Smart phone Buying Behaviour Among Youth in the Emerging Economies: A Study Conducted in India

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Abstract

The second decade of the current century has witnessed a sharp rise in the total number of mobile users across the globe. Mobile device ownership rather defines our daily lives and even identities. India has emerged to become one of the largest markets for smartphones. India is an emerging economy with a lot of uniqueness: particularly, it has one of the most tech literate young consumers in the world and that its cultural fabric is extremely collective. This study looks into some issues related to the proliferation of smartphones among the Indian youth.

Keywords: Smartphone, Brand Preference, Youth, Promotion, India.

1. Introduction

The usage of mobile phone is increasing day by day. Some areas of the world have enjoyed rapid deployment and high penetration of mobile telephony and India is considered to be the second largest mobile phone user in the world. According to global research firm eMarketer, India will overtake the US as the second largest market for smartphones in the world by 2016 as smart mobile devices become affordable. By the end of 2016, China will have 519.7 million

smartphone users, followed by the US at 165.3 million, India with 123.3 million, Japan with 50.8 million and Russia with 49 million. According to IAMAI-KPMG report, India is expected to have 236 million mobile Internet users by 2016 and the user base will reach 314 million by 2017. It has been increasingly observed that Mobile Users in India are now shifting from basic phones to Smartphone's as highlighted in Figure 1.
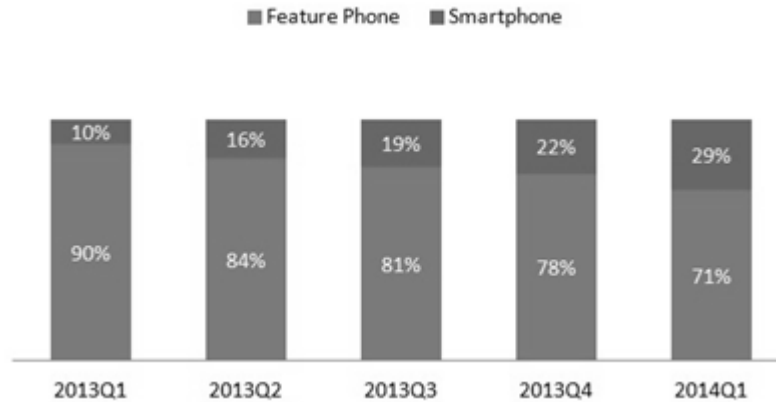
Source: IDC Asia-Pacific Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker, 1 Q (2014)

Figure 1: Feature Phone to Smartphone Migration in India

Research reports published by Garner (2015), Strategy Analytics and Trend Force reveal that Samsung captured 24.2 percent of the global Smartphone market during Q1 2015 with shipments of 81.1 million units, outsmarting Apple, which managed to capture 17.9 percent market share with sales of 60.1 million iPhones. Table 1 highlights the same.

Table 1: Worldwide Smartphone Sales to End Users by Vendor in 1Q15 (Thousands of Units)

Company	1Q15 Units	1Q15 Market Share (%)	1Q14 Units	1Q14 Market Share (%)
Samsung	81,123	24.2	85,507	30.4
Apple	60,177	17.9	43,062	15.3
Lenovo	18,888	5.6	16,721	5.9
Huawei	18,102	5.4	13,450	4.8
LG Electronics	15,428	4.6	11,200	4.0
Others	142,335.6	42.4	111,697.8	39.7
Total	336,0544	100	281.636.8	100

(Source: Gartner, May 2015)

Samsung is the market leader in India as well if we go by the total number of handsets shipped in 1Q2015 as highlighted in Table 2 and Micromax comes a close second followed by Microsoft.

Table 2: Indian Mobile Handset Shipments Share 1Q2015

1Q2015 Rank	India Handset Shipments Share (%)	1Q2014	4Q2014	1Q2015
1	Samsung	16.3	16.1	18.2
2	Micromax	13.3	14.4	12.2
3	Microsoft	13.4	11.0	9.8
4	Intex	3.6	6.7	8.7
5	Lava	5.6	7.4	8.1
	Others	47.8	44.4	43.0
	Total	100	100	100

(Source: Counter Point Research, 2015)

Today's Smartphone is taking the role of the computer, making it possible to do a lot with this small hand held device. According to Cassvoy (2012), Smartphone can be defined to be a device that enables the user to make telephone calls and at the same time has some features that allow the user to do some activities that in the past was not possible unless using a computer or a personal digital assistant (PDA), such as sending and receiving e-mails, amending an office document etc. It is a mobile phone with more advanced computing capability and connectivity and more features than other cell phones i.e., the smart phones are multifunctional. It has a broad use such as sharing information, paying for products, browsing and shopping. Virtually every activity today has a Smartphone application for it (Mackenzie, 2006). Smartphone is one of the most advanced technologies which typically have all the functionalities of a cell phone and also have additional features. The difference between a Smartphone and a cell phone is based on the product features. As per Businessdictionary.com, Smartphone is a mobile phone which includes functions similar to those found on personal computers. It provides a one-stop solution for mobile calls, email sending, and Internet access.

Smartphone features are more advanced than the features of the regular cell phones. At the early stage of Smartphone, it typically combined with the features of the mobile phone with those of another popular consumer device such as a personal digital assistant, a media player, a digital camera or a GPS navigation system. Modern Smartphone include more features such as Wi-Fi, 3G or 4G internet connectivity, different applications, better camera resolution, internet connectivity; web browsing, operating system, higher screen resolution, voice call,

video call, SMS, MMS etc. Applications like Facebook and Whatsapp availability has also increased the usage of Smartphone. Smartphones are used to store and send large information when compared to cell phones. Due to these reasons, Smartphone have now become a common choice for consumers.

Reports suggest that majority of Smartphone users in India are aged between 25 to 34, highly educated and full time employed with income. According to Enterprise News (2013), the most important usage of Smartphone for users is for internet browsing (41%), social network (37%), and using the internet on a further device (49%). A study indicates that the key motivating factors for future Smartphone users are internet surfing (39%), upgrade from current devices (34%), and applications (29%). In addition, the highest rate of internet usage with the Smartphone falls in the age group 25 to 34 years old (41%) and 18 to 24 years old (38%), which is generally the Generation Y. Also, the most important criteria that affect the Smartphone buying decision are the trend in community (35.6%), followed by needs (34.4%) and software (33.1%) of the Smartphone (Osman, 2012). But age isn't the only determinant of Smartphone ownership. Income also plays a significant role. When age and income are both taken into account, older subscribers with higher incomes are more likely to have a Smartphone.

Customers are always willing to buy or pay for a particular brand irrespective of its varying price. They prefer certain brand of product based on the peculiarities that product contain. The word brand is derived from the old Norse word "brand" which means "to burn" as brand were and still are the means by which livestock owners mark their animals to identify ownership (Keller, 2003). Brand means an identity or an image to attract the customers to buy a particular product. Customer's willingness to pay for a particular product based on certain determinants is termed as buying behavior. This may vary from products to products and this theory is applicable in case of Smartphones as well.

Modern Smartphone are of different varieties. Each Smartphone are different from each other based on their price, product features, brand name etc. The buying behavior of customers towards Smartphone is determined by certain factors. The factors are price, product features, brand name and advertisement or promotions. Price means the money we pay for a particular product in order to meet the customer satisfaction. So the money spend by them for a particular product has some value. So price is one of the important factors that determine the brand preference. The most important factor that determines the brand preference is product features. Product features means what are the specifications or the peculiarity for a particular product. In the case of Smartphone's, the special features are camera resolution, screen size, operating system, music system, and applications etc that they have. Brand name is about quality and trust. It deals with the confidence of customers on a particular product. That is brand name

plays a vital role in brand preference. Another factor that determines the buying behavior is advertisement or promotion.

A review of previous research indicates that a context specific study in India is missing. The variables under investigation in this study include product features, brand name, price, and promotion. As the Smartphone market is growing rapidly, an understanding of the consumer behavior regarding the characteristics of consumers in influencing their buying behavior is crucial besides; this research will be useful for future researchers intending to make further study in the same field of consumer behavior.

2. Background

Hawkins, Best and Coney (2004) considered that consumer behavior is the study of why, when, where, and how individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impact that these processes have on the consumer and society. The study focuses on the fact that the consumer behavior focuses on only the circumstance before and after the buying behavior. The Engel, Kollat and Blackwell model (1968) shows consumer's buying-decision making process, which is based on the field of consumer psychology theories such as those developed by Howard (1963). A study done by Hawkins, Best and Coney (2004) suggested that the consumer need is influenced by both external factors such as culture, subculture, demographics, social status, reference groups, family, and marketing activities and aspects such as perception, learning, memory, motives, personality, emotion, and attitudes that serve as internal factors. Studies have proved that buying situations are characterized by low involvement but significant brand differences and that consumers usually do lots of brand switching without much evaluation, and evaluate the product during consumption. Brand switching is said to happen for the sake of variety, rather than dissatisfaction.

From a marketing perspective, consumer buying behavior can be studied through the classical five-step (need-information search-evaluation of alternatives-purchase-post purchase evaluation) problem solving paradigm or through the progression of consumer choice from a product class to brand choice (Dorsch, Grove, and Darden, 2000). The acquisition of a new mobile phone follows this traditional view of buying process, but in many situations this is also affected by symbolic values related to brands.

Consumer decision making process is usually guided by already formed preferences for a particular alternative. This means that consumers are likely to make the choice between

alternatives based on limited information search activity as shown in various studies (Beatty and Smith, 1987; Moorthy, Ratchford and Talukdar, 1997). In close relation to information search, evaluation of alternatives has also gained a momentum in recent research (Laroche, Kim and Matsui, 2003). Studies also show that the choice between alternatives is donw without detailed evaluation of the other alternatives (Alba and Hutchinson, 2000; Chernev, 2003; Coupey, Irwin and Payne, 1998; Slovic, 1995). So from a marketer's point of view Kotler & Amstrong (2014) indicates that a marketer needs to consider five product levels when planning market offering. Each level increases more consumer value, and the five levels constitute a customer-value hierarchy.

In the case of Smartphone market, the core value for most Smartphone buyers could be the convenience and the timeliness of communication, including multi-media communication; at the second level, the basic product might be a concrete, communicable, and multi-functional product. At the third level of core value Smart phone users expect that it is useful and has good quality, for example, performance, camera, and screen resolution; Pleasing design and diversity is termed as the augmented product at the fourth level. At the fifth level, the potential product is possibly the voice control system. Keller (1993) suggested that branding could be divided into two parts- brand awareness and brand image. Alba and Hutchinson (1987) implied that branding is the experience and the frequency of advertising that consumers perceived though advertisement, mass media, or other kind of sources including commercial sources, public sources, and individual sources.

Scitovsky (1945) indicated that the price of a product is related to product costs, which is the reason that people consider price as a signal that can represent the quality of a product. People perceive that when the price of the product is higher, at a certain point, the quality of the product is also better. This in turn attracts people and influence people's buying decision. Some studies have shown that on the other hand, price and need have negative correlation. When the utility of products is similar, consumers will choose the solution with the lower price to maximize the utility. Price is considered as an essential role of consumer behavior.

3. Smartphone Buying Behavior of Young Consumers

When more number of mobile users between the age group of 16 and 22 years are looking forward to purchase a Smartphone, an initial perception of the Smartphone is important. Usually, an initial perception is made based on an attractor that draws the user to the particular device (Carroll & Howard, 2002). Mobile designers concentrate on younger user's preferences, since

they are the majority of population that uses these devices. Younger people have different preference styles than older users. This group has become "aestheticized" with their personal technology (Wilska, 2003). The same study also highlights the fact that self-expression and having their individual identity expressed through their gadgets are part of how younger adults consume new emerging technology. Studies have shown that younger adopters perceive Smartphone as a fashion when considering adopting mobile phones (Jiang, 2011). It is important for them to discover their own style, and these individual styles can be seen in their interaction with mobile telephones. But it is also seen that the younger mobile users determine if the device is affordable, and if they cannot afford this technology, they will reject it (Carroll & Howard, 2002).

Additionally, Jiang (2011) noted that some functional advantages that young people found useful in Smartphone were better screen size, endless list of applications, and reliable Internet access. Comparing Smartphone to older model mobile phones (which do not have many applications, email, games, etc.); younger users were displeased with their old devices because of the lack of Internet and design of the phone. Second to aesthetics, cost is another important attractor that influences the purchases of these devices.

A recent study showed that younger mobile users see the importance of having features on their phones such as alarm clocks, calendar, and email (Rahtmati et al., 2011). However, the same features on Smartphone were also found to be attractive and important features to older users (Ziefle& Bay, 2005). Even though these features were important to this age group, it was often harder for older adopters to use these services with ease. According to Ziefle and Bay (2005), knowledge of how functions are arranged hierarchically and where each function is located, improves performance when using mobile phones. Younger users have a higher knowledge of the functions on Smartphone compared to older users. The reasons older users have difficulty is that they are less experienced with menu-driven technology or they have a decline in memory capacity that does not let them remember the functions easily, as seen in younger adopters (Ziefle & Bay, 2005).

The need for mobile Internet services and the various applications that are available are not as important to older users. According to Kurniawan & Mahmud (2011), the older generation use mobile phones for limited purposes and do not intend to download music or play games as much. Essentially, it appears that older users have different preferences than do younger users. In India, the youth, which is more informed, pragmatic, opportunistic, demanding and restless, will always seek excitement in products and services (Sharma, 2004)

Wireless technologies such as mobile devices, are commonly expected to have a higher correlation with adopters, who have a higher income (Castell et al., 2004). Mobile devices are

becoming more advanced, and applications are becoming more expensive, thus creating the assumption that there is a higher adoption of mobile devices in high socio-economic statuses (Castell et a., 2004). Castell and colleagues (2004) note that in a national representative survey in 2000 showed that users' income is an important predictor of mobile phone adoption. Income is often a reason for mobile adopters to either continue or stop using emerging technology.

In contrast to those with higher income, younger users that are in a household where the income is under $30,000 years are more likely to pay their own phone plan (Brown et al., 2011). In fact, 23% of teens with low income pay their own phone bills, and only 4% of teens from households with higher incomes pay their own phone bills. Research by Brown, Campbell, and Long (2011) shows that younger adults that paid their own phone bill used more of the features and services that the phone offered than younger users that did not pay their monthly bill.

Lower income youth use their mobile devices for the Internet at significantly higher rates than teens that have higher household earnings. In households that earn less than $30,000 per year, 41% of youth use their mobile phones to access the Internet compared to 23% of youth in households that earn more than $30,000 per year (Brown, Campbell & Ling, 2011). This disparity may exist because lower income teens lack access to other information communication technologies (ICT), such as PCs and tablets. Therefore, low income users accept mobile technology as an alternative way to access the Internet. Smartphone tend to be inexpensive and provide access to the Internet for young users with lower household incomes who do not have the Internet on desktop computers or laptops.

4. The Study

This is a descriptive study based on the primary and secondary data sources. Primary data has been collected by conducting the survey and secondary data has been collected from books, periodicals, journals, databases etc. For this study judgment sampling is used and only the youth respondents both males and females between the age group of 16-30 are considered for the study. For this study, we selected a sample of 218respondents. Questionnaires were administered to 250 respondents out which only 218 of them could be taken because the rest of them were either not filled correctly or were incomplete. The primary data required for the study is collected through a well-structured Questionnaire.

The reliability and consistency of the data was examined through reliability test with, Cronbach's (alpha) as a coefficient of internal consistency. As per the ranges provided by George and Mallery (2003), Cronbach's Alpha value greater than or equal to 0.5 is considered acceptable. The Cronbach's α value for the given set of sample was found to be 0.871. This signifies that all construct have acceptable internal consistency.

Table 3: Satisfaction score of present Smartphone

		Are you satisfied with your current Smartphone?		In Percentage (%)		Total
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
Brand of Smartphone presently being used	Apple	14	0	100	0	14
	HTC	6	10	37.5	62.5	16
	Nokia	26	8	76.4	23.6	34
	Blackberry	6	2	75	25	8
	Sony	28	4	87.5	12.5	32
	Samsung	80	28	74.07	25.93	108
	Motorola	2	0	100	0	2
	Lenovo	4	0	100	0	4
Total		166	52			218

Table 3 highlights that Samsung was cited as the most preferred brand of mobile phone and was found to be the first choice of many of the respondents with higher level of satisfaction. 25.93 % of Smart phone users were using Samsung Brand and 74 % of the respondents were satisfied with the brand.
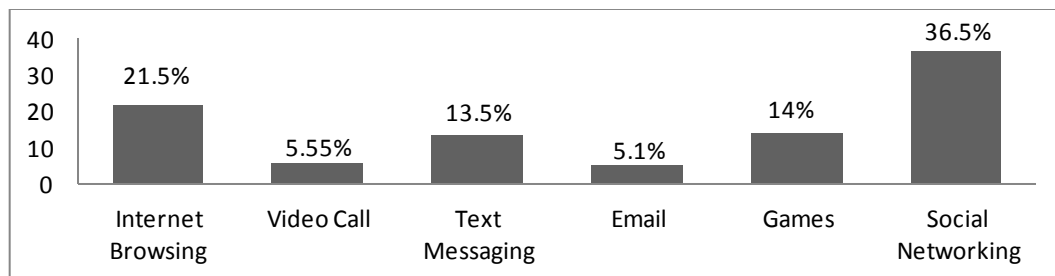

Figure 2: Most frequently used applications on Smartphone

Figure 2 illustrates the most frequently used application among youth. Overall about 36.5% respondents using Smartphone for social networking, 21.5% for Internet browsing, 14% for Games, 13.54% for Text messaging followed by video call(5.55%) and Email(5.1%). This implies that social networking is the most preferable application among the youth.
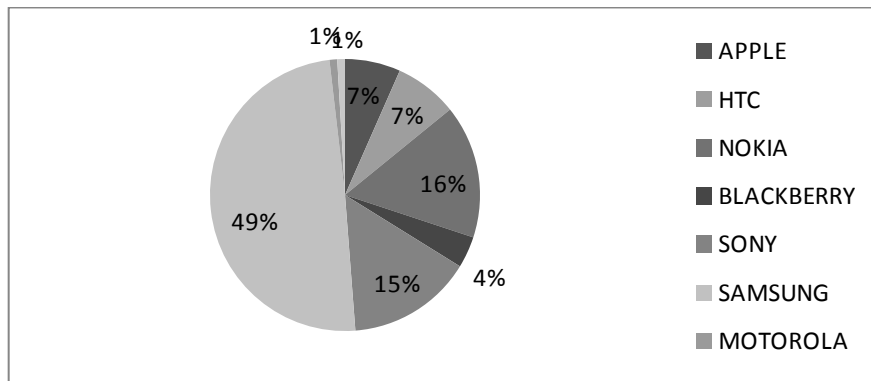
Figure 3.Smartphone Brand preference of Youth

From Figure 3 above it can be inferred that among the respondents, Samsung (49%) is the most popular brand followed by Nokia (16%) and Sony (15%). HTC, Apple, BlackBerry, Lenovo and Motorola respectively constitute 7%, 7%, 4%, 2%, and 1% in the survey.

Table 4: Relationship Between Age & Brand Preference

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	37.158a	21	.016
Likelihood Ratio	32.267	21	.055
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.376	1	.001
No. of Valid Cases	216		

From Table 4 it is found that the observed chi square value is 37.158 with a degree of freedom 21 and its P value is 0.016. Here the table showed the P value less than .05. Hence the hypothesis that there is significant relationship between age of respondents & brand preference of Smartphone's is rejected.

Table 5:Relationship Between Own Income and Brand Preference

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.558a	15	.636

	Value	df	
Likelihood Ratio	15.204	15	.437
Linear-by-Linear Association	.329	1	.566
N of Valid Cases	92		

Table 6: Relationship Between Parent's Income and Brand Preference

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.933a	21	.589
Likelihood Ratio	21.662	21	.419
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.058	1	.304
N of Valid Cases	126		

From Tables5 and 6 it is found that there exist a relationship between own income and parents income with brand preference. Both the tables show the values .636 and .589 respectively for own income and the parent's income with the brand preference. The observed value is greater than critical value. So both the hypothesis that there is significant relationship between Income of respondents & brand preference of Smartphone's and there is significant relationship between Parent's Income of respondents & brand preference of Smartphone's is accepted. Thus it can be concluded that buying behavior or preference of youth while purchase of Smartphone's is directly related to the economic situation or the income of the buyer.

Table 7: Relationship Between Price and Brand Preference

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.390a	28	.940
Likelihood Ratio	18.876	28	.902
Linear-by-Linear Association	.017	1	.895
N of Valid Cases	218		

The study tried to analyze how important is the role of price for making decision of choice of branded mobile product for the youth. Youth were asked to mention to what extent they give

importance to price. The findings of the same is shown in Table 7. In order to identify the relationship between price and brand preference chi-square test is used and the value is obtained as 0.940 which is greater than critical value 0.05. So the hypothesis that here is significant relationship between Price of Smartphone& Brand Preference is accepted.

Table 8: Relationship Between Performance and Brand Preference

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.632a	28	.840
Likelihood Ratio	23.422	28	.712
Linear-by-Linear Association	.825	1	.364
N of Valid Cases	218		

This is the technical criteria on which it is measure as to how youth view about performance of smart phones and how important it is for decision making. Since the table value 0.840 which is shown in Table 8is greater than the critical value 0.05, it shows that there exist a direct relationship between performance and the brand preference. So the hypothesis that there is significant relationship between Performance of Smartphone& brand preference is accepted. Thus it can be concluded that performance is the major factor for preferring Smartphone among youth.

Table 9: Relationship Between Product Feature and Brand Preference

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.465a	28	.914
Likelihood Ratio	20.981	28	.826
Linear-by-Linear Association	.017	1	.897
N of Valid Cases	218		

From the Table 9 it is found that the chi square value is 18.465 with degree of freedom 28 and its P value is 0.914 which is greater than the critical value 0.05. The null hypothesis that there is significant relationship between Product Features of Smartphone& brand preference is

accepted and hence stated that there is significant relationship between product feature and brand preference.

Table 10 : Relationship Between Promotion and Brand Preference

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.122a	28	.357
Likelihood Ratio	28.942	28	.415
Linear-by-Linear Association	.674	1	.412
N of Valid Cases	218		

From Table 10 it is observed that there is a direct relationship between promotion and brand preference. Since the table shows the chi-square value 0.357 is greater than critical value 0.05, the hypothesis that there is significant relationship between Promotion done by Smartphone Companies & brand preference is accepted. Therefore it can be said that promotion is the most influencing factor for preferring smart phone among youngsters.

5. Conclusion

Samsung remains the most popular brand which is preferred by the youth in India followed by Nokia and Sony. Nokia (even after its corporate demise) constitutes 16% and Sony 15%. HTC, Apple, BlackBerry, Lenovo and Motorola respectively constitute 7%, 7%, 4%, 2%, and 1% in the survey. The study also establishes that there is no relationship between age and brand preference of Smartphones. In the economic criteria, price and income is considered to be a crucial factor. From the survey, it was found that there exists a relationship for own income and parent's income with brand preference. Price also has relation with brand preference. Product feature is to satisfy the needs and wants of the buyer. So from the study it was identified that there is a close relationship between product feature and the brand preference. The study also helped in analyzing how important is the role of price in making decision of choice of branded mobile product for youth. The study also reveals that there is a relationship between price and brand preference. According to study conducted by Maxwell (2001) on testing of homogeneity versus heterogeneity of global consumption in a cross-cultural price/brand effect model; Indian consumers in comparison to Americans are tougher for the marketers to sell their products. However, he found Indian consumers more price and less brand conscious. So the

manufacturers should always keep the price aspect in mind while coming out with a new model of Smartphone.

Smartphone these days are becoming more powerful and packed with more features that it was in the past. So we tried to identify whether there was any relation with performance and brand preference. It shows that there exists a direct relationship between performance and the brand preference. Promotion means the advancement of a product, idea through publicity or advertising. The study identified whether there is a significant relationship between promotion and brand preference and it was found that there is significant relationship with brand preference. Lastly, the study measures the level of satisfaction of the brand which was owned by the user. Samsung was the most preferred brand of mobile phone and was found to be the first choice of many of the respondents with higher level of satisfaction. It was also established that technical criteria (performance) and promotion are the two important factors which play an important role in brand preference of Smartphone among the youth. The companies that wish to target Indian youth must strengthen their brand equity besides improving 'appearance', 'value added features' and 'core technical features'. It will help them in increasing their revenues manifold in India due to the fact that Indian market is youth rich.

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