

# Effect of Branding on Purchase Decision of Mobile Handset: A Case Study of London City

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## Acknowledgement

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## Abstract

Branding is a very important word in the current world. Brand name gives the confidence to the customers about the quality of the product, and hence ensures more sales. Jobber.D, (2007) explained that the brand name affects the purchase decision of the consumers as the consumers believe that strong brand name is equal to the good quality of product as well as the service. The research studies the effect of the brand preference on mobile purchase among the population of London. To understand this, the research studies the various factors which influences the choice of the consumers.

With the use of a 15questions among 250 respondents followed by a survey, it is concluded that the consumers are influenced by the brand name while searching or purchasing the product. Also apart from brand name the advertisements also makes an important contribution to the purchase decision. These are followed by the technical specifications and the price of the product. The reason why consumers select the brand emerged as the product specification, its value in the society and the ease of use.

In addition to this study shows most of the people uses internet and television to know about the product. The friends and family and newspapers have taken the secondary seat with respect to the brand introduction. Finally Apple is the most preferred brand among the population of London with highest level of satisfaction too. The same is followed by Samsung which is now followed by brands like Huawei, Sony and Nokia.

To sum up branding forms an important part of the customer's purchase decision. Moreover, the brand alone is not sufficient. The brand needs to offer the services and the product to meet the customers' expectations as well. Then only the brand becomes a name worth following in the industry.

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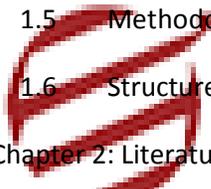
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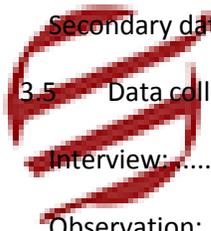
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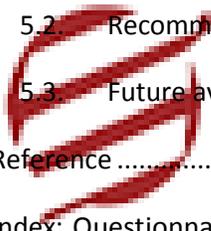
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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

*The idea behind this chapter is develop the background and the research problem. The chapter also focuses on the research significance and the flow of the research report. The purpose of the chapter is to introduce the reader to the subject of the research and the purpose for which the research was chosen. This chapter will provide the much needed framework before moving on to the further research studies.*

### *1.1 Background*

The concept of the brands is not new. The branding has been there since the times of Greek and Roman who used signboards to advertise for their shops and engraved stones to tell the products sold in the shops. The times have changed since then and the message of conveying the brand, but the process is still more or less the same. The brand image is still used as one of the most powerful tool to entice the customers and increase the market share (Rierzebos, 2003).

M. Delong (2004) stated that the customer's purchase decision is result of multiple factors, and one of those factors is the perception of the brand image in the mind of the consumers. Thus, marketers need to develop a brand image that would appeal to the customers and influence them to make the purchase of the product of that particular brand. There are many methods to develop a brand image and these includes the use of advertising, word- of-mouth, reference groups, celebrities, and media (R. Mihalcea and I. Catoiu, 2008).

Brand helps in developing the positive image about the brand. Branding is appeals to the consumers' tastes psychologically. Using the psychology of the human mind, the strategic

planners develop an image that resonates with the target group of the customers. Kotler et. al., (2013) has explained that there four different kind of brand name strategies:

Individual names (every product/service has its own brand name)

Blanket family names (all products/services have one brand name like corporate brand)

Separate family names (firm offers different products/services having different characteristics so products/services with similar characteristics have a family brand name), or the company Trade name with individual product/service names.

In the present market when the competition is quite high and each company is fighting for its own place, branding plays an important role. Although, the branding is important in every industry and field, the branding takes a special meaning in mobile phone handset industry where the competition is fierce and the technology is constantly growing.

Mobile has gained a special importance in past few decades as a reliable and efficient vehicle to connect one person to another. Since the 1980s when it was launched, it has come a long way. The development of mobile phones and technologies has been at such an advanced rate that it has resulted in the constantly changing customers' needs and preference. The mobile phone is the most widely and most quickly adopted technology. The constantly changing technology and advancement in the phones provide a dynamic landscape for customers' needs and preferences (Comer and Wikle, 2008).

The mobile handsets have become necessary part of every household these days.

The purpose of this study is to understand the effect of brand preference on the purchase decision of mobile phones. The study takes the help of the literature review, and previously published papers to develop the necessary framework to understand the consumer buying decision. It is expected that the study will help both the consumers and the strategy planners. The consumer will understand the reason for the choice of the mobile handset, while strategy planner will be able to understand if they need to take certain actions to ensure the successful strategic planning.

### *1.2 Rationale behind the study*

The inspiration for this paper is derived from the findings of Heikki, Jeri et al (2005) who found out that even though the mobile phones are getting advanced, many of the consumer do not even realize the features of the product they are selecting. The question this presents is if it is not the features, then what are the factors that influence the customers' purchase decision regarding the mobile handset. Heikki, Jeri et al (2005) showed there are seven factors that affect the consumers' choice of mobile phones pricing, reliability, outside influence, brand and basic properties, design, multimedia and innovative services.

Studies about the customers' choice of mobile handset provided varied results. Similar factors have been listed by Mei-jian, Haibo & Qiong (2012) who listed out four factors that affect the customers' choice of a mobile handset: group effect, enterprises networking marketing methods, and perceived brand identity. Khurana (2011) showed that product price, quality and availability, and promotion the factors affecting the phone choice in Hissar's mobile phone market.

Inspired by these studies, the paper tries to understand the effect of branding on the mobile handsets' purchase decision of consumers from London. This will help in understand the brand awareness and brand preference and the reason why a certain brand is preferred.

### 1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

The problem statement of the research project can be stated as “How Does Branding affect customers purchasing decision making in mobile phones handset in London?” The purpose of the study is to understand the perception of different handsets’ brand in the mind of the consumer. An attempt will be made to understand if the brand awareness and brand image affects the choices of the phone made by the consumers. Thus the research objective for the current study can be listed as:

- i) Understanding the factors which affect the choice of mobile handset.
- ii) Brand awareness and the effect of the brand image on the above mentioned choice.
- iii) Understanding the truth behind the brand image from the customers’ perspective?
- iv) Understanding the factors which help in developing the brand image.

### 1.4 Research Questions

In order to fulfill the above mentioned objective following research questions will serve as the base of the project.

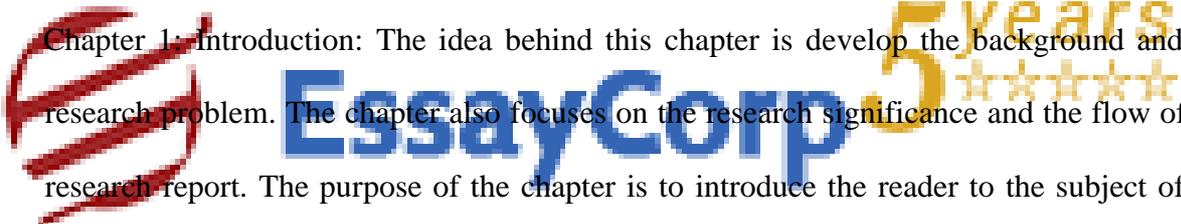
1. Which mobile handset brand is preferred most by consumers of London, and how does that influence their purchase decision?
2. What are the other factors which affects the choosing and purchasing the branded mobile product?
3. Do the customers believe that the brand image proclaimed is the true level of the quality of the product?
4. Does the brand image change with the personal experience of the customers?

### 1.5 Methodology in brief

The current study has been conducted with the help of mixed research including both primary and secondary methods. The secondary research was used to develop the framework for the primary research instrument development. Primary research was conducted by circulating the questionnaire to the various individuals. A target of around 250 people was selected to get the idea of the results. The questionnaires were filled in front of the researchers and the convenience sampling was used to select the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of the mix of structured and unstructured questionnaire to truly gauge the response of the respondents.

### 1.6 Structure of the Research

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives and to present the answers to the research questions, following is sequence of chapters is used for the report preparation:

- i.  Chapter 1: Introduction: The idea behind this chapter is develop the background and the research problem. The chapter also focuses on the research significance and the flow of the research report. The purpose of the chapter is to introduce the reader to the subject of the research and the purpose for which the research was chosen. This chapter will provide the much needed framework before moving on to the further research studies.
- ii. Chapter 2: Literature Review: The purpose of the chapter is to understand the various subjects and theories associated with branding and customer decision making choices. Also the factors affecting the choice of the consumers are also studied to clearly develop the much needed framework for the research.
- iii. Chapter 3: Research Methodology: Research is the process of gathering information and providing the answer to the question. This section takes a look at the various method of the research available to the researcher and what method is finally selected for the research. This section is necessary for researchers as it helps the researcher in keeping the track of the

work ; the section is also necessary for the readers to help them judge the accuracy of the results.

- iv. Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion: This chapter presents the finding and discussions of the research data obtained in the readable form. The mathematical techniques, graphs and tables are used to express the data obtained and develop the hypothesis with the help of the received data.
- v. Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations: This chapter presents the finding and discussions of the research data obtained in the readable form. The mathematical techniques, graphs and tables are used to express the data obtained and develop the hypothesis with the help of the received data.



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## Chapter 2: Literature Review

*The purpose of the chapter is to understand the various subjects and theories associated with branding and customer decision making choices. Also the factors affecting the choice of the consumers are also studied to clearly develop the much needed framework for the research.*

### 2.1 Understanding Brand and Brand Management

In order to understand the impact of branding on the customers' choice, the first thing is to understand what exactly branding is. The current market is highly competitive and each of the company wants to stay on the top. In order to win this competitive war, the branding is utilized (Kotler *et. al.*, 2013). Anisimove(2007) has defined corporate branding as the process by which the organizations enhance and market their distinctiveness and uniqueness by linking the corporate characteristics to the products and the services.

Branding can ensure that a product last for decades and be a favorite of the customers. The customers are even ready to pay for the branded product as compared to the unbranded product, but the brand equity is not a permanent feature for a company. The brand equity can be damaged if the care is not taken to manage it well (D. Bello and M. Holbrook as cited in Kotler, 2007). The brand image is the overall impression of the product or the service among the customers. Brands are not only useful for the companies because they help in increasing the market share; branding is equally important to retain the employees and to attract the investors as well (Ozer & Aydin, 2004). The benefits of the right kind of branding can be listed as follows:

- i) Brand equity ensures repeat purchase and loyalty of the customers.
- ii) Brand image helps in development of confidence among the new and the existing customers, especially when a new product is being launched (D. Aaker, 2009).
- iii) Brand equity can help the companies in earning higher margins through premium pricing systems within (D. Aaker, 2009).

iv) Brand equity also helps in getting the attention of the investors and the prospective employees.

The brand equity consists of four major parts. These parts are discussed individually in the subsequent sections:

*Brand Awareness:* Brand awareness can be defined as the customer's ability to recognize the brand once certain input is provided to them (D. Aaker, 2009). A customer will purchase the brand only when they are aware about it. Without awareness, the customer will not even know that such a brand is available in market, leave alone its purchase. Thus brand awareness is extremely important. Also, it has been noted that the brand with higher level of awareness have higher market share as compared to brand which are relatively unknown to the consumers. (D. Aaker 2009) has provided with the four different levels of the brand awareness among the consumers (T. Shimp, 2010):

- 
- a. *Brand unawareness:* The brands are unknown to the customers in this stage. The customers do not know that such a brand exists and are unable to recognize the brand without any kind of input.
  - b. *Brand recognition:* In this case customer is aware about the existence of such a brand. They might even know the features offered, but brand does not hold any special appeal for them. In such a case, the customer knows the brand, but does not have any special preference for the brand.
  - c. *Brand recall:* Brand recall is the situation in which customer is able to recall the brand at the time of purchase. They remember the features and all the other details about the product and known when they need to order the product.
  - d. *Top of Mind:* Top of the mind is the best possible brand for the company. The brand is the first thing that comes to client's mind when he is trying to order the product or to make the purchase. This is the top most kind of brand awareness.

Although how much the customer is aware about the brand changes from person to person and their individual habits, it is possible to increase the awareness about the brand by giving repeated exposure to the brand. Some of the method of increasing the brand exposure are use of advertisements, use of billboards, organization of events, setting up celebrities as a brand ambassadors etc. (Keller, 2008).

*Brand Loyalty:* Brand loyalty is when the customers are biased towards certain benefits offered by a product and are more likely to purchase the brand again and again. The benefits can be either the special features or the product price or the availability of the product as compared to the competition. D. Aaker (2009), divided customers into five different groups based on the brand loyalty:

e. The *switchers* are the people who are not concerned with what brand they are going to buy.

f. *Habitual buyers* are the people who prefer a brand because of their habit of buying the brand. They are not partial towards the brand because of any special reason and hence are not very loyal towards the brand.

g. *Satisfied buyers with switching costs* are the customers who are generally satisfied with the product. They are the loyal customers of the brand who will change their choice only in face of some kind of problem.

h. *Brand likers* are the people who like the brand because of its positive features and hence are more likely to buy the brand.

i. *Committed buyers* are the customers who are dedicated to one brand only and do not plan to change the brand ever.

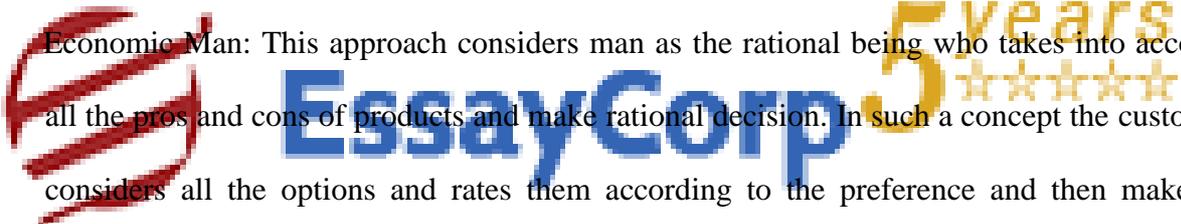
*Perceived Quality:* Brand equity is also affected by the perceived quality of the product. This perceived quality is not the true mirror of the brands' performance, but instead a representation of how the customer sees the brand (D. Aaker, 2009). What customer perceives is influenced by the

quality of the product offered and the kind of the service provided by the company. The customer will even pay the higher amount if he or she perceives that the product quality offered is of good kind.

*Brand Association:* Brand association represents the kind of emotional response brand generates in the customers. Right brand association means that the customers are able to recall the product while making the purchase decision. The brand association is mainly affected by the social image of the brand and features of the products offered by the brand.

## 2.2 *Understanding Customers' Purchasing Process: Approaches of Consumer Behavior*

Decision making behavior of the consumer can be understood by the following five different approaches:

- I.  Economic Man: This approach considers man as the rational being who takes into account all the pros and cons of products and make rational decision. In such a concept the customer considers all the options and rates them according to the preference and then make an optimal selection (L. Schiffman et al. 2007).
- II. Psychodynamic Approach: As per this theory, customer's behavior is influenced by the instincts. Rather than the objective rationale, feelings decide the behavior of the customers in this case.
- III. Behaviorist Approach: This theory believes that he behavior learnt from internal and external stimuli defines the purchasing choice of the customer. If the customer has enjoyed positive consequences of past purchase behavior, they are likely to continue doing so.
- IV. Cognitive Approach: Cognitive approach believes that the customers gather information from various sources in the environment. The purchase is made after the information is gathered about the product.

V. Humanistic Approach: This approach believes that rather than general information the customers are more focused on the individual experiences and behavior. The approach gives importance to the emotions and believes that consumers' emotions are main reason behind a purchase decision.

### 2.3 Theory of Consumption Values

Another theory which tries to explain the purchase decision of man is called theory of consumption values. This theory describes five reasons for which a consumer may select a brand. It is possible that all factors have influenced consumer decision or only one of them is responsible for the decision. A. Maslow's the Pyramid of Human Needs or J. Hanna's a typology of Consumer Needs can define the reason why consumer select the certain factor.(J. Sheth et al. as cited in Moore, Berger & Weiner, 2013). The five factors can be defined as:

- Functional Value: This value represent the utility, perceived or real, of the performance or utility or function of the product (J. Sheth et al. as cited in Moore, Berger & Weiner, 2013). The functional value is expected to be the major feature of the purchase decision process. The selection of the value is in line with the economic man concept discussed above

- Conditional: Conditional value is the value that makes the customer select a product because of a specific set of conditions. The product fits the criteria of customer's choice despite the contingencies faced by them (J. Sheth et al. as cited in Moore, Berger & Weiner, 2013). The consumer choice in such case can be described by attitude-behavior relationship of consumer.

- Social: This value is developed when the consumer perceives the utility or the use of the product because of their association with a social group. Positive or negative stereotype acquired

because of demography, socio-economic preference or cultural preference gives product its social value (J. Sheth et al. as cited in Moore, Berger & Weiner, 2013). The selection of product because of this presents a need for approval of society or social circle defined in cognitive and humanistic behavior above.

- Emotional Value: This is the value the product derives when the consumer associate specific feelings and emotions with the product. Many a time these values are derived from the childhood itself. The association of emotional values with the product is the reason why advertisements are developed today in such a manner so as to appeal to the emotional side of the consumer.

- Epistemic value: It is the value of the product or its capability to arouse any kind of curiosity in the consumers. Such product *provide novelty to the consumer, and their purchase is generally aimed at satisfaction of desire for knowledge* (J. Sheth et al. as cited in Moore, Berger & Weiner, 2013). This value is the representative of the desire for new and different experiences. This leads for the customers to try out new brand and branch out in different product. That's how lesser known brands make their way in the market—by arising the curiosity (DeLong,2004). The value can be better defined with the behavioristic approach.

#### 2.4 Factors Affecting Mobile Purchase Decision

Multiple research has been conducted in the above by considering the decision making process and the practices of the purchases of the consumer. David Jobber (2007) states that a consumer goes through many steps before making the final purchase of a product. These steps are as shown below:

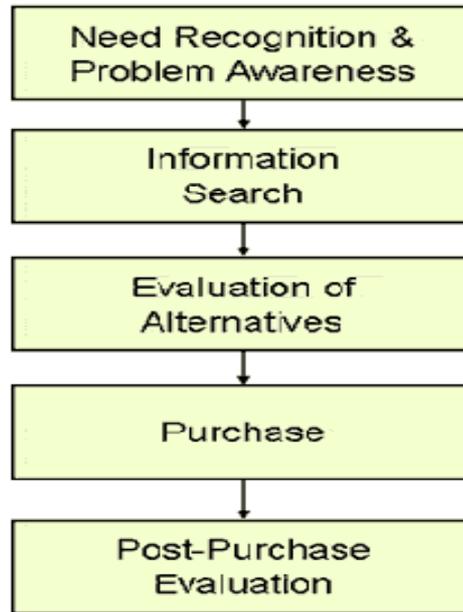


Figure 1: Consumer decision making process Jobber D. (2007)

- a) Need recognition: Accordingly to Jobber D. (2007) the need recognition is understanding that a product is required for its functional or any of the above mentioned reasons. The need recognition in mobile phone is its need for social values or for the purpose of daily use.
- b) Information search: Once the decision is made to purchase the product, the consumer then identifies what alternatives does he or she have and makes further enquiry about the product specifications (Jobber.D.2007.) . In case of mobile phones, this information can either be collected by the internal process like past experience, or by the external process using the web, experience of the friends etc.
- c) Evaluation of alternatives: The next step involves evaluation of the alternative products searched in the previous step(Jobber.D., 2007.). In case of mobile, the factors which influence the evaluation include the price of the mobile, the specification, the brand name etc.
- d) Purchase decision: The next step is the actual decision of making the purchase of a particular brand.

e) Post-purchase behavior: Once the purchase is done, the consumer uses the product and tend to evaluate its feature. This formation of opinion helps in purchase decision of others and the future purchase decision of the consumer as well.

### 2.5 Factors affecting the mobile choice decision: Past literature

Heikki, Jeri et al (2005) research on factors affecting consumer choice of mobile phones and concluded that many times the consumer make the purchase without being aware of the features or the properties of the product. They identified seven factors which affects the choice of the consumers: pricing, reliability, outside influence, brand and basic properties, design, multimedia and innovative services.

They also argued that the customer's choice is affected by the demographic features like their gender, location and their occupation. Heikki, Jeri et al (2005) concluded that the phone companies need to go beyond advertising the specifications and appeal to consumer on other fronts as well.

Mei-jian, Haibo & Qoing (2012) identified four major factors that affect the brand decision in their research: brand emotion of the web consumers, group effect, enterprises networking marketing methods, and the perceived brand identity are the four factors that influenced the choice behavior of web consumer in a different degree and way.

Alamro and Rowley (2011) had expressed three features in their research which defines the brand choice of a consumer: consumer attributes, brand image and band awareness are the antecedents of brand preference.

Zhou & Shanturkovska.( 2011) on their research on Chinese Consumer Behavior in the Mobile Phone market – Nokia Case described that the successful strategies of Nokia to become a brand mobile

are working with the locals, maintaining customer satisfaction, offering diverse product portfolio, establishing strong brand image, prioritizing —people first, localizing research and development centers, expanding broad distribution channels, and implementing low pricing – high quality strategy in the unique Chinese market.

Thus as seen above, a lot of research has been carried out in the different geographical regions to understand the consumer choice of the mobile brand. Although there is no consensus, the following features emerge as the notable features for that affect the purchase decision of the customers

**Table 1: Consumer Criteria for Selection of Mobile Phone**

Types of Criteria			
Technical	Economical	Social	Personal
Reliability	Price	Status	Self image
Durability	Value of money	Social belonging	Risk reduction
Performance	Running costs	Convention	Ethics
Style/look	Residual value	Fashion	Emotions
Comfort	Life – cycle cost		
Delivery			
Convenience			

### 2.6 London Mobile Phone Market

Before conducting the research on the branding in London market, it is necessary to understand the brands that are famous in London and the reasons behind the fame. In the current competitive market, there are many brands of mobile phone available in the market. The following graph represents the market share of the major mobile companies in 2014.

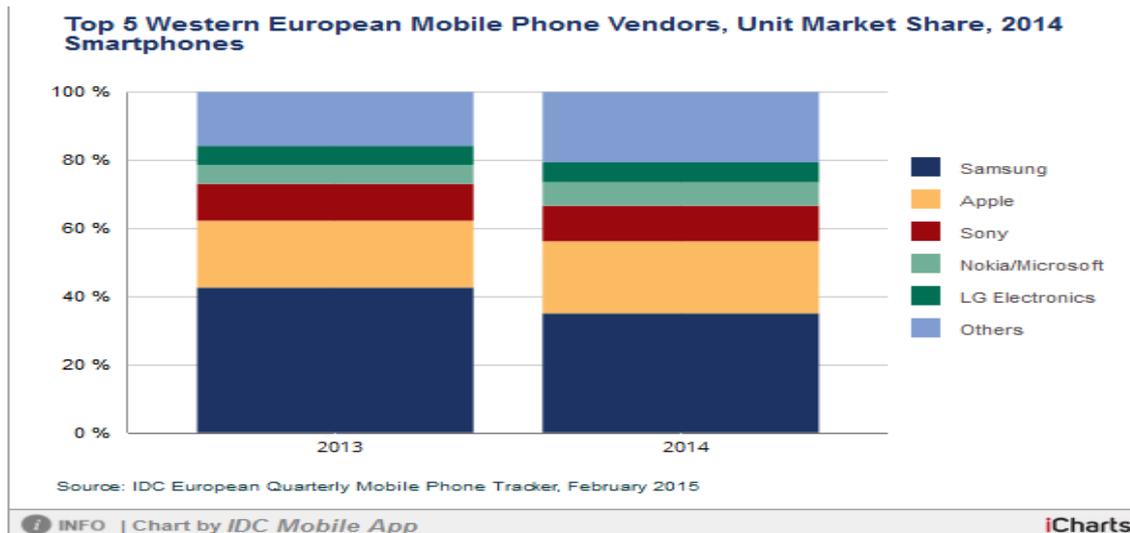


Figure 2: Top 5 Mobile Phone Companies of Europe in 2014 on the basis of Market Share(IDC, 2015)

Apart from the above mentioned vendors, the other vendors like Huawei and Xiaomi also made their entry in the market. The reports indicate that 2015 showed the marked decline in the market share of the android phone while the market share of Apple and Huawei increased (Inquirer, 2015).

A lot of literature has tried to understand the reason for the popularity of the brand. Some of the major reasons for the various companies identified in different articles are listed below:

- i) Apple: The major reason for the success of Apple is considered as is leadership in innovation. It develops the products which are different from all the other products. The Apple Operating system is safe and secure and offers more security to the consumers. Moreover, carrying an Apple phone is considered as the matter of prestige. The phones developed by Apple have higher social value and hence are preferred by the users in general. Moreover, premium pricing ensures that there is a niche markets for the phone.
- ii) Samsung: Samsung is known for its wide variety of the phones in different price range. Since Apple phones are premium products, Samsung's product offers an easy solution to the people with lesser budget. The wide range ensures that something is available for everyone in Samsung. Moreover, the products offered have unique design which is favorite of the customers.

iii) Sony: Sony as a phone has lesser share in the market, but is mostly preferred because of its camera and unique features. Although not innovative, the phones offered by Sony are considered as the durable products. Moreover, Sony provides an excellent after-sales service which makes it a favorite among many of the users.

iv) Huawei: Another company which is making waves among the users is Huawei. The biggest USP of Huawei is its lower price which makes it the darling of the customers on budget. Moreover, the features offered by the brand rival the other high-end brands as well.

## 2.7 Conclusion

The chapter studied the various theories associated with the branding and the customer purchase theories. These theories help us understand what value the brands have for the customer, and what are the other factors which affect the choice of the customers.



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### **Chapter 3: Methodology:**

*Research is the process of gathering information and providing the answer to the question. This section takes a look at the various method of the research available to the researcher and what method is finally selected for the research. This section is necessary for researchers as it helps the researcher in keeping the track of the work ; the section is also necessary for the readers to help them judge the accuracy of the results.*

A research can be based on two theories: positivism and hermeneutics. Positivism is the scientific method of research which expresses the knowledge through mathematical and logical language. Hermeneutics approach, as opposed to positivism, is based on the interpretation of the result. The idea of hermeneutics is to understand the meaning of result obtained. This research is based on Hermeneutic approach (Hine & Carson, 2007).

#### *3.1 Method of Research:*

There are two methods of research available with the help of which the data can be collected and interpreted: Qualitative and Quantitative. Based on the research question, the research method is selected in such a way that it supports the research question (Maxwell, 2012).

##### *Qualitative Method:*

Qualitative approach is more focused on collecting the information through quality of the words rather than the numbers. The data for qualitative research can be gathered with the help of the interviews, detailed questionnaires or by group discussion methods. The sampling used might be small, but the focus is on getting the complete and in-depth answer for each question. This help

in understanding the influences and phenomenon affecting the sample population (Maxwell, 2012).

### *Quantitative Method:*

Quantitative approach makes use of the numbers rather than the quality of the answers. The result obtained from the research is analyzed based on the numbers and then mathematical models are used to treat and analyze the data (Gorard, 2010). In order to successfully use quantitative method, it is necessary that the researcher be clear about the research objectives and the kind of answer they expect before starting the data collection process. The tools used for the quantitative research mainly include questionnaires. The idea behind the quantitative research is to seek measurement and understand the response of the sample population (Gorard, 2010).

Based on the above described theory, this research is mainly based on the quantitative research as the current research studies the fixed set of customers and gets their opinion with the help of the questionnaire. Small amount of qualitative analysis will also be conducted to understand the consumer preference, but that amount will not be notable. Thus based on the research question, the quantitative method of the research analysis is selected.

### *3.2 Types of Research:*

There are many type of researches available to a researcher. McNabb (2015) has divided the research into three types: descriptive, exploratory and explanatory. He explained that while descriptive and exploratory researches are dedicated to the quantitative research, qualitative research is more suited to explanatory type of research (McNabb, 2015).

*Descriptive Research:*

Descriptive research provides the snapshot of a situation. The research mostly is used for the large samples where the research is being conducted to define the attitudes, opinions and behaviors of the people in particular environment. The descriptive research tries to describe an event or a situation.

*Exploratory Research:*

Exploratory research is done for as a way to explore a situation. In the case of exploratory research, information is not available about the topic and research is conducted as a preliminary way to understand the subject. Exploratory research is mostly done with the wider sample group of people.

*Explanatory Research:*

Explanatory Research is conducted to explain some kind phenomenon or to develop the theories associated with the research. The purpose of this kind of research is to either understand the cause and effect situation or to understand how the response of one group varies from the other. The research is also conducted to develop and support the theories associated with the subject.

The current research can be termed as descriptive in nature because it tries to understand the mobile phone purchase behavior of the sample population. The research is concerned about the brand customers prefer along with the reasons why these brands are preferred. The questions asked are mix of closed ending and open-ended questions which are utilized for the purpose of research.

*3.3 Population and sampling Method Used:*

Once the research type is decided, the next step is to decide the sample population for the research. This involves selection of the group of the people who will be utilized for the research purpose. The sample chosen shall be such that it fits the requirement of the research, and the one which can be utilized further for the research too (Schindler & Cooper, 2013).

*Population:*

Population refers to the small group of people whom the researcher wants to use for developing the opinion (Babbie, 2015). Since it is not possible for a researcher to utilize the group of people, a certain group of people is selected whose opinions are utilized. Such is called the population in terms of the research. In the case of current research, the research is to focus on the population of the London and hence same can be considered as the population.

*Sampling:*

Sampling is a very important point in research as in most of the cases, it is not possible for the researcher to conduct a research throughout the population. Thus to ease the research, a small subset of the population is selected. That selected subset of population is called the sample (Phillips & Saunders, 2011).

Gorard (2010) has explained that the group of people on whom the research is desired to be conducted is the population while the subset on which the research is finally administered is the sample population.

Sampling needs careful consideration as the larger number of sample means more faithfulness to the real view presented by the population, but the same will call for the higher amount of time and resources. On the other hand, smaller sample means lesser time and lesser resources, but the same

may not be able to capture the opinion rightly. Also the sample should be selected in such a way that it is true representation of the population (Gorard, 2010).

Thus, it can be concluded that right sampling is useful in cost saving and time saving and also can be extrapolated to encompass the population. There are many techniques available for sampling. One such technique is simple-random sampling. In such a situation, each member of the population is considered for the sample, and each of the members has equal chance of being selected. Simple-random sampling is a preferred method of sampling for marketing research. Since the purpose of the research is to find the habit of the population of the whole of London, attempt is made to understand the same by using the sample population. A sample size of 250 has been considered for the research, and convenience sampling technique has been selected. The convenience sampling means that the research instrument is administered as per the convenience of the researcher. The research instrument is delivered to the respondents on the road at different times of day so as to allow the variety of demographics. Different geographic areas have also been selected for the same.

#### *3.4 Sources of data collection:*

In market research, there are two different ways of collecting the data:

##### *Primary data:*

Primary data is the data that is collected by the researcher on first hand basis. It is the new data that is collected solely for the purpose of current research (Yin, 1994). In this research primary data is gathered through questionnaire. The questionnaire is filled by the sample population selected randomly.

*Secondary data:*

Secondary data is the data that is existing in nature. This data has been collected by the past researchers and scholars for some other purpose other than this research (Gorard, 2010).

This research uses the data from the secondary research to develop the questionnaire and to answer develop the concept associated with the research.

*3.5 Data collection tools:*

As discussed, the data collection is required for the primary data. The data can be collected by many different methods. Some of the research methods are listed below (Schindler & Cooper, 2013).

*Interview:*

Interview involves the discussion with the subject with the help of the preplanned questions. Interviews are conducted with the open-ended question and allow the interviewer to watch and observe the subject. The interview course can be changed as well in case the interviewer feels like it (Yin, 1994).

*Observation:*

Observation involves noticing the reaction of the people to the different scenarios. There is no conversation or sharing of the views involved in the method of the observation, but the interviewer just takes note of the action and the reaction of the subject (Yin, 1994).

*Survey:*

Survey tool calls for the collection of answers from the respondents through one or the other methods. The respondents are allowed to answer a certain set of questions provided to them, and the data so observed is analyzed accordingly. Questionnaire is the most common method used for the collection of data with the help of surveys. Questionnaire acts as the medium of

communication between researcher and respondent. A questionnaire can include two types of questions:

- a) Open-ended Question: These questions allow the respondents to answer in the way they want. The answers are the detailed answers and the respondents can explain their choices.
- b) Closed-ended Questions: Closed-ended questions are the questions with the fixed choices of answers. The respondents are provided with the list of answers out of which they are supposed to select the answers.

The kind of questions selected depends upon the research type and the research objectives (Gorard, 2010). A qualitative research calls for open ended questions which allow the users to explain their answers and the researcher can analyze them accordingly (Gorard, 2010). A quantitative research calls for the closed ended questions which are better for handling through the mathematical expressions.

Yin (2009) also argues since the questionnaire is developed based on the literature reviews, the questions are also dependent upon that.

For the purpose of this research, the mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions is used. This will help us in understanding the viewpoint of the sample population better. Also, the questionnaire is filled by the respondents in front of the researcher and hence the response rate is 100%.

### *3.6 Developing a questionnaire*

The questionnaire should be developed in such a manner that it allows the respondents to understand the questions and to answer them completely. The questions asked should be clear, concise and unambiguous. In the case of the current dissertation the questionnaire needs to ask

the question about what brands the customers know of and favors as branding is not only the purchase decision but the amalgamation of what the customer knows and the process of the brand development. Following steps were followed to develop the questionnaire:

- i. The first step was the specifying the objective of the questionnaire. This helped in understanding what kind of questions should be asked. Thus, the impact of branding on customers' perspective was considered as the major objective of the questionnaire.
- ii. The second step involved division of the questionnaire into segments. For the case of this questionnaire, it was divided into following sections: general information, brand visibility and reasons, brand choice and reason, brand loyalty and its reasons, and the information about the brands.
- iii. The third step involved the design of the questions in terms of the above headings. The same was done keeping in view the literature review and past researches on the subject.
- iv. The fourth step involved the testing of questionnaire. In order to ensure this, the questionnaire was tested on the members of friends and family.
- v. Reliability and validity of the questionnaire was then studied to ensure that questions and the sample population can be used to represent the population.
- vi. The last step involved the revision of the questionnaire on the basis of the feedback received from the above steps.

#### *Distribution of the questionnaire*

There are many method available for the distribution of the questionnaire among the respondents. Some of these methods are listed below:

- i. **Email Distribution:** This method involves sending of the questionnaire via Emails and then returning of the filled questionnaire. This method is quite famous because this

allows researcher to send the questionnaire to a large group of people. The biggest disadvantage of this method is that the response rate is low. Also, there was no way to ensure that the sample population required for this survey will be as diversified as expected. Moreover it limits the questionnaire to the people who have access to internet.

- ii. **Physical Mail Distribution:** This process involves sending of the questionnaire via physical mail along with the self addressed envelope which can be utilized to return the filled up questionnaire. Although this distribution overcomes the disadvantage of the email distribution, it is not suitable for the larger number. Also, arranging for the addresses without alienating the respondents would have been difficult.
- iii. **Hand to hand distribution:** This involves the distribution of the questionnaire directly by the researcher to the respondents. This system takes away the limitations of both physical and email distribution. Also, it ensures that the answers filled are somewhat right as the researcher is themselves present with the researcher. On the other hand, there is a chance that the respondents might be influenced to embellish the answers in presence of researcher.

For the current research, hand to hand distribution is used as the method to distribute the questionnaire. It is believed that the researcher will be able to cover wider geographical area and get the variety of answers in this manner.

#### *Research Questions and Their Rationale*

The table below indicates the division of question investigated in the questionnaire. Following points explain the rationale behind the selection of these questions:

- 1) Age and Gender Information: This information helps in understanding the diversity of the population chosen. This will further help in understanding if the research data can be extrapolated to the general public or not.
- 2) Brand known of: This question asks the respondents to name the brands they have most heard of. The idea is based in the definition of brand recall. It is believed that if customer can recall the brand, then he or she will be able to recall the brand during the final purchase decision as well. The question asks respondents to select three brands that they have head of most.
- 3) The reasons for brand recall: This question asks the users to identify the reason why they remember the above three brands. This will give an idea about what kind of factors increases the brand recall value.
- 4) Brand Usage: This section of the questionnaire focuses on the brand used by the customer and the reason why the brand was selected. It also asks the customer to explain if they are satisfied with the brand or not.
- 5) Brand Loyalty and Reasons: The brand loyalty questions are concerned with customer satisfaction and how loyal they are to a particular brand. The question asked also asks the users to specify the reason for switching as well as the brand loyalty.
- 6) Information Collection: This question focuses on understanding what are the majority of the factors which help in development of brand equity. The question tries to understand the various factors which influence the visibility of the brand.

**Table 2: Table of Research Questions**

Topic	Specific Information investigated
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General Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender information</li> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Income of the individual</li> <li>• Brand Owned</li> </ul>
Brand Known of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The brand customer is most aware of and its reason</li> </ul>
Brand Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment with the brand</li> <li>• Reason for Selecting the brand</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction</li> </ul>
Brand Loyalty and Reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfaction for service and quality</li> <li>• Switching information</li> <li>• Brand Loyalty, if any</li> <li>• The Reason for Loyalty</li> </ul>
Information About Any brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding how customer gets the information for any brand.</li> </ul>

### 3.7 Analysis

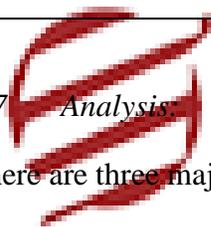
There are three major strategies of analyzing the research:

#### *Proposition strategy:*

Proposition strategy involves formation of certain proposition. The results obtained through the results are then used to justify or negate the propositions. This kind of analysis is useful for “how” or “why” kind of questions.

#### *Explanatory strategy:*

This strategy focuses on the situation and tries to understand the cause-effect relationship. The explanatory strategy is quite famous for explaining a subject. In this strategy, explanations are formed with the help of the research data.



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*Descriptive Frame work:*

Descriptive strategy describes or justifies a phenomenon. It is more focused on discussing the frequency with which the phenomenon occurs. The descriptive framework is suitable for the quantitative analysis.

Scholars have argued that research should be done with a previous theory in mind. The theories for this research are discussed in the previous chapter. Also, the research follows the descriptive framework as it focuses on the number and the frequency with which the reasons are cited in the research data obtained. Since the theories of customer behavior are explained earlier, the research follows the inductive approach rather than the deductive approach.

3.8 *Validity and Reliability of Data*



*Validity:*

Validity checks if the research follows the pattern it is meant to do (Matthias, 2013). Validity is concerned with various theories associated with the research and verification of these theories to check if they are in line with the research objectives (Matthias, 2013).

Yin(2009) explains that validity of the research can be done internally and externally. Internally, it is done at data analysis stage, and externally it is done when the research is being administered.

(Yin, 2009).

This research contains a mix of closed and open-ended questionnaire administered on 250 people. These questions have been tested for any confusion by discussion with the teachers as well as colleagues. The answers are verified during the analysis stage.

External validity refers to if the results obtained can be generalized to the rest of the public. Since the research is being conducted from random sample of the population, the results can be generalized for London population. The results cannot be generalized throughout the world as consumer preference changes from geographical area to area.

*Reliability:*

Reliability of the research is the process of reducing errors and biasing. Also reliability should ensure that the results have not been copied or can neither be copied. Since the result is conducted with the help of quantitative method as well, it is believed that the same results will not be able to replicate. Also, since the questionnaire is administered personally, the respondents are assured of their confidentiality. The research is conducted at different areas and different times of the day so as to ensure that the sample population reflects the people of all age-group and areas. The research has also been conducted without any particular preference to gender so as to ensure completely unbiased answers.

*3.9 Ethical Consideration*

The research suffers from ethical consideration of questionnaire. With questionnaire, it is difficult to ensure whether the respondents have given the true answers or whether the answers are fabricated to appeal to the researcher or to present a better picture. Also, since the research is conducted before the researcher, the chances of answers being given to impress the researcher

are higher. In order to overcome the same, the respondents were explained why the research was important and how it can be utilized.

### 3.10 Conclusion

The chapter explains the research design followed for this particular research. The research type, method, instrument, and methods of analysis are discussed here.



## Chapter 4: Findings and Discussions

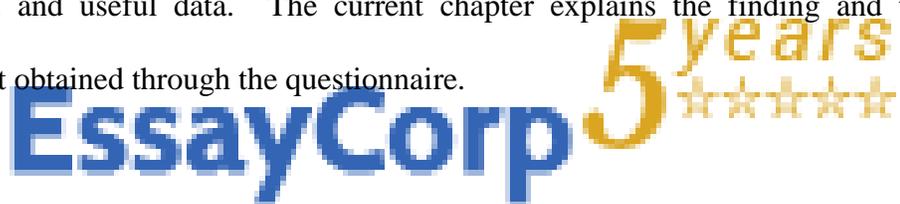
*This chapter presents the finding and discussions of the research data obtained in the readable form. The mathematical techniques, graphs and tables are used to express the data obtained and develop the hypothesis with the help of the received data.*

The survey questionnaire was circulated among 250 random people of London . The data was collected from these respondents. The respondents were requested to fill the questionnaire by the researcher themselves, and the resulting ratio was found to be excellent. None of the respondents expressed any constraints about filling up the questionnaire. Moreover, all the questionnaires represented the logical and useful data. The current chapter explains the finding and the discussions on the result obtained through the questionnaire.

### 4.1 Age and Gender

As discussed in the literature review, the age, gender and work profile of the person plays a role in the choice of the brand and the preference they give to brand. Hence the data is collected to ensure that the survey sample presents the healthy mix of people.

Around 42% (105 numbers) of the respondents were under 30 years of age and 32.8%(82 numbers) of respondents lied in the age between 30- 40 years of age. 20% of the people(50 nos.) belonged to the age of 40-50 years, and balance 5% of the sample population represented( 13 numbers) the people beyond 50 year of age. The female respondents were around 52%(130 numbers) while the male respondents constituted 48%(120 numbers) of the total respondents. This presents a gender-wise well balanced sample. The age-wise sample is well-balanced as well



as it represents the buying trends among the consumer. The biggest consumer band of the mobile phones lies between 18-40 years of the age, and the same is well-represented here in the sample.

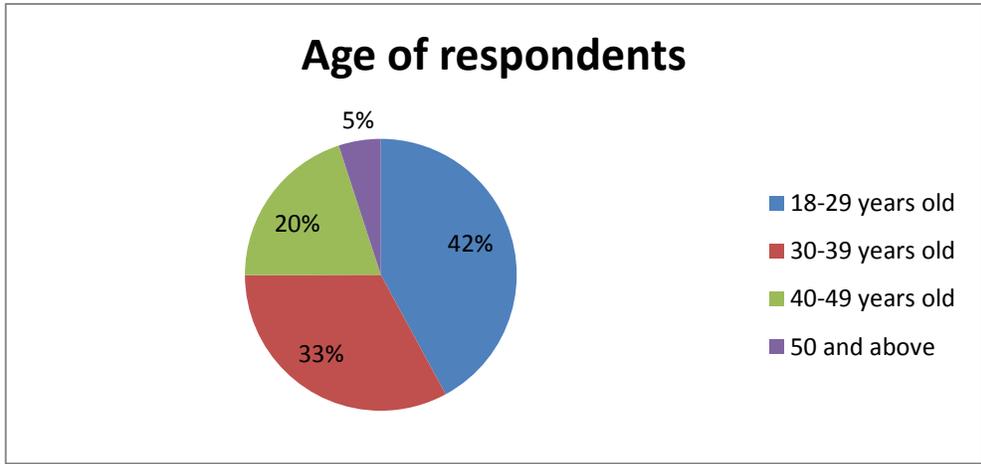


Figure 3: Pie chart showing age of the respondents

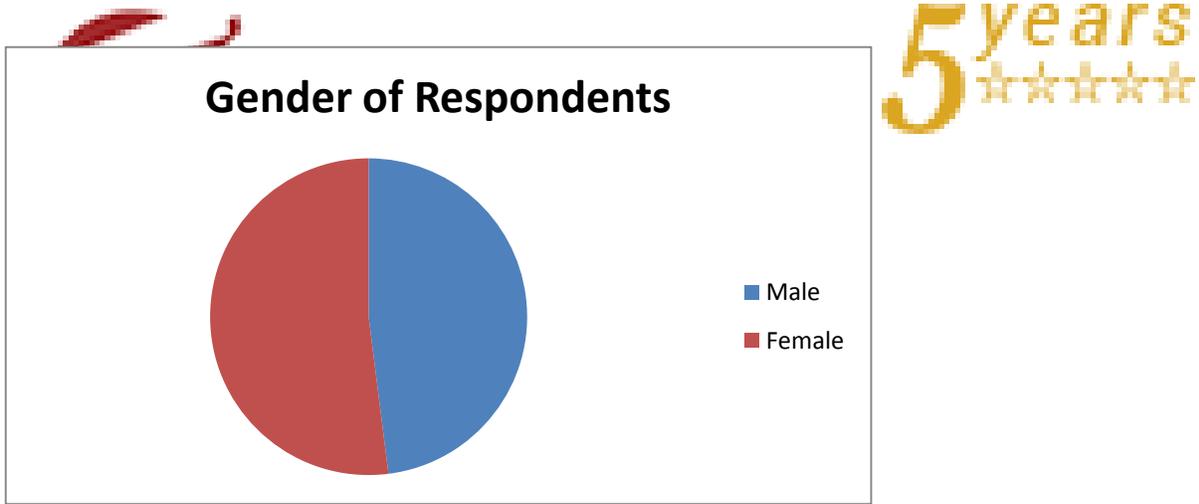


Figure 4: Gender of the Respondents Pie chart

#### 4.2 Mobile Set brands customer can most easily recall

As discussed above, brand recall is an important factor that affects the purchase decision. Following results indicate the brand recall in the sequence-wise response. The top most brand of smartphones noted by the sample population was Apple which was noted down by 185 respondents, i.e. 74% of the people responded Apple, while balance 26% of the people noted

down Samsung as the top brand. This indicates that the most easily recallable brand for the population of London is Apple and Samsung. Although as seen in literature review, the market share of Samsung and Apple has been rivaling for years, the people still recall Apple as the topmost brand.

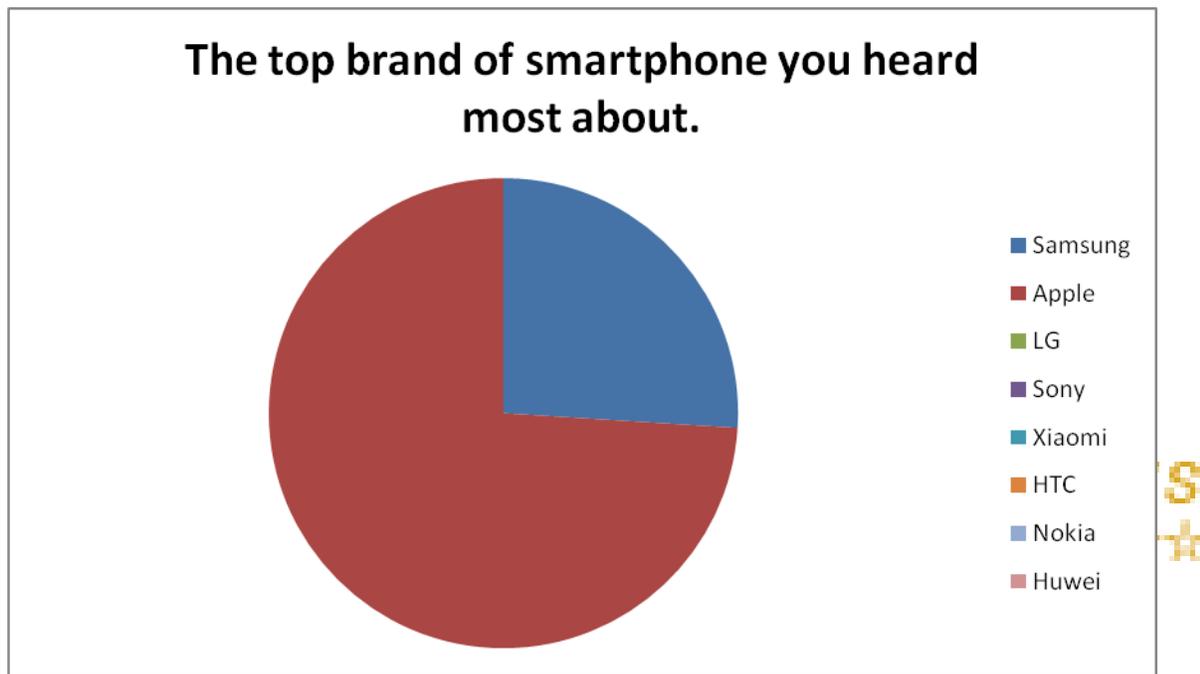


Figure 5: Pie-chart indicating the topmost recallable brand of smartphone noted by the sample population

The reason why people could recall these names was listed as the brand name. The reasons of specifications and price were also indicated by a few of the respondents.

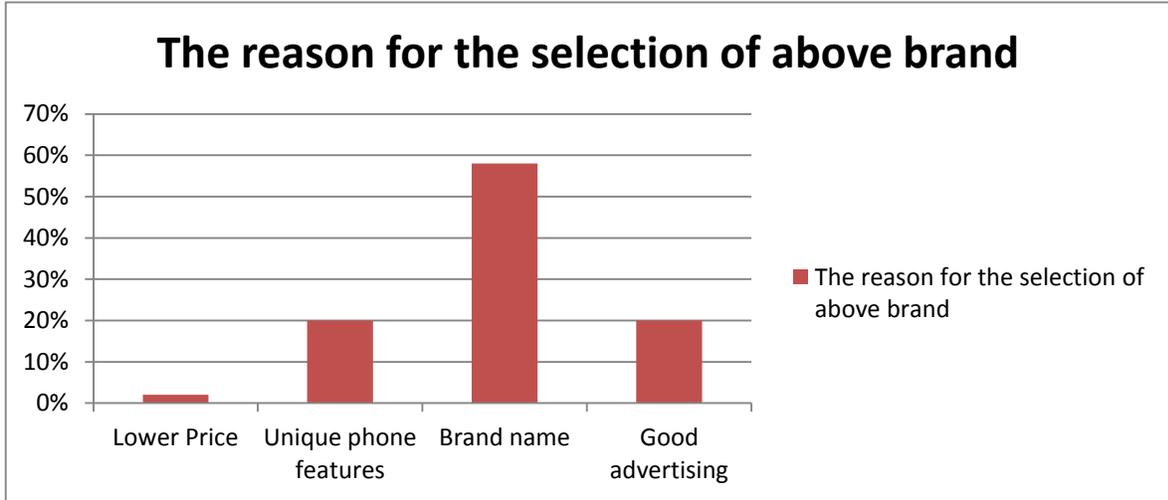
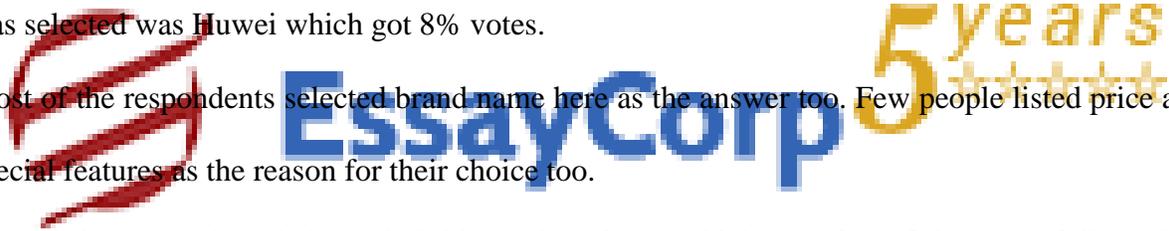


Figure 6: Factors indicating the reason for the selection of the topmost brand

The second most recallable brand emerged as Samsung(40%). The same was followed by Apple(30%). 20% people listed Nokia, and 2% people also selected Sony. Another brand that was selected was Huawei which got 8% votes.

Most of the respondents selected brand name here as the answer too. Few people listed price and special features as the reason for their choice too.

The third topmost brand showed Nokia as the winner which got 50% of the votes followed by 20% of the votes for Sony. 20% of the people noted down Apple here along with 10% listed Samsung as well.



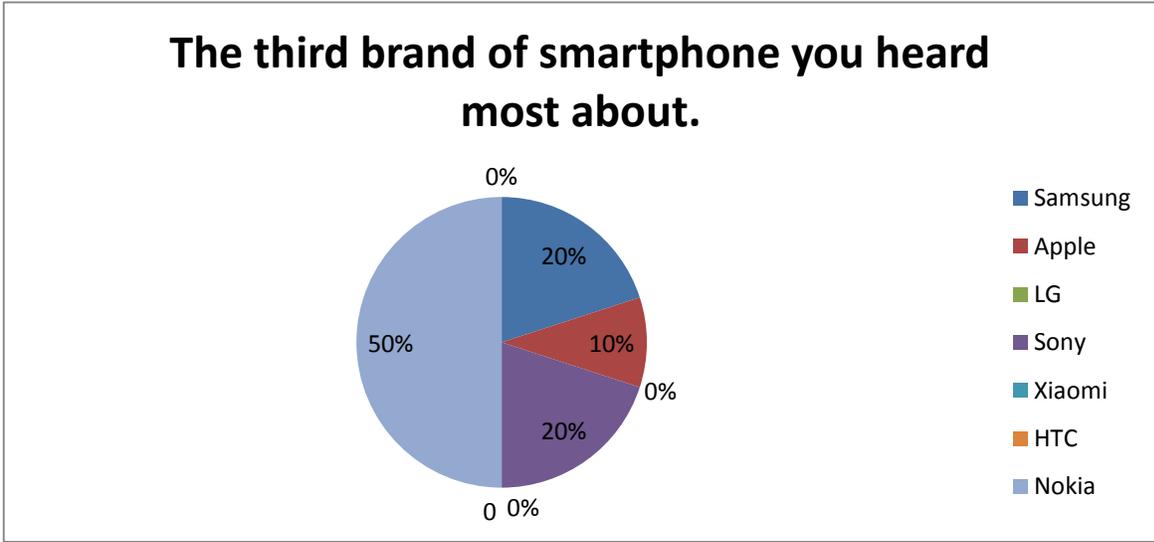


Figure 7: Pie chart showing third most heard brand of smartphone among respondents

The reason varied from the special features to the brand name here as well.



Figure 8: Graph indicating the reason for the choice of third most recallable brand.

Thus as clear from above recall value of phone handset can mostly be dedicated to the reasons in the following order:

- a) Brand Name
- b) Good Advertising
- c) Unique Phone Features
- d) Lower Price

As seen above, the good advertising and brand name emerges with higher votes than the phone feature and the price. This agrees with the theory that the customers' choice is not always based on the features of the phone. Branding and advertising also affects which brands the customer is able to recall.

#### 4.3 Purchase Decision of the Customers

It was assumed that the customers' purchase decision is different from the brand they recall. This question tried to understand the reason why a customer selected certain brand to purchase.

Following table indicates the response of the customers in percentage.

**Table 3: Table indicating the factors that affect the choice of purchase of the consumer**

Select how much are you influenced by the following factors while purchasing the handset	Not Influenced at all	Somewhat Influenced	Strongly Influenced
Price	12%	28%	60%
Brand Name	10%	50%	40%
Distinguishing Features	20%	64%	16%
Especially made phone for a target market.	40%	30%	30%
Marketing Techniques	30%	60%	10%
Company's treatment of the customers	20%	40%	30%

As we can see from the above table, almost all the factors influence the choice of the mobile handset by the consumer. The focus market design strategy has lesser response as compared to the other factors, while price and the brand name tops the list of factor which influence the choice of mobile handset.

#### 4.4 Favorite Mobile Handset Brands and Reason of Choice

This question tries to look into the fact if the favorite brand of consumers and the brand purchased matches to some extent, or is the above recall merely the effect of the advertising.

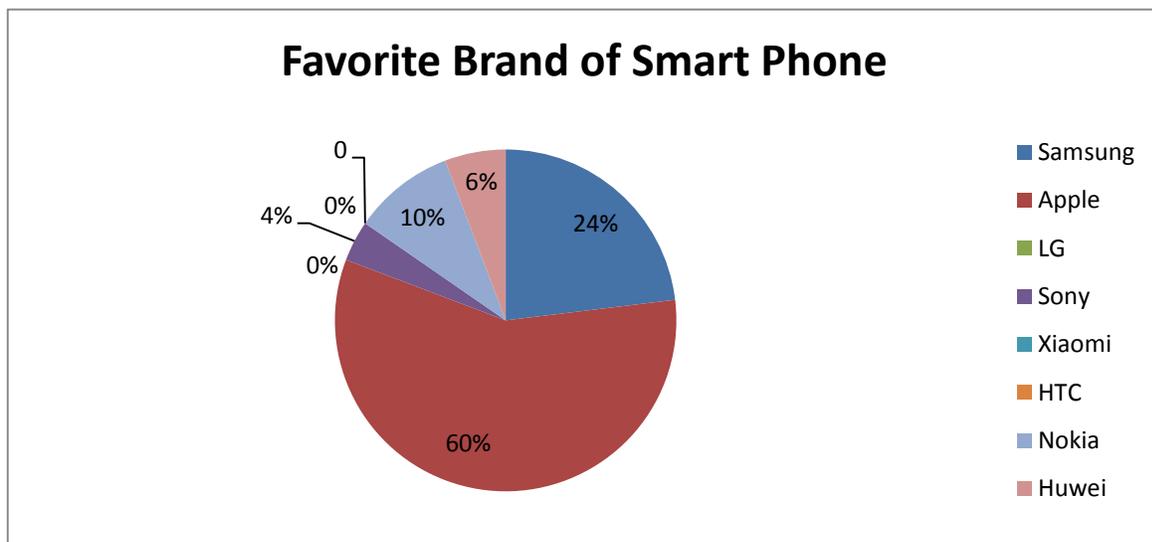


Figure 9: Favorite Brand of Smartphone

This indicates that the brand name is truly influential as customers not only recalled Apple and Samsung, but they truly believe the brands to be good.

The next question was an open-ended question which asked for the reason why the respondents selected these brands. The reasons were wide and varied. But some of the common reasons for each of the brands are listed below

For Apple, the reason why people favored the products can be categorized as:

- i) Famous brand

- ii) Ease of use
- iii) Safe and secure operating system.
- iv) Excellent camera
- v) Social Value

For Samsung as the brand, following emerged as the major reason for its popularity among the consumers:

- i) Brand name
- ii) Many choices.
- iii) Specification and design

As seen above, the topmost votes went to the brand name which means that branding does effect the mind of the consumers.



62% of the consumer said that they were loyal to the brand they use. The next question asked about the reason why they are loyal and the reasons that were listed were satisfied with the service, easy to use, excellent society image provided by the phone, resale value, customer service etc. The interesting factor was that most of these people had listed Apple as their favorite brand.

This shows that the brand name and good features do play an important role in winning the customers' loyalty. The brand loyalty can be increased if the companies provide better service to consumers. The loyalty of the customers is not dependent upon the name of the brand itself, but on the other features like t how the product performs on the expectations of the consumers.

#### 4.6 *Information about the brand*

When asked about how they heard about the brand, most of the people wrote advertisement as the major factor. Some people indicated the “well-known brand” as the reason as well, while other listed out the internet. Nobody mentioned newspaper as the brand introduction reason. Similarly only 10% of the people mentioned friends or families. Some 5% of the people also mentioned that they were introduced to the brand in the showroom itself. This indicates the current trend of branding that the companies can follow. Newspapers are dwindling, while internet is gaining its presence and hence, most of the people consider internet and television as their information source. Society presence of the brand name also makes it famous among the consumers.

#### 4.7. *Conclusion*

Thus as seen from above, branding does play an important role in the purchase decision of the consumer. But branding alone is not sufficient for the consumers’ interest. The product and services offered by the handset companies should be able to live up to the expectations of the consumers. Then only, the brand loyalty will be ensured.

This chapter discussed the findings of the research conducted and expressed the data in the concise form. Wherever possible, the numbers and graphs have been used to make the understanding clear. Answers to the open-ended questions are also summarized to explain the answers to the research questions.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

*This chapter concludes the research. It answers the research questions asked in the beginning and explains the topics that can be utilized for future research.*

### 5.1. Answers to Research Questions

The main objective of the research was to understand how the branding affects the purchase decision of the consumers in London. In order to do so, the primary and secondary research technique was used. Secondary research was used to build up the literature review, while the primary research was conducted to collect the data about the consumer preference. In the beginning, few of the research questions were summarized to guide the research and to fulfill the research objective. Based on the discussion in the last chapter, the questions are answered in the following section.

1. Which mobile handset brand is preferred most by consumers of London, and how does that influence their purchase decision?

As seen in the above discussion, London's customers are more favorable towards Apple handsets. The same is followed by Samsung's handset. Beyond Samsung handset, Nokia, Sony and Huawei emerge as the brands that the customer are aware of or consider their favorite. This is in line with the discussion of the mobile handset market share in Europe presented in the literature review and hence, it can be assumed that the research presents the clear picture and can be extrapolated to the population of the country as well.

2. What are the other factors which affects the choosing and purchasing the branded mobile product?

The major factors which emerged as the reasons for customer's purchase decisions are:

- i) Brand Name

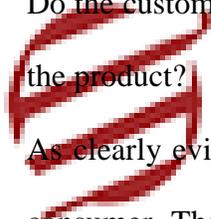
- ii) Advertising
- iii) Technical Specification
- iv) Price.

This trend is interesting for the mobile companies as it indicates that advertising also works in favor of the company and that the customers are influenced by the advertisement shown. In fact, the rank of advertising above the technical specifications indicate that it is not merely sufficient to develop a product. The same need to be marketed well with the special capitalization of the unique selling points of the product. Apple and Samsung have stronger advertising and brand name and the same is evident in the choice of the consumers as well.

3. Do the customers believe that the brand image proclaimed is the true level of the quality of the product?

As clearly evident in the results above, the brand image does influence the choice of the consumer. The brand name of the handset is also responsible for how much the customer is able to recall the brand. But for any new brand, the competition will be very stiff as Samsung and Apple have established themselves as the leaders in the market.

Also, the brand loyalty result indicates that while the customer may select a handset because of its brand name, the performance of the product is also important. Also, the service provided by the company plays an important role in ensuring the brand loyalty of the consumers. Another feature that emerged the reason for the brand loyalty is that the customers are able show-off their phone in the friends and family because of its social value. This clearly matches with the reasons of the purchase indicated in the literature



review where behavior and society's preference were indicated as one of the reasons of the purchase.

4. Does the brand image change with the personal experience of the customers?

Since the loyalty of the customers is dependent upon many other reasons, the brand loyalty does change with the personal experience of the consumers. The consumer might procure a product because of the brand name, but it is important for the product to match the expectations of the consumers to be adopted again and again. Thus brand image will vary with the personal experience of the consumers.

5.2. *Recommendation*

As seen from the primary research above, most of the customer consider brand as their major weakness. The customers are more favorable towards the well-known brands. This explains the love of the customers for the brands like Apple and Samsung. The respondents showed mark reluctance to try newer product from the unknown brands and more comfortable towards the well-known brand.

The second factor that emerged as the customers' favorite was the price, which explains the rising popularity of the brands like Huawei. Even the success of Samsung can be contributed to the price of the products.

Knowing these factors can help the companies in developing the right strategies for the product. The company can develop the brand name based on the performance and other strategic choices and market their product better to increase their market share. The customers love the brand name. But to develop the brand, the company not only needs a product supporting the brand, but also a service which will impress the customers. Also the right kind of strategy needs to be developed to make the product known to the consumers. The marketing and advertisement also

impacts the purchase decision of the consumers and the same can also be utilized to develop the brand name.

### 5.3. *Future avenues of Research*

The research is limited to the effect of branding on the consumer choice of mobile handset. The research can be further extended to understand the other factors like price, customer service etc. Also, the sample size selected for the research is 250 respondents only. The research can be further expanded by increasing the number of participants. The interviews and focus group discussions can also be utilized to understand the point of view of consumers better.



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**Index: Questionnaires**

Dear friends,

I am the student of XXX and I am doing my project work of **“Effect of branding on the purchase choice of customers”**. The attached questionnaire asks questions about the mobile phone preference and your reason for that choice. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated. Please rest assured that the information will be treated as strictly confidential. I would like to thank for your anticipated cooperation.

1	Age	Below 18 18-30 30-40 40-50 50+	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"><tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr><tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr><tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr><tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr><tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr></table>					
2	Gender	Male Female	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"><tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr><tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr></table>					
3	List the major mobile handset you have heard about the most?	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"><tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr><tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr><tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr></table>						



**EssayCorp** 5 years ★★★★★


List out the special feature for each of the above mentioned brands which explain why they are in your mind?

Example: Lower cost, distinguishing features, brand names, special advertising etc.

4




**EssayCorp**

5 years  
★★★★★

How much does the following factors influence your choice of purchase of a known product as a customer?

5

Price

6

Brand Name

7

Distinguishing Features

8

Especially made phone for a target market.

9

Marketing Techniques

Not Influenced at all	Somewhat Influenced	Strongly Influenced

10 Company's treatment of the customers

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11 What is your favorite brand and why?

--

12 How loyal are you to one particular brand for phones?

Not loyal towards the brand, but the products	Neutral	Completely loyal

13 Please explain the reason for the above answer

How/ where do you get information when you want to buy new brand mobile phone?

14

15 Will your next mobile phone will be of the same brand as the current brand? Explain with reason.




EssayCorp

5 years ★★★★★