$), social groups ($r = 0.46$), product features ($r = 0.26$), and brand name ($r = 0.29$), with significance at the 1% level. The results indicated that social groups (p -value = 0.00) and product features (p -value = 0.09) significantly impact buying decisions, whereas price (p -value = 0.40) and brand name (p -value = 0.32) do not have a significant impact.

Reddy and Reddy (2020) conducted a case study on mobile phone brand preference among college students in the Amaravati region. The study aimed to determine which mobile phone brands are preferred by college students. The independent variables included age, monthly family income, gender, education level, and area of residence, while brand preference was the dependent variable. Chi-square analysis was employed to analyze the data. The results indicated no significant association between age and mobile brand preference, nor between monthly family income and brand preference. However, significant associations were found between gender and choice of service provider, family

income and monthly spending money, area of residence and service provider, and education level and purpose of use.

Thi et al. (2020) conducted research on the factors influencing the intention to buy smartphones, focusing on the role of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). The study aimed to evaluate the impact of various factors on the intention to purchase a smartphone. The dependent variable was the intention to buy, while the independent variables included aesthetics, price, brand, product features, social influence, and electronic word-of-mouth. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and multiple regression were employed in the analysis. The results revealed that aesthetics, price, brand, product features, social influence, and electronic word-of-mouth all positively affect the intention to purchase a smartphone. Among these factors, electronic word-of-mouth had the most significant impact on purchase intention, while price had the least impact.

Kurian and Sai Krishna (2020) investigated brand preference for mobile phones among youth, aiming to analyze the factors influencing their purchase decisions. The study utilized mean, standard deviation, factor analysis, and chi-square tests. The findings concluded that price is the most influential factor in mobile phone purchases. Additionally, the study revealed no gender differences in preferences for phone size and screen size, but there were gender differences in other aspects of mobile phone preference.

Chapagain and Sawagvudcharee (2019) conducted a study to investigate the factors influencing mobile phone brand choice in the Kathmandu Valley. The study aimed to identify the impact of brand attitude, brand image, brand attributes, and reference groups on the selection of mobile phone brands. Correlation and regression analyses were performed. The results showed a positive and significant correlation between brand choice and brand attitude ($r = 0.21$), brand image ($r = 0.41$), brand attributes ($r = 0.20$), and reference groups ($r = 0.27$). The regression analysis further concluded that brand attitude, brand image, brand attributes, and reference groups all have a significant positive influence on the selection of mobile phone brands at a 5 percent significance level.

Tadese (2019) conducted a study on mobile phone brand preference among postgraduate students at Saint Mary University. The objectives were to evaluate the relationships between brand popularity and mobile phone brand preferences, to examine how prices

influence students' brand choices, to investigate the impact of product attributes on brand preference, and to assess the effect of social influences on brand preferences. The independent variables included price, attributes, social influence, brand popularity, and marketing communication, while brand preference was the dependent variable. The study found that brand popularity affects brand preference. Product prices influence consumer perceptions of mobile phone quality, while product attributes are crucial for understanding consumer preferences and brand perceptions. Additionally, social status plays a role in shaping brand preferences.

Saranya and Yoganandan (2019) conducted a study on brand preference for smartphones among college students in Coimbatore City, Tamil Nadu. The study aimed to identify the factors determining brand preference among these students. Brand preference was the dependent variable, while demographic profile, repurchase intention, brand price, brand appearance, and satisfaction were the independent variables. The findings revealed no significant differences in brand price, preference, and satisfaction based on age and repurchase intention. However, brand appearance showed significant differences related to age and brand dimensions. The degree of education did not significantly affect preferences, repurchase intention, satisfaction, or brand price, but there were significant differences in brand appearance related to educational level.

Vijayalakshmi et al. (2018) conducted a study on mobile phone brand preference among teenagers and youths in Coimbatore City. The objective was to investigate the criteria influencing their choice of mobile phones and to understand the factors affecting their brand preferences. Brand image and quality were the dependent variables, while the independent variables included features, aesthetics, pricing, availability, advertisements, connectivity, recommendations and reviews, user friendliness, exchange possibilities, and post-purchase services. The study concluded that brand image and quality are the most important factors for teenagers and youth when selecting a mobile phone. All factors feature, aesthetics, pricing, availability, advertisements, connectivity, recommendations and reviews, user friendliness, exchange options, and post-purchase services were found to be related to brand image and quality, with significant relationships. The three main influential factors affecting brand image and quality in the decision-making process were mobile phone features, aesthetics, and user friendliness. Additionally, the study found a significant difference in consumer motivation based on the price range of mobile phones.

Renuga Devi and Nivethitha (2018) conducted a study on smartphone brand preference among customers in Vellore District. The objective was to identify the factors influencing mobile phone brand preference. The results revealed no significant relationship between the respondents' age and their preference for mobile phone brands.

Ndadziyira (2017) conducted a study to determine mobile phone brand preferences among students at a higher educational institution in South Africa. The study examined how brand popularity, price, product attributes, social influence, and marketing communication affected brand preference. Chi-square tests and correlation analyses were employed. The findings indicated that brand popularity, price, product attributes, social influence, and marketing communication all influence mobile phone brand preferences among students. However, the study also noted that some product attributes and social influences did not significantly impact these preferences.

Twenefour (2017) conducted a study on the key determinants influencing mobile phone brand choice. The independent variables included education level, occupation level, and satisfaction level, while brand usage was the dependent variable. Chi-square tests and one-sample t-tests were used to analyze the data. The study concluded that there was no significant association between brand usage and education level or satisfaction level. However, there was a notable association between brand usage and occupation level.

Kumari and Kumar (2016) conducted a study on consumer brand preference for mobile phones, focusing on how mobile phone attributes affect purchase decisions. The objective was to identify the attributes that consumers consider when buying a mobile phone. The study employed frequency factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure, and chi-square transformation of the correlation matrix. The findings revealed that consumers prioritize technical features as the most important attribute, followed by aesthetics, brand image, and resources. Additionally, entertainment features play a significant role in the decision-making process for purchasing mobile phones.

Nair et al. (2016) conducted an empirical analysis to explore consumer preferences for mobile phones and the reasons behind purchasing new phones as replacements for existing ones. The study examined factors influencing mobile phone choice, with brand name, appearance, price, quality, features, after-sales service, model, social status, reviews and recommendations, and brand advertising and promotion as independent

variables. Friedman rank tests and chi-square tests were used for analysis. The findings revealed that product quality is the most critical factor influencing mobile phone choice, followed by phone features. The need for a replacement triggers the purchase decision, with touch screens and design and style being the most valued aspects of the mobile phone's appearance. Additionally, the results showed no significant association between gender and the frequency of changing mobile phones.

Dhital (2013) studied mobile phone brand preference in Kathmandu, examining how various factors influence consumer choices. The study's dependent variable was mobile brand preference, while the independent variables included age, income, usage, education level, gender, attributes, and price. The findings indicated that brand attributes significantly impact the purchasing decisions of people across different ages and educational backgrounds. The monthly family income of youth influences how long they use their mobile brand. No significant relationship was found between gender and current mobile brand usage, monthly family income and mobile price range selection, or educational qualification and preference for better features. However, a significant relationship was observed between monthly family income and the duration of mobile phone brand usage. Mobile phone features, such as touch pads, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and memory cards, affect brand preference, and the intended usage of the phone, such as calling, photography, or storage, determines the choice of brand.

Ingavale et al. (2012) conducted an empirical study on mobile phone brand preference among management students in Kolhapur City. The study aimed to explore the relationship between family income (dependent variable) and willingness to pay and frequency of changing mobile phones (independent variables). Using the chi-square test, the study found no significant relationship between these variables. The research revealed that most respondents preferred Samsung mobile phones and favored devices that offer multiple features in a single phone.

Sthapit (2010) conducted research on cell phone brand preference among users in Nepal, focusing on demographic factors and their influence on brand choice. The study aimed to assess how buyers' preferences vary based on their demographic characteristics and to identify key factors driving brand preference in the Nepali market. The independent variables were age, gender, occupation, and education, while brand preference was the dependent variable. Using the chi-square test, the research found a strong relationship

between buyers' brand preferences and demographic factors, such as age, gender, occupation, and education level.

2.3 Research Gap

The significance of this study is to fill the gap in brand preference literature in the context of consumers of smart phone in Kathmandu Valley and also to analyze the relationship and impact of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on brand preference of smart phones.

Different international organizations, Nepalese researchers, academician, businesses, public and private organization have conducted research on the topic brand preference of smart phones. International research in the topic brand preference of smart phone does not include the context of Nepalese market (Rai et al., 2023).

In the same way, this research is concerned with the brand preference of smart phones among the consumers in Kathmandu valley. Most existing studies on smart phone brand preference focus on broader, often Western, markets. The Kathmandu Valley encompasses a diverse population with varying income levels, education backgrounds, and access to technology (Chapagain and Sawagvudcharee, 2019). Previous research has not sufficiently disaggregated data to explore how these socioeconomic variables specifically impact brand preference within this region. There is a paucity of research tailored to the unique demographic, socioeconomic and other factors influencing consumer behavior in the Kathmandu Valley. There is also lack of specific research to study the influence of demographic, socioeconomic, psychological and behavioral variables on smart phone brand preferences (Sah, 2021). Understanding how local demographic factors and socioeconomic status affect brand perception and purchasing decisions can provide valuable insights (Ingavale et al., 2012).

Past research prioritized factors like price, quality, and brand image. Further research is needed to explore the influence of overall demographic, socio-economic, psychological and behavioral factors on brand preference of smart phones (Shrestha and Singh, 2021).

This research explores the influence of demographic variations and explore how brand preference varies based on age, income level, or education level within Kathmandu Valley. Similarly, this research also explores the influence of brand popularity, brand

attributes and social influence on brand preference of buyers of smart phones in Kathmandu valley.

By addressing these gaps, future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive smart phone brand preference among buyers in Kathmandu Valley. This could help companies tailor their strategies to better meet the needs and preferences of their target market.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is concerned with research methodology that is used to identify and analyze information on the topic. It prescribes how a research is to be carried out in finding the brand preference of smart phones, specially to analyze the relationship and influence of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on brand preferences of smart phone among the consumers in the Kathmandu valley. It includes detail of research design, population and sample, and sampling design procedure, nature and sources of data collection, instrument of data collection, methods of analysis, research framework and definition of variables used in this study.

3.1 Research Design

The main purpose of study is to find out the smart phone brand preferences of respondents, specifically the impact of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on brand preference among the users in Kathmandu Valley from various genders, age, education level, price and income level. The research is quantitative in nature. The data collected are analyzed statistically to interpret findings and results. Primary sources of data are used. Data are collected through questionnaire.

Descriptive and explanatory research design is carried out to achieve this purpose. The study describes the current status of brand preference among the consumers in Kathmandu valley. Similarly, the study examines the relationship of brand preference with brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence. Also, the study analyzes the impact of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on brand preference of smart phone.

3.2 Population and Sample and Sampling Design

The population for this study comprised of all people in Kathmandu Valley. Sampling frame consists of all the people of Kathmandu Valley who possess a smart phone. Due to unavailability of the sampling frame and the impossibility of including every individual within the selected area, a sample of 250 respondents are selected. For this purpose, non-probability convenience sampling method is used for easy to assess respondents.

Given the absence of a comprehensive population frame for smart phone users among the Kathmandu Valley's population and practical limitations, a convenience sample of 250 smart phone users was selected for feasibility and time constraints, acknowledging the potential limitations in generalizability. This number is derived from comparable studies, providing a balance between practicality and the capacity to identify significant relationships with an acceptable margin of error and confidence level. This approach acknowledges the limitations in generalizability but allows for initial exploration of the research question.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

The techniques utilized to obtain, access and gather data from respondents for the study's objectives are known as sources of data. There are two sources of data; primary sources and secondary sources of data. In order to carry out this research, the data are collected for both quantitative and qualitative information. Qualitative methods of research and analysis are provided to add value for identifying and exploring intangible factors. Quantitative data collection helps numeric estimates and provide opportunity for uncomplicated data analysis. Primary data are collected through the respondent using structured questionnaire and secondary data are collected from various websites of mobile phone brands, government publications and other electronic media.

3.4 Instrument of Data Collection

The instrument used for this research is questionnaire. Primary source of data via questionnaire is used while conducting the research. A structured questionnaire is prepared and self-administered to the respondents. Questionnaire is distributed to 250 respondents by the researcher through google forms. The questionnaire includes 12 questions that included demographic questions as well as questions used to collect opinions of respondents. Questionnaire includes simple dichotomy questions, multiple choice questions, open ended questions and 5-point Likert scale questions.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis is the way of converting raw data into information by processing, coding, classifying, tabulating and presenting such information in the graph and charts for

drawing conclusions out of them. After the collection of data, they are analyzed using descriptive and inferential analysis.

In this study descriptive method of data analysis such as frequency, percentage, measure of central tendency, measure of dispersion, rank, etc. were used. Data were presented graphically and diagrammatically. Similarly, Correlation and regression analysis are used to find the relationship and impact of dependent and independent variables. For this research MS-Excel and STATA 14.2 software was used for data analysis.

3.5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The data analysis of the study included following descriptive statistical tools as mean and standard deviation as follows:

Arithmetic mean: Arithmetic mean is one of the measures of central tendency. The mean of data refers to an average of the given data collection. It equals to the sum of all the values in the group of data divided by the total number of values.

Standard deviation: The standard deviation is a statistic that measures the dispersion of a dataset relative to its mean and is calculated as the square root of the variance. A low standard deviation indicates that the values tend to be close to the mean (also called the expected value) of the set, while a high standard deviation indicates that the values are spread out over a wider range.

Similarly, frequency, percentage, range, rank and other measures of center tendency and dispersion were used.

3.5.2 Correlation Analysis

Correlation is a statistical measure that expresses the extent to which two variables are linearly related (meaning they change together at a constant rate). It's a common tool for describing simple relationships without making a statement about cause and effect. In terms of the strength of relationship, the value of the correlation coefficient varies between +1 and -1. A value of ± 1 indicates a perfect degree of association between the two variables. As the correlation coefficient value goes towards 0, the relationship between the two variables will be weaker. The direction of the relationship is indicated by the sign of the coefficient; a + sign indicates a positive relationship and a – sign indicates

a negative relationship. The Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation has been used in the study. It measures the degree of linear relationship between the two variables. If the p-value is less than or equal to level of significance (0.01, 0.05 or 0.10), the relationship is significant.

3.5.3 Regression Analysis

Regression models were used to describe relationships between variables by fitting a line to the observed data. Regression analysis helps to estimate how a dependent variable change as the independent variables change. A multiple regression equation is an equation for estimating the value of dependent variable from two or more independent variables. It helps to determine how strong the relationship is between two or more independent variables and one dependent variable as well as the value of the dependent variable at a certain value of the independent variables. If the p-value for a coefficient of an independent variable is less than level of significance (0.01, 0.05 or 0.10), the corresponding independent variable significantly predicts the dependent variable. Similarly, if the p-value associated with the F-statistic is less than level of significance, the overall regression model is significant. In the study, regression analysis is done to determine the impact of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on brand preference.

Model Specification:

The model takes the following form:

Brand Preference = f (age, gender, price, income, education, brand popularity, brand attributes, and social influence)

More Specifically,

$$BP = \beta_0 + \beta_1G + \beta_2A + \beta_3P + \beta_4I + \beta_5E + \beta_6BA + \beta_7BPO + \beta_8SI + e$$

Whereas,

BP = Brand Preference,

β_0 = Coefficient of constant or intercept,

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6, \beta_7, \beta_8$ = Regression coefficients,

A = age,

G = gender,

P = price,

I = Income,

E = education,

BA = brand attribute,

BPO = brand popularity,

SI = social influence and

e = error term.

3.6 Research Framework and Definition of Variables

3.6.1 Research Framework

The steps taken during the research were considered using the research framework. It usually serves as a guide for researchers to help them narrow the scope of their research. It shows the framework within which the research is based on. Theoretical framework helps researcher in building a foundation of the study. It aids in understanding the study by evaluating research design and clarifying the variables of the study.

There are various factors that influence the brand preference of mobile phone. It can be external or internal or situational factors. The dependent variables in this study is brand preference and independent variables are brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence. Age, gender, education level, income and price are taken as control variables. The research study attempts to analyze the brand preference of smart phones by the users in Kathmandu valley. The study examines the factors influencing brand preference of smart phones.

The theoretical framework of the study is presented in Figure 1. The figure 1 illustrates the relationships between the independent variables (Brand Popularity, Brand Attributes, Social Influence), control variables (Gender, Age, Income, Educational Level, Price), and the dependent variable (Brand Preference).

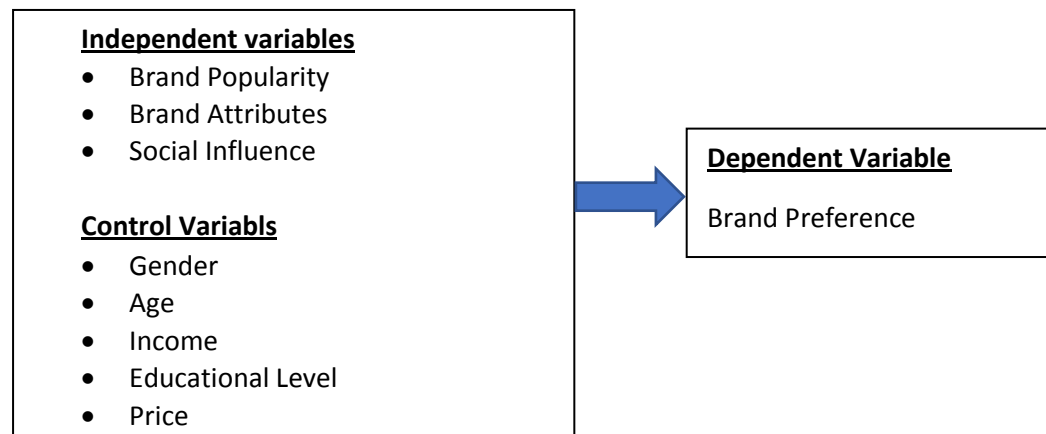


Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

Source: Rai (2021), Nair et al. (2016), Sthapit (2010).

3.6.2 Definition of Variables

3.6.2.1 Brand preferences (BP)

Brand preferences represent the extent to which consumers favor one brand over others within a product category. Kotler (2003) says brand preference as a type of brand loyalty could be described as when customers choose a certain brand in presence of competing brand while yet accept substituting brands in its absence.

Brand preference reflects consumers' subjective evaluations of brand attributes, perceptions, and experiences, influencing their purchasing decisions and brand loyalty (Keller, 2008). Brand preference refers to the tendency of consumers to choose one brand over others when making purchasing decisions, often based on their positive attitudes, perceptions, and experiences with the brand (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

The characteristics of smart phone such as the brand name, quality, price, innovation awareness, and recreating capability etc. can influence the buying behavior of customers before purchasing (Leo et al., 2005; Rahim et al., 2016; Rakib, 2019).

Brand Preference can be measured on a scale, indicating the strength of preference for a particular brand. Designing a questionnaire to measure brand preference for smart phones involves creating a set of questions that cover various aspects of consumer opinions and choices. Measuring brand preferences involves assessing the degree to which consumers favor one brand over another. Respondents are asked to indicate their degree of preference or likelihood of choosing the brand by marking a point on the scale. This method allows researchers to quantify brand preference while providing a user-friendly format for respondents to express their opinions (Fink, 2013).

3.6.2.2 Brand Attributes (BA)

Brand attributes refer to the distinctive characteristics or qualities associated with a particular brand that influence consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards the brand (Keller, 2013).

Product features refers to the attributes of a product that can satisfy consumers' needs and wants through having, using and applying the product characteristics along with product quality and functions can affect the adoption and usage of product. Different consumers have different emotion on attributes of the product. Sometimes, consumers don't know how to judge the quality of products. In most cases, they feel for difficulty of information processing and inconsistent product attribute reviews (Chen et al., 2018; Kotler et al., 2010).

Nair et al. (2016) found that quality is a more important factor in the choice of branded smart phone. The features of the smart phone like touchscreen, design, and style also have a significant effect on the choice of the device.

Respondents are asked to mark their responses on the scale, with endpoints representing extremes of the attribute being measured (e.g., strongly agree to strongly disagree). This method allows for the quantitative assessment of brand attributes while providing a user-friendly format for respondents (Alreck & Settle, 2004).

3.6.2.3 Brand Popularity (BPO)

Brand popularity refers to the level of recognition, preference, and acceptance that a brand enjoys among consumers within a specific market or industry (Kotler & Keller,

2016). Brand popularity can be defined as the degree to which a brand is recognized, preferred, and frequently chosen by consumers within its target market. This recognition and preference contribute to the brand's competitive position and market share (Keller, 1993).

Brand popularity encompasses the widespread recognition and positive perception of a brand among consumers within a specific market segment. It reflects the brand's ability to attract consumer attention, evoke favorable associations, and influence purchase decisions. Popularity can be quantified through metrics such as brand awareness, preference, and market share, which indicate the brand's competitive strength and appeal relative to competitors (Keller, 2008).

Respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement, preference, or likelihood of choosing the brand by marking a point on the scale. This method allows researchers to quantify brand popularity while providing a user-friendly format for respondents to express their opinions (Fink, 2013).

3.6.2.4 Social Influence (SI)

Social influence is the process by which individuals or groups exert direct or indirect pressure on others to change their attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, or behaviors to conform to social norms, expectations, or standards (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004).

Changing of thoughts, feelings, attitude, and behavior, intentionally or unintentionally, and being influenced by other person of the society is termed as social influence. Surrounding

people influence the action of consumers (Kotler et al., 2010).

Social influence happens from the interaction among the various levels of people in the society those who are known to each other like parents, family, peers, friends, relatives and so on (Rahim et al., 2016).

Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they feel influenced by others or the pressure they perceive to conform to social norms by marking a point on the scale. This method provides researchers with quantitative data on the perceived level of social

influence while offering a user-friendly format for respondents to express their opinions (Alreck & Settle, 2004).

3.6.2.5 Gender (G)

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women. It is often used as a categorical variable in research studies to explore differences in attitudes, behaviors, and preferences between males and females (Risman, 2004). Gender is categorized as male and female.

3.6.2.6 Age (A)

Age of the respondent is measured in years. Age refers to the number of years a person has lived since birth. It is a demographic variable commonly used to categorize individuals into different age groups for research and analysis purposes (Newell, 2016). Log value of age is used for correlation and regression analysis.

3.6.2.7 Income (I)

Income represents the amount of money an individual or household earns over a specific period, typically measured on an annual basis. It is a key socio-economic variable used to assess an individual's purchasing power, standard of living, and economic well-being (US Census Bureau, n.d.). For the purpose of this study, monthly household income of the respondent is measured in Nepalese Rupees. Log value of income is used for correlation and regression analysis.

3.6.2.8 Education Level/ Years of Education (E)

Education level represents the highest level of formal education attained by an individual, typically categorized into levels such as high school diploma, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctoral degree. It is a significant socio-demographic variable used to assess individuals' knowledge, skills, and socio-economic status (OECD, 2020). Education level is measured as years of education the respondent has taken. Log value of years of education is used for correlation and regression analysis.

3.6.2.9 Price (P)

Price refers to the monetary value assigned to a product or service in exchange for its purchase. It is a fundamental concept in economics and marketing, influencing consumer purchasing decisions and market dynamics (Lancaster & Massingham, 2016). Price is the cost associated with purchasing a mobile phone from a particular brand.

Price is the sum of money consumers is indebted to pay for products and services to fulfill their needs or want (Kotler et al., 2010). It is the sum of money necessary to make payment for buying a product It can be examined to understand how pricing affects brand preference. Price may be measured as an absolute value or in relation to consumers' budget constraints. Log value of price of smart phone is used for correlation and regression analysis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is concerned with the collection, proper presentation, analysis and discussion of the data undertaken from sample of consumers of smart phone of Kathmandu valley in the topic factor influencing brand preference of smart phone, especially the impact of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence among the users in Kathmandu valley. Different statistical tools were used in getting the answer of research questions. Results were obtained from analysis of dependent variable, different independent variables and control variables. After the result is obtained, discussion is done to analyze the actual findings of the study. Necessary statistical tests were carried out to give relevant interpretation. And it is conducted on dependent variables: brand preference and independent variables as brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence. Gender, age, years of education, income and price are taken as the control variables.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is one of the methods of analyzing the data collected from secondary sources of data for the study. In this analysis, statistical measures such as mean and standard deviation are calculated to detect and identify the relations among variables. Descriptive analysis helps to conduct further statistical analysis to summarize the data of the variables collected for the study.

4.1.1 Respondent Profile

In this study, the respondents include consumers of smart phone in Kathmandu valley and 250 questionnaires were collected through google forms. The proportion of male respondents was 58% (145), and female respondents were 42% (105) in the survey.

4.1.2 Descriptive Statistic

Descriptive statistics in Table 1 shows the minimum, maximum, average and standard deviation of the variables.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistic

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	Std. dev.
Brand Preference	1	5	3.80	0.77
Brand Popularity	1	5	3.96	0.77
Brand Attributes	1	5	3.80	0.76
Social Influence	1	5	3.56	0.79
Income (Rs)	20000	600000	150920	111163.8
Price (Rs)	13000	300000	74017.2	63260.23
Age (Years)	15	70	31.66	8.07

Table 1 depicts that brand preference of selected sample extended from 1(Strongly Disagree) to 5(Strongly Agree) having 3.79 as a mean and 0.78 as a standard deviation. Here, brand popularity of sample consumers ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) having 3.96 as a mean and 0.77 as a standard deviation. And, brand attributes range from minimum of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to maximum of 5 (Strongly Agree) having 3.80 as a mean and 0.76 as a standard deviation. Likewise, social influence is minimum of 1 (Strongly Disagree) and maximum of 5 (Strongly Agree) along with the mean of 3.80 and standard deviation of 0.76. Also, monthly household income ranges from Rs 20000 as minimum to maximum of Rs 600000 having mean of Rs 150920 and standard deviation of Rs 111164. And also, the variable price of smart phone set ranges

from minimum of Rs 13000 to maximum of Rs 300000 with mean of Rs 7417.20 and standard deviation of Rs 63260. Similarly, the variable age ranges from 15 years as minimum to maximum of 70 years, having mean of 31.66 years and standard deviation of 8.07 years.

4.1.3 Usage of Smart Phone (in terms of brand and duration)

The usages of smart phone in terms of brand and duration of use is presented in Table 2. The duration of the usage of smart phone by the respondent ranges from minimum of less than 1 year to maximum of 7 years. 26% of respondents use smart phones for 2 years, 20.8% for 3 years, 18% for 1 year, 16.4% for 5 years, 7.6% for 4 years, 6% for less than one year, 3.6% for 6 years and 1.6% for 7 years as presented in table 2.

Table 2

Usage of Smart phone

Usages of smart phone (years)			Usages of Smart phone (Brand)		
Usage Duration	Frequency	Percentage	Brand	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1	15	6	Samsung	74	29.6
1	45	18	Apple	63	25.2
2	65	26	Xiaomi	48	19.2
3	52	20.8	Realme	23	9.2
4	19	7.6	Oppo	14	5.6
5	41	16.4	Vivo	10	4
6	9	3.6	OnePlus	13	5.2
7	4	1.6	Other	5	2
Total	250	100	Total	250	100

The highest proportion of the respondents uses Samsung brand which accounted for 29.6% of the total respondents followed by Apple (25.2%), Xiaomi (19.2%), Realme (9.2%), Oppo (5.6%), Oneplus (5.2%), Vivo (4%) and other (2%) as shown in table 2.

4.1.4 Usage of Smart Phone (Gifted/Purchased)

The usage behavior of smart phone in terms of uses of purchased or gifted smart phone is presented in Figure 2, which shows that 15.2 % of respondents uses gifted smart phones however 84.8 % uses self-purchased smart phone set.

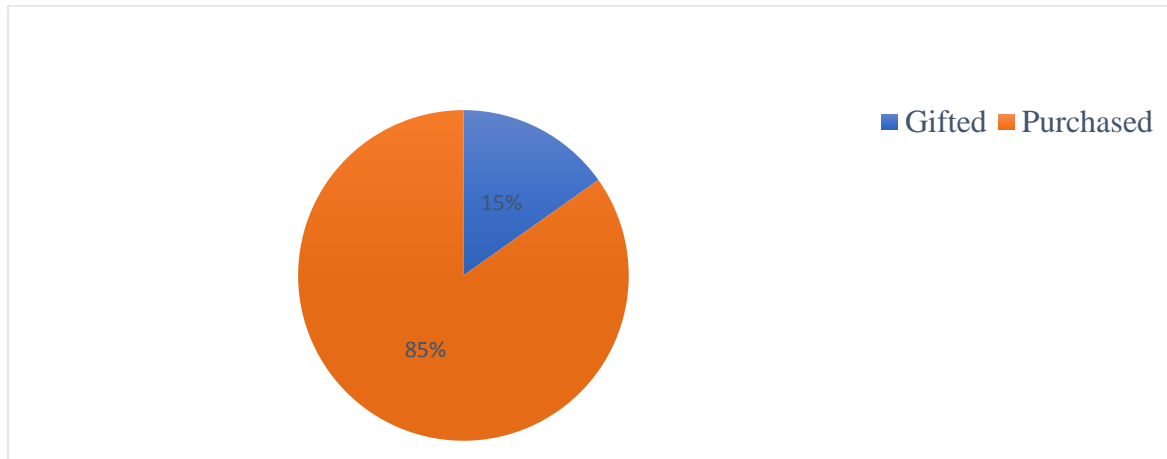


Figure 2 Usage of Smart phone (purchased/gifted)

4.1.5 Brand Preference

Brand preference of smart phone by the sample consumers is presented in Table 3. The most preferred brand among the consumer is Apple, which was preferred by 42.4% of the total respondent, followed by Samsung (32%), Xioami (11.6%), Oppo (4.8%), Oneplus (3.6%), Realme (3.2%), Vivo (1.2%) and other (1.2%).

Table 3

Brand Preference

Brand Preference	Frequency	Percentage
Apple	106	42.4
Samsung	80	32
Xioami	29	11.6
Oppo	12	4.8
Oneplus	9	3.6
Realme	8	3.2
Vivo	3	1.2
New brands	1	0.4
Nothing	1	0.4

Poco gaming series	1	0.4
Total	250	100

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis in Table 4 presents the relationships among brand preference and various control variables (gender, age, years of education, monthly household income and price of smart phone) as well as independent variables (brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence). The correlations provide insights into how these factors are associated with consumers' preferences for smart phone brands in Kathmandu valley. The values of correlation coefficient in Table 4 indicate the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables, with significance levels noted by asterisks. The numbers in parentheses are p-values, which indicate the statistical significance of the correlations. Lower p-values indicate stronger evidence against the null hypothesis (no correlation).

Table 4

Correlation Analysis

Variab les	BP	G	A	E	I	P	BPO	BA	SI
BP	1.00								
G	-0.07 (0.27)	1.00							
A	-0.04 (0.49)	0.25*** (0.00)	1.00						
E	-0.02 (0.72)	0.18*** (0.00)	0.14** (0.03)	1.00					
I	0.16*** (0.01)	-0.08 (0.21)	0.14** (0.03)	0.17*** (0.01)	1.00				
P	0.24*** (0.00)	-0.09 (0.16)	0.06 (0.35)	0.11 (0.08)**	0.33*** (0.00)	1.00			
BPO	0.63*** (0.00)	-0.13** (0.03)	-0.11** (0.09)	0.04 (0.49)	0.18*** (0.01)	0.28*** (0.00)	1.00		
BA	0.64*** (0.00)	-0.03 (0.65)	-0.00 (0.97)	-0.00 (0.97)	0.12* (0.07)	0.15** (0.02)	0.63*** (0.00)	1.00	
SI	0.37*** (0.00)	-0.07 (0.29)	-0.06 (0.35)	0.04 (0.56)	-0.02 (0.78)	-0.00 (0.97)	0.39*** (0.00)	0.52*** (0.00)	1.00

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table 4 shows the negative correlation of years of education and age with brand preference. This shows that higher the age and years of education lower would be the brand preference and vice versa. Similarly, income, price, brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence have positive correlation with brand preference. This implies that increase in income, price, brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence, increases brand preference and vice versa.

Table 4 shows the strong positive correlations of brand preference with brand attributes ($r = 0.64$) and brand popularity ($r = 0.63$), both brand attributes and brand popularity are significant at 1 percent level of significance. This indicates that more popular brands are strongly preferred by consumers. Similarly, brands with desirable attributes are more preferred by consumers. However, social influence ($r = 0.37$) and price ($r = 0.24$) have moderate positive correlation with brand preference, both social influence and price are significant at 1 percent level of significance. The result reveals weak correlations of brand preference with gender, age, years of education and income.

Price, brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence are statistically significant at 1 percent level of significance, whereas income is significant at 5 percent level of significance. However, gender, age and years of education is not statistically significant.

Similarly, table 4 shows strong positive correlation ($r = 0.63$) between brand popularity and brand attributes. This implies that popular brands are perceived to have better attributes. Moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.39$) between brand popularity and social influence suggests that popular brands also benefit from social influence. Similarly, moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.52$) between brand attributes and social influence indicates that brands with better attributes are also more likely to be recommended or preferred by peers.

Thus, the correlation analysis shows that strong positive and significant relationship of brand popularity and brand attributes with brand preference of smart phone users of Kathmandu valley. Variables such as income and price show significant and positive relationships with brand preference. However, gender, age, and years of education do not have significant correlation with brand preference.

4.3 Regression Analysis

Table 5 presents the regression analysis between dependent variable i.e. brand preference and independent variables i.e. brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence. The table provides coefficients for each variable, along with their standard errors in parentheses, statistical significance (significance levels denoted by asterisks), constant term, overall goodness of fit, standard error of the model and adjusted R-square.

Table 5

Regression Analysis

Variable	G	A	E	I	P	BPO	BA	SI	Constant	SEE	Adj. R-Squared	F-stat
Model	0.02 (0.08)	-0.09 (0.31)	-0.31 (0.25)	0.11 (0.11)	0.18 (0.12)	0.34 (0.07)**	0.41 (0.07)**	0.04 (0.06)	-0.17 (0.73)	0.55	0.51	28.67

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

From the above results, in Table 5 the estimated equation can be written by taking the values from the model:

$$BP = -0.17 + 0.02G - 0.09A - 0.31E + 0.11I + 0.18P + 0.34BPO + 0.41BA + 0.04SI$$

Here, BP is the measure for analyzing the brand preference and G, A, E, I, P, BPO, BA, SI represents the gender, age, years of education, price, income, brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence respectively.

The beta coefficient, standard error and t-statistics for brand popularity are 0.34, 0.07 and 4.86 respectively. The coefficient for brand popularity has positive and significant relationship with brand preference at 1 percent level of significance. This indicates that 1 unit increase in brand popularity, increases 0.07 unit of brand preference. This finding is consistent with the empirical evidence obtained by the study of Omobola M. (2024).

Similarly, the beta coefficient, standard error and t-statistics for brand attributes are 0.41, 0.07 and 5.85 respectively. The coefficient of brand attributes is positive and significantly related to brand preference at 1 percent level of significance. This indicates that 1 unit increase in brand attributes, increases 0.07 unit of brand preference. This finding is consistent with the empirical evidence obtained by the study of Omobola M. (2024).

The coefficient for social influence is 0.04 with a standard error of 0.06, which is not statistically significant (t -statistics = 0.67). This implies that social influence does not significantly impact brand preference in this context. This finding is consistent with the empirical evidence obtained by the study of with Rakib et al. (2022).

Likewise, the coefficient for gender is 0.02 with a standard error of 0.08, which is not statistically significant. The coefficient for age is -0.09 with a standard error of 0.31, which is not statistically significant. The coefficient for years of education is -0.31 with a standard error of 0.25, also not statistically significant. The coefficient for income level is 0.11 with a standard error of 0.11, which is not statistically significant. And, the coefficient for price is 0.18 with a standard error of 0.12, which is not statistically significant. This suggests that the variables gender, age, years of education, income and price does not have a significant impact on brand preferences.

Recapitulating, the regression analysis reveals that brand popularity and brand attributes are the most significant predictors of smart phone brand preferences in Kathmandu, both having strong positive impacts. Social influence, despite showing a significant positive correlation with brand preference, does not significantly impact brand preference in the regression model. Likewise, gender, age, years of education, income and price do not significantly affect brand preference.

An adjusted R-square of 51% shows that 51% of variability in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables, adjusted for the number of predictors used. It means that the model explains 51% of the variance in brand preference, indicating a moderate level of explanatory power. The remaining 49% can be affected by other factors outside these independent variables.

Table 5 shows the F-statistics of the regression model is 28.671, with p-value (0.00), which indicates that the regression model is highly significant. This means that the independent variables in the model collectively have a significant effect on the dependent variable. The model explains a substantial portion of the variance in the dependent variable, and the likelihood that this result is due to chance is extremely low.

Standard error of estimate 0.55 in Table 5 indicates that the average deviation of the observed values from the predicted values is 0.554 units. Thus, Standard error of estimate 0.55 is relatively small and indicates a good model fit.

4.4 Hypothesis test

The hypotheses for the study are tested using the p-values from the regression analysis presented in Table 6. The null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected if the p-value is less than or equal to the significance level of 5 percentages (0.05).

Table 6

P-Values

Variable	BPO	BA	SI
P-value	0.00	0.00	0.47

Hypothesis 1: Since, (p-value $0.00 < 0.05$), this suggests that the evidence against the null hypothesis is strong. Thus, null hypothesis is rejected, which means, brand popularity has significant impact on brand preference. This finding is consistent with the correlation analysis, which showed a strong positive relationship between brand popularity and brand preference.

Hypothesis 2: Since, (p-value $0.00 < 0.05$), this suggests that the evidence against the null hypothesis is strong. Thus, null hypothesis is rejected, which means, brand attributes has significant effect on brand preference. This aligns with the correlation analysis, indicating that consumers value the qualities and features of smart phones when making purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis 3: Since, (p-value $0.47 > 0.05$), this suggest that the evidence against the null hypothesis is not strong enough and null hypothesis is failed to reject. Thus, social influence has insignificant effect on brand preference. Despite the moderate positive correlation observed between social influence and brand preference, the regression analysis indicates that social influence is not a key determinant of brand preference when other factors are considered.

In conclusion, brand popularity and brand attributes are the significant predictors of the brand preference. However, social influence is not significant predictor of the brand preference.

4.4 Discussion

The major objective of this research is to examine the effect of brand popularity, brand attributes, and social influence on brand preference of smart phone by the consumers in Kathmandu Valley. This study helps to understand the major factors affecting the brand preference of smart phone. Here, various variables like gender, age, years of education, price of smart phone, income are taken as control variables. Independent variables brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence are studied that affect the brand preference of smart phone. The variables are studied by collecting data from the respondent using google forms. The study was done to measure the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The model was developed by taking into the reference from various literature reviews.

The initial part of the study concerns with descriptive analysis of the variables. It reveals that Samsung is the mostly used brand among the various brands of the smart phone. This evidence is consistent with the findings of Sridevi (2023), Sah (2021), Tadese (2019), Twenefour (2017), Ndadziyira (2017), and Nair et al. (2016). However, iphone is the most preferred brand among the others, which is similar to the finding of Radhika and Lakshmi (2021), Ann et al. (2021), Kurian and Sai Krishna (2020) and Dhital (2013).

The correlation analysis reveals significant positive correlations of brand preference with brand popularity, brand attributes, social influence, price and income suggesting these variables move together. The positive relation of brand preference with brand popularity is similar with the findings of Rahman and Sultana (2022), Sah (2021), Shrestha and Singh (2021), Thi et al. (2020), Chapagain and Sawagvudcharee (2019), and Ndadziyira (2017) . The positive relation of brand preference with brand popularity is significant since p-value (0.00) is less than the significant level.

The positive relation of brand preference with brand attributes is constant with the findings of Rahman and Sultana (2022), Sah (2021), Rai (2021), Shrestha and Singh (2021), Haris and Hadi (2020), Thi et al. (2020), Chapagain and Sawagvudcharee (2019) and Ndadziyira (2017). The positive relation of brand preference with brand attributes is significant since p-value (0.00) is less than the significant level.

Similarly, the positive relation between brand preference and social influence is consistent with the finding of Liang et al. (2024), Sah (2021), Kumaradeepan (2021),

Shrestha and Singh (2021), Thi et al. (2020), Haris and Hadi (2020), Chapagain and Sawagvudcharee (2019) and Ndadziyira (2017). The positive relation of brand preference with social influence is significant since p-value (0.00) is less than the significant level.

Likewise, the positive relation of brand preference with income is similar to the findings of Singh et al. (2023), Sah (2021), Rai (2021), Thi et al. (2020), Shrestha and Singh (2021), Haris and Hadi (2020) and Ndadziyira (2017). The positive relation between brand preference and price is significant since p-value (0.00) is less than the significant level.

Similarly, the positive relation between brand preference and income is consistent to the findings of Reddy and Reddy (2020), Renuga Devi and Nivethitha (2018) and Ingavale et al. (2012). The positive relation between brand preference and income is significant since p-value (0.01) is less than the significant level.

However, the negative relationship of brand preference with gender, age and years of education is insignificant since p-value is not less than the significant level. Such insignificant relationship between brand preference and gender is consistent with the findings of Simon Ayo and Oiza Lauren (2021), Reddy and Reddy (2020) and Sthapit (2010). Similarly, insignificant relationship between brand preference and age is similar to the finding of Reddy and Reddy (2020), Simon Ayo and Oiza Lauren (2021), Renuga Devi and Nivethitha (2018) and Sthapit (2010). Insignificant relation between brand preference and years of education is constant with the findings of Simon Ayo and Oiza Lauren (2021), Reddy and Reddy (2020), Twenefour (2017) and Sthapit (2010).

The correlation analysis shows that strong positive and significant relationship of brand popularity and brand attributes with brand preference of smart phone users of Kathmandu valley. Variables such as income and price show significant and positive relationships with brand preference. However, gender, age, and years of education do not have significant correlation with brand preference.

The regression analysis reveals that brand popularity and brand attributes are the only significant predictors of the dependent variable, both highly significant at the 1% level. This suggests that changes in brand preference and brand attributes have a strong and reliable impact on the dependent variable. However, gender, age, years of education,

income, price and social influence do not significantly predict the dependent variable, as their p-values are not below the significance level.

Positive and significant relationship between brand popularity and brand preference indicates that 1 unit increase in brand popularity, increases 0.07 unit of brand preference. This evidence is consistent with the findings of Omobola M. (2024), Singh et al. (2023), Rai et al. (2023), Rahman and Sultana (2022), Rakib et al. (2022), Sah (2021), Radhika and Lakshmi (2021), Saranya and Yoganandan (2019), Tadese, (2019), Chapagain and Sawagvudcharee (2019), Vijayalakshmi et al. (2018) and Nair et al. (2016) but inconsistent with the findings of Haris and Hadi (2020).

Similarly, positive and significant relationship between brand attributes and brand preference indicates that 1 unit increase in brand attributes, increases 0.07 unit of brand preference. This is similar to the findings of Omobola M. (2024), Kurnia and Hasyim (2023), Rahman and Sultana (2022), Rakib et al. (2022), Sah (2021), Rai (2021), Radhika and Lakshmi (2021), Saranya and Yoganandan (2019), Tadese (2019), Chapagain and Sawagvudcharee (2019), Nair et al. (2016), and Dhital (2013) but contradict with the finding of Rai et al. (2023), Singh et al. (2023), Haris and Hadi (2020), Vijayalakshmi et al. (2018) and Kumari and Kumar (2016).

Insignificant relation between brand preference and social influence is consistent with Rakib et al. (2022), Sah (2021) and Tadese (2019) but contradicts with the findings of Liang et al. (2024), Rai et al. (2023), Kumaradeepan (2021), Kurian and Sai Krishna (2020), Haris and Hadi (2020) and Chapagain and Sawagvudcharee (2019). Similarly, insignificant relation between brand preference and price is consistent with Haris and Hadi (2020) but inconsistent with Rai et al. (2023), Singh et al. (2023), Rahman and Sultana (2022), Rakib et al. (2022). Insignificant relation between brand preference and gender is consistent with the findings of Ann et al. (2021), Simon Ayo and Oiza Lauren (2021), Kurian and Sai Krishna (2020) and Dhital (2013). Likewise, insignificant relation between brand preference and age is similar with the findings of Simon Ayo and Oiza Lauren (2021) and Dhital (2013). Insignificant relation between brand preference and income is similar to the findings of Dhital (2013). Similarly, insignificant relation between brand preference and years of education is consistent with the findings of Simon Ayo and Oiza Lauren (2021) and Dhital (2013).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter is about the brief summary of the whole study and point out the major findings of the study. It mainly includes summary, conclusions and implications regarding the link between brand preference and other independent variables. Finally, the chapter ends with the scope of the future study in the same field.

5.1 Summary

The landscape of brand preference in the smartphone industry is dynamic and constantly evolving due to various factors such as technological advancements, changing consumer trends, competitive strategies, and external influences. Consumer behavior and preferences are intricate and multifaceted. They are shaped by psychological, social, personal, and situational factors, significantly impacting the success of businesses and the development of markets. Grasping these elements is crucial for companies to customize their products, services, and marketing strategies to align with consumer needs and desires.

The study aims to examine the factors influencing smart phone brand preferences among the users in Kathmandu valley. Specifically, it investigates the impact of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on brand preference. Control variables included gender, age, years of education, income and price. The research used primary data collected from 250 respondents from the Kathmandu valley. Descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis was used to analyzed the data.

The results of this study were based on the descriptive and inferential statistics analysis of primary data collected from the respondents. Convenience sampling method was administered to collect the data. Analysis of data collection and interpretation are done with the help of various statistical techniques.

The result reveals that Apple is the most preferred smart phone brand followed by Samsung. However, most of the respondent use Samsung brand.

From the result of correlation analysis, there is positive correlation of brand popularity, brand attributes, social influence, price and income on brand preference of smart phone.

Which refers that increase in brand popularity, brand attributes, social influence, price and income leads to increase in brand preference of smart phone and vice-versa. The result of correlation revealed negative relationship of brand preference with gender, age and years of education.

Regression analysis was conducted with the aim to examine the effect of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on brand preference of smart phone of consumers in Kathmandu Valley. The model explains 51% of the variance in brand preference (Adj. R-Squared = 0.51), and the overall model is statistically significant (F-statistic = 28.67, $p < 0.01$).

The result of regression analysis reveals that brand popularity ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$) and brand attributes ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$) have significant positive relationship with brand preference of smart phone. On the other hand, social influence ($\beta = 0.04$, $p = 0.47$) has no significant relationship with brand preference of smart phone.

Two out of three null hypotheses are rejected and one of them is not rejected. From the hypothesis testing, it is found that brand popularity and brand attributes are the significant predictors of the brand preference. Likewise, social influence is not significant predictors of the brand preference.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that brand popularity and brand attributes significantly influence smart phone brand preferences among the users in Kathmandu. Consumers are more likely to prefer brands that are well-known and possess desirable attributes such as quality, features, and design. Social influence, however, does not significantly affect brand preference in this context.

The study has been fulfilled the objectives taken before. The initial objective of the study was to determine the preferred brand of smart phone by the users in Kathmandu Valley. The result revealed that Apple is the most preferred brand of smart phone followed by Samsung.

The second objective of the study was to examine the relationship of smart phone brand preference with brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence. The study

revealed that brand attributes, brand popularity and social influence has significant and positive correlation with brand preference.

The last objective of the study was to analyze the impact of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on brand preferences of Smart phone. The study found that brand popularity and brand attributes influence have significant impact with brand preference. However, social influence has no significant relationship with brand preference.

5.3 Implications

The research identifies brand popularity and brand attributes as key determinants of smart phone brand preferences in Kathmandu, while social influence plays a lesser role. These findings provide valuable guidance for both academic researchers and practitioners aiming to understand and influence consumer behavior in the smart phone market. The practical and research implication of this study is discussed as follows:

5.3.1 Research Implications

The findings support and extend existing theories on consumer behavior by highlighting the relative importance of brand popularity and attributes in the context of smart phone purchases. The study provides valuable insights specific to Kathmandu, contributing to the limited literature on consumer preferences in this region.

Further research with a broader sample and a more comprehensive set of variables could be explored. That is, further research might be conducted in to analyze impact of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on brand preference of smart phone having more extended sample size. Generalizability of the findings can be more precise with the increased number of sampled respondents.

The three variables brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence do not effectively contribute to brand preference of smart phone in Kathmandu Valley. Future research could explore the unobserved factors contributing to the remaining 49% variance in brand preference. As a result, additional research is highly encouraged to find other elements that may contribute to brand preference. Furthermore, the literature review excludes several more recent studies on brand preference. Thus, further research could

explore other potential factors influencing brand preference, such as cultural influences or post-purchase satisfaction etc.

This research can be extended to diverse geographic areas where people exhibit varied socioeconomic backgrounds, perceptions, cultural norms, behaviors, purchasing capabilities, and attitudes. The study's framework is applicable beyond the smartphone sector and can be adapted to analyze other products and services. Additionally, incorporating additional independent variables not addressed in this study could provide deeper insights into consumer behavior when purchasing smartphones. These findings represent pioneering empirical evidence and offer a basis for future research in various settings.

The data analysis and technique must be strengthened. A further in-depth examination of such techniques and use of other inferential analysis tools would strengthen the findings' rigor. Investigating the specific aspects influencing brand popularity and brand attributes for smart phones in Kathmandu could provide deeper insights.

5.3.1 Practical Implication

Results of the study showed a positive and significant relationship of brand popularity and brand attributes with brand preference. Smart phone brands can utilize these findings to develop targeted marketing strategies that enhance brand preference of smart phone in Kathmandu Valley. Smart phone companies should focus on enhancing their brand popularity and attributes. Marketing campaigns that highlight the brand's popularity and superior attributes can attract more consumers.

Since, brand popularity has positive and significant relationship with brand preference marketers should invest in strategies that enhance the visibility and popularity of their smart phone brands to influence consumer preferences. Awareness campaign, celebrity endorsement, sponsorships and events etc. helps for enhancing brand popularity.

Similarly, brand attributes have positive and significant relationship with brand preference. For superior brand attributes smart phone brands should ensure quality assurance, emphasis unique and advance features, showcase the design elements, innovate design and technology etc. Companies should focus on improving and

highlighting the quality, features, and overall performance of their smart phones to attract and retain customers.

However, social influence was not found to be significant in this study, it should not be entirely ignored. Companies should engage with customers through social media and other platforms to build a strong community and brand loyalty. This engagement could potentially shift perceptions over time.

Hence, Marketing managers and companies must consider brand popularity, brand attributes, and social influence in marketing planning. These insights may assist the organization and marketers create a smartphone marketing strategy.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a student of Masters of Business Studies (MBS) at Shanker Dev Campus. This survey is on the dissertation titled “Factors influencing smart phone brand preference in Kathmandu Valley: Analyzing brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence” for the partial fulfillment of the degree. You are kindly requested to fill up the questionnaire honestly and to the best of your ability. The information provided will be kept confidential and used in aggregate form. Your input is highly valued and will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this study.

Regards,

Manisha Regmi

Shanker Dev Campus.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age (in years):
3. Permanent Address:
4. Years of Education
5. Monthly Family Income (NPR):
6. Monthly Household Expenditure (NPR):
7. Which brand of mobile phone you are currently using? (Tick major one)
 1. Samsung
 2. Apple
 3. Xiaomi
 4. Oppo
 5. Vivo
 6. Realme
 7. Other (Please specify)
8. Which is your favorite/most preferred mobile phone brand? ((Tick major one)
 1. Samsung
 2. Apple
 3. Xiaomi
 4. Oppo
 5. Vivo
 6. Realme
 7. Other (Please specify)
9. Mobile phone you are using is gifted or purchased?
10. How long you are using the current mobile phone?.....Years.

11. At how much price did you purchased the mobile phone? NPR

12. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your brand preference on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Brand Preference					
1. I prefer the brand over others in the same category.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I trust this brand more than others.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am likely to recommend this brand to others.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I feel emotionally connected to this brand.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Overall, I have a positive perception of Brand.	1	2	3	4	5
Brand Popularity					
1. The brand is widely recognized by consumers.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The brand has a large following on social media platforms.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I perceive this brand to be popular and in-demand.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Many people I know trust and admire this brand.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Overall, I believe this brand is highly popular among consumers.	1	2	3	4	5
Brand Attributes					
1. The brand offers high-quality and innovative products/services.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The brand is environmentally friendly and socially responsible.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The brand offers good value for money.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The brand provides excellent customer service.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Overall, I have a positive perception of this brand based on its attributes	1	2	3	4	5
Social Influence					
1. My friends' preferences and recommendations significantly influence my brand choices.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The opinions and experiences shared by online reviews and ratings influence my brand preferences.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Recommendations from family members influence my brand preferences.	1	2	3	4	5

4. I often discuss and seek opinions from others before making a purchase decision, which influences my brand preferences.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am more likely to purchase a brand if it is endorsed by someone I admire or respect.	1	2	3	4	5

The End!!!

FACTORS INFLUENCING SMART PHONE BRAND PREFERENC...

By: Manisha Regmi

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ABSTRACTS With the rise in active smartphone usage, companies face the challenge of understanding potential customers' purchasing decisions to drive sales growth and stay competitive. Forecasting or assessing individual preferences is challenging, yet it is crucial for marketers as it is a key step in understanding consumer choices.

The main aim of this study is to investigate the factors influencing

smart phone brand preference in Kathmandu valley. The study examines the influence of brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence on brand preference of smart phone among the consumers in Kathmandu valley. The independent variables are brand popularity, brand attributes and social influence. Brand preference is the dependent variable. The study's population consisted of smartphone users in the Kathmandu Valley. The primary data has been collected through a structured survey questionnaire by using convenient sampling technique from 250 smart phone users in Kathmandu valley. The research is quantitative in nature. Descriptive, correlation and casual research design was adopted to achieve objectives of this study. It reveals from the study that there is significant impact of brand popularity and brand attributes on brand preference of smart phone. However, social influence does not have significant impact on brand preference.

The findings will aid smartphone manufacturers in formulating **strategies** aligned with **consumer brand preferences**