

Factors Affecting Consumer Buying Decision towards Smartphone in Kathmandu

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Abstract—*The main objective of this paper is to investigate factors affecting consumer buying towards Smartphone in Kathmandu. The study examines how the product features, social factors and brand name influence in the buying decision of the Smartphone. The study focuses on how the consumer preferred to select the Smartphone and which factor has the more influencing role for purchase decision. The demands of Smartphone products are increasing rapidly in Kathmandu valley. This research also identified the mathematical relationship between dependent variable and independent variables. Primary data has been used in this research. The data was collected through structured questionnaire using convenient sampling technique from 394 customers buying Smartphone in Kathmandu.*

Descriptive statistical analysis, correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to diagnose data collected to draw valid conclusions. Product features, social factors and brand image are taken as independent variables to explore the relationship with purchase decision and impact on purchase decision. Correlation showed that all independent variables have significant relationship with dependent variable. The regression result showed that there is a significant impact of product features and brand image on consumer buying decision. Relatively, the social factors have the less significant positive impact on purchase decision than compare to others.

Keywords: *brand name, Consumer buying decision, product features, social factors, Smartphone.*

Background of the study

Customers purchase decision is a complex process. Purchase intention is related to the behavior, perceptions and attitudes of consumers. Purchase behavior is a key point for consumers to access and evaluate the specific product. Purchase intention may be changed under the influence of price or perceived quality and value. In addition, consumers are affected by internal or external motivations during the buying process (Gogoi, 2013). Researchers have proposed six stages before deciding to buy the product, which is awareness, knowledge, interest, preference, persuasion and purchase (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010).

Engel et al. (1975) present the most recognized model of consumer purchase decision-making. This model divides the

consumer purchase decision process into five stages: (1) problem recognition, (2) information search, (3) alternative evaluation, (4) purchase decision, and (5) post-purchase behavior. It can be regarded as an impulse buying behavior. Partially planned buying means that consumers only decide a product category and the specification before buying a product, and brands and types will be decided in the shop later. Fully planned buying means that consumers decide which product and brand to buy before entering the shop.

Kotler (2003) proposes that individual attitudes and unpredictable situations will influence purchase intention. Individual attitudes include personal preferences to others and obedience to others' expectation and unpredictable situations signify that consumers change purchase intention because a situation is appearing, for example, when the price is higher than expected price (Dodds et al., 1991). Consumer purchase intention is considered as a subjective inclination toward a product and can be an important index to predict consumer behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Zeithaml (1988) uses possible to buy intended to buy and considered to buy as measurement items to measure purchase intention.

Purchase decision is a behavior of a person that how he/she thinks of any particular product and what comes in his/her mind first about it and what would he think or do when he/she purchases the same product of the same brand. There may be and can be negative and positive impacts on that particular product. There is strong tendency for him to react based on their past actions. Here, the individual is likely to report his or her habit rather than intention when responding to the intention (Warsaw & Davis 1985). Despite issues, purchase intention is an important construct in consumer behavior (Kotler & Armstrong 2010). Having said so, the study of repurchase intention was said to be important due to their long term implications.

Brand Name

The image of any particular product set into the mind of any individual is the brand image of that product; a brand image is anything linked in the memory to a brand (Aaker, 1991).

Brand image is also defined as “the set of beliefs about a particular Brand” (Kotler 1988) or “a set of associations, usually organized in some meaningful way” (Aaker 1991). While it states that “a product is a physical thing; a brand has no tangible, physical or functional properties (Kim, 1990).

The brand Image has a positive influence on the brand attitude and product involvement, having a positive and direct impact on the purchase intention towards Smartphone. Brand image clarifies if or if not the brand is for the consumer and contributes the purchase decisions (Dolich 1969) and thus, it influences the buying behavior of the customer (Johnson & Puto 1987) and thereafter brand equity thereafter (Biel, 1992). As much as the brand image is strong, people are more likely to buy that product so it has a positively strong impact onto the purchasing behavior of the customers. Thus, there is a highly positive relation between brand image and purchase intention.

When consumers strongly recommend the brand, and have unique relations with a brand, that generates positive attitude toward the brand (Keller, 2003). We consider brand image, as an important factor because it adds to the consumer’s decision process either he should purchase the brand or not (Dolich 1969). Brand image has a great effect on consumers’ next behavior (Johnson and Puto 1987), and have great contribution in the brand equity (Biel, 1992).

With the reference to Rizwan et al. (2012), researchers found that both brand image and purchase intention has significant positive relationship with each other. It means the brand image positively influences the purchase intention in the buying of counterfeited products.

Shah et al. (2012), the independent variable core brand image shows a positive relationship with the dependent variable purchase intention.

Another, similar type of research was conducted by Tariq, et al. (2013) they mentioned that there is strong relationship between brand image and purchase intention. This research finding also proved by another study of Wu (2007) and he found that every dimension of brand image influences the purchase intention of the consumer. “Brand names are valuable assets that help correspond quality and suggest precise knowledge structures which related to the brand” (Srinivasan & Till, 2002). Importance of Brand name is shaping consumer's behavior towards Smart phones has been recognized in the previous studies like; Lay et al (2013), Wollenberg & Thuong (2014).

Product Features

The inclusion of factors such as phone size, screen resolution, feasibility in carrying and good user interface are reason enough to consider that any specific brand of Smartphone is good enough to catch the eye of the younger generation. The main features that drive to the purchase decision for a mobile

phone are Bluetooth, internet connection; one needs a good Smartphone.

As per lay et al. (2013), “Feature is an attribute of a product to meet the satisfaction level of consumers' needs and wants, through owning of the product, usage, and utilization of a product. Product features includes hardware and software. Hardware is the description for a device that can be touched physically. The hardware of a Smartphone is the body of the phone itself, size and weight. Color and design are also considered as hardware as it is the physical appearance of the Smartphone. Software whereas is the general term for computer programs, procedure and documentation. The software of a Smartphone is the operating platform, storage memory, or apps that run the phone.”

Sujata et al. (2016) studied five factors namely as Technology factors, Hardware factors, Basic factors and Brand factors and Financial factors were taken in to consideration for the research work. The finding of the articles revealed that Technology, OS version and Hardware features have a significant effect on young student’s choice while purchasing a Smartphone.

In the research entitled “A Study of Consumer Preference for Smartphone: A Case of Solan Town of Himachal Pradesh” conducted by Guleria (2015) aims to ascertain elements which are responsible for developing consumer preference for Smartphone and several usability features. The research finding states that consumers considered usage ease and processing speed as major factors building preference, which was followed nearly by technological needs and applications.

Uddin et al. (2014) conducted a research work on the Title “Factors Affecting Customers’ Buying Decisions of Mobile Phone. The findings of the research state that while purchasing the mobile phone, customer are influenced by different factors which ultimately affects the purchase decision, the important factors which influence the customers during purchase are physical attributes which includes physical characteristics of mobile phone like camera, Bluetooth, color, weight and others. In the research, work undertaken by intended to determine the factors affecting purchase intention of Smartphone by identified five independent factors that affect purchase intention of Smartphone, which include price, compatibility, security, and social influence and consumer innovations.

Mokhlis & Yadi (2012) conducted a research on consumer choice criteria in mobile phone selection. Findings of the research state that while purchasing the mobile phone, customer are influenced by different factors which ultimately affects the purchase decision, the important factors which influence the customers during purchase are physical attributes which includes physical characteristics of mobile phone like camera, Bluetooth, color, weight and others.

Rahim et al. (2016) examined purchase intention of Smartphone among University students. The study explored

various factors, which influences purchase intention of Smartphone among university students in Malaysia. It examined the relationship between product features, brand name, social influence, product sacrifice and purchase intention of Smartphone. Ayodele et al. (2016) research aimed at determining the factors of Smartphone purchase behavior among young adults in Anambra State, Nigeria. Research finding states that aesthetic value, Smartphone features has a foremost effect on the purchase behavior among young adults.

As per Russell, (2012) factor affecting ones to acquire a Smartphone due to software consists of 33 % whereas hardware has only 17.6%. It shows that software is much more important than hardware in making Smartphone purchase decision.

Social factors

Reference groups include groups or people whom one can look up for guidance and ask for opinion. These are important source of influencing the brand purchases. Reference group include friends and family who influence ones buying decisions due to special skills, knowledge, personality.

“A consumer behavior is influenced by social factors, such as the consumer’s small groups, family, and social roles and status” (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). During the decision making process, consumers tend to always influence by the social group, which is the people. Depending on various factors, consumers might listen and believe in different social groups, perhaps to those who are more professional in certain fields. In the purchasing of Smartphone for Generation Y, perhaps the social influence might come from friends, peers, family members and spouse. According to a research, consumer’s purchase behavior is shaped up by others, especially by family members while buying high-involvement products (Farzana, 2012). According to another research, in Malaysia, 35.6% of 1814 respondents feel that the trend in community is one of the important criteria that influence Smartphone purchase decision (Osman, 2012). A study also found that social influence has a significant relationship of student’s dependency on a Smartphone (Ding et al., 2011).

Another study towards Malaysian young adult of age 19 to 25 shows that both direct and vicarious role models have an impact on the consumer’s purchase intention, in which direct role model refers to parents and vicarious role model refer to celebrities. Result shows celebrities have higher influence than parents (Ernest et al., 2010). Social influence indeed plays a significant role and it is the most influential to student’s dependency on Smartphone (Suki and Suki, 2013). Nowadays, people can develop their social network online through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and so on. They can find not only the information regarding Smartphone but they can also get comments and product reviews from the other users that currently or previously used the Smartphone. Social Influence has been found an important factors affecting

consumer's purchase in many studies (Qun et al., 2012; Anam, 2014; Ibrahim et al. 2014).

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2007), people surrounding them are influencing consumers’ action. They would seek for suggestion, advice as well as experiences of people that already purchase and use the Smartphone. They might tend to get it from different type of people especially for those that close to them such as friends, peers, family members and spouse. Based on previous research conducted in Malaysia by Osman et al. (2012), 35.6% of the respondents prefer to purchase the Smartphone according to the trend in the community. This can be supported by research done by Suki and Suki (2013), young generation especially students depend highly over people surrounding them in order to purchase the Smartphone. Consumers tend to get advice and opinions from their friends and families based on features of Smartphone and will purchase the similar Smartphone that their friends and families use.

Social factors affect consumer behavior significantly. Every individual has someone around influencing their buying decisions. The important social factors are: reference groups, family, role and status (Perreau, 2014).

Every consumer is an individual, but still belong to a group. The group to which a consumer belongs is called a membership group. This is a direct and simple classification. The second group type is a reference group. The reference group influences the self-image of consumers and consumers’ behavior. The reference group provides some points of comparison to consumers about their behavior, lifestyle or habits. Usually there are many smaller reference groups, which are formed by family, close friends, neighbors, work group or other people that consumers associate with. The groups to which a consumer does not belong yet can also influence. These inspirational groups are groups where a consumer aspires to belong and wants to be part in the future. (Kotler & Armstrong 2010)

Family members can influence individual consumers’ buying behavior. A family forms the environment for an individual to acquire values, develop and shape personality. This environment offers the possibility to develop attitudes and opinions towards several subjects such as social relations, society and politics. A family creates first perceptions about brands or products and consumer habits. (Kotler & Armstrong 2010).

Family members, is considered the fundamental structure of the initial Reference Group, have a great impact on purchase behavior (Thomson et al., 2007).

The beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors, and norms of the group are perceived to have relation upon the assessment, behaviors, and aspirations of another individual (Eva, & Judit, 2010). In addition to, Individuals may be involved in numerous different types of groups. Furthermore, reference groups have potential in forming a person attitude or behavior.

The effect of reference groups varies across products and brands (Sakpichaisakul, 2012, & Chaipornmetta, 2010).

Research Objectives

The basic objective of this study is to examine factors affecting the purchase decision of Smartphone in Kathmandu. This study aims to explore the relationship of different factors on purchase decision in the buying of Smartphone. Following are the specific objectives set in this study:

- To examine the relationship between the product features, social factors and brand name with purchase intention of Smartphone buying in Kathmandu.
- To explore the effect of product features, social factors and brand name on purchase decision of Smartphone buying in Kathmandu.
- To identify which variable or (variables) has the most prominent role on purchase decision of Smartphone buying in Kathmandu.

Theoretical Framework

There are different variables like sales promotion, point of purchase advertising, media advertising, product feature, product display, price of the product, competitor product price, price of the substitute product, dealing pattern, ease to recognition, salespersons influence, influence of reference group, delightful mind of customers, gender, brand, economic level of the customer, perceived quality etc. influence in the buying decision of Smartphone. In this research brand name, social factors and product features are considered as independent variables, which affect purchase decision as the dependent variable. Based on the review of available literature in the field of purchase decision, the following framework has been developed to undertake the study in systematic manner.

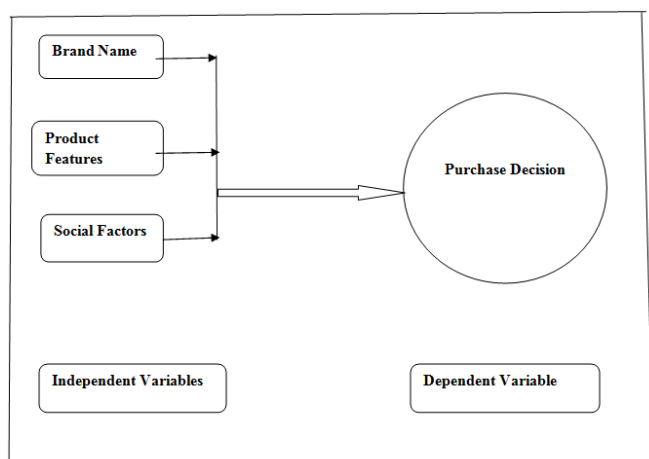


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Research Hypothesis

Based on the theoretical framework, the research hypotheses are proposed as follows:

- H1:** There is significant relationship between brand name, social factors and product features with purchase decision of Smartphone.
- H2:** There is significant effect of social factors, brand name and product features on purchase decision of Smartphone.

Research Methodology and Data Analysis

Research methodology covers the type of research design used for undertaking, population and sample, sampling process, source of data, data collection procedures and analytical tools that will be used to analyze the data and develop the relationship between purchase decision influencing factors and purchase intention among Nepalese Youth in buying smart phone in Nepalese market.

Research design is an overall framework or plan for the activities to be undertaken during the course of research activities. The research design of this study is descriptive and causal. This study has been investigated the impact of product features, social factors and brand name on purchase decision of Smartphone in Kathmandu.

Nepalese people who reside in Kathmandu valley will be the sample frame of the study. The appropriate sample size of the respondents has been taken through convenient sampling method. This study is based on primary source of data. Information about the retention factors has collected from the primary sources. The questionnaire has been used to collect the data required for undertaking the proposed study. Sample size for the study is 394. Correlation Analysis has been carried out to examine the association between retention factors and purchase decision. Regression Analysis has been used to examine the impact of independent variables on purchase decision.

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Table no. 1

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CBD	1.67	5.00	4.2000	.68329
SOF	1.00	5.00	3.5100	.81712
PRF	1.33	5.00	4.2267	.79826
BRN	1.00	5.00	3.8400	.89453

All variables were rated on the behavior intention scale with a score of 1 indicating strongly agree, midpoint 3 indicating unsure (neutral) and score of 5 indicating strongly disagree. The table 1 indicates the descriptive statistics of factors affecting purchase decision of consumers towards Smartphone in Nepal. The result has shown the mean score of consumer buying decision, social factors, product features and brand

name are 4.200, 3.51, 4.2267 and 3.84 respectively. Likewise, the standard deviations have been recorded to be ranging from 0.683 to 0.894 which are consistent. It shows that the variability of data collected is significant to be used for the purpose of study. The minimum and maximum values have been recorded to be 1 and 5 respectively. Thus, it can be concluded that the consumers are agree with the statements that social factors, product features and brand have significant influence on consumer buying decision while purchasing their products in the Nepalese markets.

Table 2: The Correlation Coefficient between Dependent and Independent Variables

Variables	SOF	PRF	BRN	CBD
SOF	1			
PRF	.400**	1		
BRN	.527**	.375**	1	
CBD	.573**	.434**	.557**	1
	.000	.000	.000	.000

The above table describes about correlation matrix between variables under investigation. It shows that there is positive correlation between social factors and consumer buying decision ($r = 0.573, p < 0.000$), product features and consumer buying decision ($r = 0.434, p < 0.000$), brand name and consumer buying decision ($r = 0.557, p < 0.000$) and consumer buying decision towards Smartphone buying in Kathmandu. There is positive and significant relationship between independent variables and purchase decision.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.740	.323		5.391	.000
	SOF	.119	.074	.142	1.605	.112
	PRF	.235	.082	.274	2.850	.005
	BRN	.273	.076	.358	3.615	.000
Y = 1.740+ 0.119SOF+ 0.235PRF+ 0.273BRN						

(*** = significant at 1 % level of significance), SOF = Social Factor, PRF = Product features and , BRN = Brand Name)

The above table describes about the multiple regression analysis. Two variables i.e. product features ($b = 0.235, p < 0.001$) and brand name ($b = 0.273, p < 0.01$) have significant impact on consumer buying decision towards Smartphone in Kathmandu. Likewise, social factors ($b = 0.119, p > 0.05$) has less significant impact on consumer buying decision towards Smartphone in Kathmandu at 5% level of significant.

Managerial Implication

The research result revealed that there is significant impact of product feature on consumer buying decision Smartphone products. It explains that consumers are conscious towards product features and brand name rather than the social factors of Smartphone products in Kathmandu.

The conclusive finding of this study helps in understanding the factors that influence the purchase decision towards Smartphone buying in Nepalese market. Through this study, it may be applicable to market and improving the understanding of the customer’s purchase decision towards Smartphone buying. This study is implacable to the managerial level and the academic level. It might be useful in assisting Smartphone companies to increase the demand of Smartphone in the Nepalese market. Nowadays, customers have more options in choosing their preferable Smartphone brands. As a result, it is necessity for these companies to make further improvements and use various marketing strategies to boost up their sales volume of Smartphone. The Smartphone companies are suggested to consider product features and brand name rather than social factors to enhance customer’s purchase intention.

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