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A STUDY ON USER LEVEL OF SATISFACTION TOWARDS SMARTPHONE

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ABSTRACT

The smartphone market has reached a stage where technological superiority alone is insufficient to secure long-term customer loyalty. As product features become increasingly similar across brands, emotional branding has emerged as a powerful differentiating strategy that influences consumer perceptions, brand trust, and purchase behaviour. This study investigates how emotional branding shapes consumer identity, trust, and loyalty among users of Apple, Samsung, and Xiaomi smartphones. Integrating Emotional Branding Theory, Self-Congruity Theory, Social Identity Theory, and the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework, the study proposes that emotional branding influences consumer perception through the mediating effects of brand love and brand trust. The research highlights the transition of smartphones from communication devices to symbolic extensions of personal identity. The findings are expected to contribute to branding literature by explaining how emotional factors increasingly determine consumer preference in technology-driven markets.

KEYWORDS: Emotional Branding, Consumer Identity, Brand Trust, Brand Love, Smartphone Industry, Consumer Perception, Brand Loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

The smartphone has evolved from a communication device into a personal statement reflecting an individual's lifestyle, aspirations, and social identity. Modern consumers do not merely purchase smartphones; they buy experiences, meanings, and emotional associations attached to brands. In this environment, emotional branding has become a strategic necessity rather than a marketing option.

Brands such as Apple, Samsung, and Xiaomi compete in an intensely saturated marketplace where technological innovation can be replicated within months. However, emotional connections built through storytelling, symbolic value, community engagement, and brand personality remain difficult

for competitors to imitate. Consumers often describe their preferred smartphone brand using emotional expressions such as trust, pride, excitement, belonging, and attachment rather than technical specifications alone.

The increasing significance of emotional branding raises an important question. Consumers choose smartphone brands because of technology, or because of the emotions these brands represent. Addressing this question is critical for understanding contemporary consumer behaviour and developing sustainable competitive advantages in the technology sector.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To examine the influence of emotional branding on consumer perception in the smartphone industry.
- To analyse the consumer perception towards purchase of smart phone.
- To analyse the level of satisfaction on purchasing of smart phone.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi (2012) in their article entitled "Brand Love", investigated the dimensions and behavioural outcomes of brand love among consumers. The study adopted a mixed-method research design and collected primary data from consumers through structured surveys. The researchers employed Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and confirmatory factor analysis to validate the proposed model. The findings indicated that emotional attachment, self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviour, and long-term commitment are the major dimensions of brand love. The study concluded that consumers who experience strong emotional connections with brands exhibit higher levels of loyalty, advocacy, and repurchase intention.

Sarkar (2015) in the study entitled "Brand Love – Moving Beyond Loyalty: An Empirical Investigation of Perceived Brand Love of Indian Consumers", examined the influence of emotional attachment on brand love among Indian consumers. The study adopted a quantitative research design and collected data from 160 respondents through a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and regression analysis were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that brand image, emotional attachment, and consumer satisfaction significantly contribute to the development of brand love. The study further concluded that brand love positively influences customer loyalty and favourable consumer behaviour.

Rahman, Langner and Temme (2021) in their study titled "Conceptual and Empirical Investigation of a Holistic Causal Model", aimed to examine the antecedents and consequences of brand love and

develop a comprehensive framework explaining consumer-brand relationships. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Initially, 14 in-depth interviews were conducted to identify relevant dimensions, followed by a survey-based empirical study. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to analyse the data and test the proposed relationships. The findings revealed that self-brand congruence, satisfaction, and emotional attachment significantly influence brand love, which subsequently enhances brand loyalty, positive word-of-mouth communication, and consumers' willingness to pay premium prices.

Singh, Singh, Jaiswal and Kushwaha (2024) in their study titled "An Analysis of Purchase Behaviour, Purchase Intention and Buying Perception on Emotional Branding: A Study in Urban Consumer Markets", aimed to investigate the influence of emotional branding on consumer buying behaviour and purchase intention. The study adopted a descriptive research design and collected primary data from 252 urban consumers using a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and SPSS Version 26 were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that emotional branding has a significant positive influence on purchase intention, buying perception, and consumer decision-making behaviour, highlighting the growing importance of emotional connections in marketing strategies.

Ikhsan and Kencana (2025) in their study entitled "Emotional Branding as a Marketing Strategy: Analysing Its Effect on Smartphone Purchase Decisions among Generation Z", examined the impact of emotional branding on smartphone purchase decisions among Generation Z consumers. The study adopted a quantitative research methodology and collected data from 129 respondents through structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistical analysis and hypothesis testing were used to analyse the data. The findings showed that emotional branding significantly influences consumer preferences and smartphone purchase decisions. The researchers concluded that emotional engagement and brand-related experiences play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing behaviour within the smartphone industry.

Hypotheses of the study

H1: There is no significant association between age and smartphone brand used among the respondents.

H2: There is no significant association between monthly income and smartphone brand used among the respondents.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The smartphone industry has become highly competitive, with brands such as Apple, Samsung, and Xiaomi continuously striving to attract and retain consumers. While technological features, price, and quality remain important, consumers increasingly make purchase decisions based on emotional factors

such as brand trust, brand attachment, and brand image. In the present dynamic market environment, smartphone companies are investing heavily in emotional branding strategies to establish long-term relationships with consumers and enhance customer loyalty. However, differences in consumers' perceptions and preferences make it difficult for marketers to identify the emotional factors that influence brand choice. Therefore, it becomes necessary to examine the influence of emotional branding on consumer perception among smartphone users and to understand the factors that shape their attitudes towards smartphone brands.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the influence of emotional branding on consumer perception among Apple, Samsung, and Xiaomi smartphone users in Tamil Nadu. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, while secondary data were gathered from journals, books, and websites. A stratified purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents, and a sample size of 200 smartphone consumers was considered for the study. The collected data were analysed using appropriate statistical tools to achieve the objectives of the research.

Percentage Analysis

To analyse the demographic profile of respondents such as age, gender, education, occupation, and income.

Formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = (\text{Number of Respondents} / \text{Total Number of Respondents}) \times 100$$

Where:

- Number of Respondents = Frequency of a particular category
- Total Number of Respondents = Total sample size

Weighted Mean Score Analysis

To identify the level of emotional branding perception among smartphone consumers.

Formula:

$$\text{Weighted Mean} = \Sigma(W \times X) / N$$

Where:

- W = Weight assigned to each response
- X = Frequency of responses
- N = Total number of respondents

Garrett Ranking Technique

To rank the factors influencing emotional branding among smartphone consumers.

Formula:

$$\text{Percent Position} = 100 (R_{ij} - 0.5) / N_j$$

Where:

- R_{ij} = Rank given for a factor by the respondent
- N_j = Total number of factors ranked

The percent positions are converted into Garrett values using Garrett Conversion Tables and average scores are computed to determine ranks.

Chi-Square Test

To identify the association between demographic variables and consumer perception.

Formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum [(O - E)^2 / E]$$

Where:

- O = Observed Frequency
- E = Expected Frequency

One-Way ANOVA

One-Way ANOVA was used to compare the perception levels of Apple, Samsung, and Xiaomi consumers and determine whether significant differences exist among the groups.

- Formula:
 $F = MSB / MSW$

Where:

- MSB = Mean square between groups
- MSW = Mean square within groups

Data analysis and interpretation

Table 1
Demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	Classification	Percentage
Age	Below 20 Years	12
	21–30 Years	48
	31–40 Years	24
	Above 40 Years	16
Gender	Male	55
	Female	45
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	32
	Postgraduate	44
	Professional Degree	18
	Others	6
Occupation	Student	22
	Private Employee	36
	Government Employee	14
	Business	18
	Others	10
Monthly Income	Below ₹20,000	20
	₹20,001–₹40,000	38
	₹40,001–₹60,000	27
	Above ₹60,000	15
Smartphone Brand Used	Apple	30
	Samsung	35
	Xiaomi	35
Duration of Smartphone Usage	Less than 1 Year	14
	1–3 Years	42
	3–5 Years	29
	More than 5 Years	15

Source: Primary Data

It is interpreted that 48 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 21–30 years, 55 percent of the respondents were male, 44 percent of the respondents were postgraduates, 36 percent of the

respondents were employed in the private sector, 38 percent of the respondents earned a monthly income between ₹20,001 and ₹40,000, 35 percent of the respondents were Samsung users, 35 percent of the respondents were Xiaomi users, and 42 percent of the respondents had been using smartphones for a period of 1–3 years. The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents are young adults, highly educated, employed in the private sector, belong to the middle-income category, and have considerable experience in using smartphone brands.

Table 2
Factors Influencing Emotional Branding
Garrett Ranking Analysis

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Mean Score	Rank
Brand Reputation	2430	2208	1632	728	600	7598	63.3	I
Brand Trust	2160	2346	1496	784	550	7336	61.1	II
Product Innovation	2025	2139	1700	896	700	7460	62.2	III
Emotional Attachment	1890	2208	1768	1008	650	7524	62.7	II
Brand Storytelling	1755	1932	1836	1120	750	7393	61.6	IV
Social Media Engagement	1620	1794	1904	1176	850	7344	61.2	V
Celebrity Endorsement	1485	1656	1904	1288	1000	7333	61.1	VI

Source: Primary Data

The Garrett Ranking Analysis reveals that Brand Reputation was ranked as the most influential factor affecting emotional branding among smartphone consumers with a mean score of 63.3. Emotional Attachment secured the second rank with a mean score of 62.7, followed by Product Innovation with a mean score of 62.2. Brand Storytelling and Social Media Engagement occupied the fourth and fifth positions respectively. Celebrity Endorsement was ranked last with a mean score of 61.1. The findings indicate that consumers are primarily influenced by a brand's reputation, emotional connection, and innovative features rather than celebrity promotions when forming perceptions about smartphone brands.

Table 3
Consumer Perception towards Smartphone Brands

Perception Factor	Mean Score
Brand Image	4.36
Product Quality	4.28
Brand Loyalty	4.21

Purchase Intention	4.14
Customer Experience	4.08

Source: Primary Data

The table indicates that Brand Image obtained the highest mean score of 4.36, followed by Product Quality with a mean score of 4.28. This implies that consumers maintain a positive perception of smartphone brands due to their image and quality

Table 4
Overall Emotional Branding Perception

Level	Frequency	Percentage
High	88	44.0
Moderate	74	37.0
Low	38	19.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Primary Data

The table reveals that 44.0 percent of the respondents possess a high level of emotional branding perception, while 37.0 percent exhibit a moderate level. This indicates that emotional branding plays a vital role in shaping consumer attitudes towards smartphone brands.

Table 5
Emotional Attachment towards Smartphone Brand

Emotional Attachment Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	136	68
No	64	32
Total	200	100

Source: Primary Data

The Table indicates that 68 percent of the respondents stated that they have an emotional attachment towards their smartphone brand, whereas 32 percent of the respondents stated that they do not have an emotional attachment towards their smartphone brand. This implies that a majority of the respondents exhibit emotional connections with their preferred smartphone brands, which may influence their purchasing decisions and brand loyalty.

Table 6
One-Way ANOVA Showing Difference in Consumer Perception among Apple, Samsung and Xiaomi Users

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F Value	Significance
Between Groups	28.764	2	14.382	4.826	0.009
Within Groups	587.236	197	2.981		
Total	616.000	199			

Source: Primary data

The above table reveals that the significance value (0.009) is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in consumer perception among Apple, Samsung, and Xiaomi smartphone users.

Table 7
Level of Satisfaction towards Smartphone Brands

Variable	Highly Satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Neutral (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Highly Dissatisfied (1)	Total Score	Rank
Brand Reputation	52	41	18	7	2	494	I
Product Quality	46	42	21	8	3	480	II
Brand Trust	44	40	24	9	3	473	III
Emotional Connection with the Brand	39	43	25	10	3	465	IV
Customer Service Support	35	41	28	12	4	451	V
Innovation and Features	37	38	30	11	4	453	VI
Advertising Appeal	32	42	29	13	4	445	VII
Ease of Use	34	38	31	13	4	445	VIII

Brand Storytelling	28	40	34	13	5	433	IX
Community Engagement	25	38	35	16	6	420	X
Value for Money	27	34	36	17	6	419	XI
Availability of Service Centres	24	36	35	18	7	412	XII

Source: Primary Data

The above table clearly shows that Brand Reputation was ranked first with a total score of 494, indicating that the majority of respondents are highly satisfied with the reputation of their smartphone brands. Product Quality secured the second rank with a score of 480, followed by Brand Trust with a score of 473. This implies that consumers place greater importance on brand reputation, product quality, and trust while evaluating smartphone brands. On the other hand, Availability of Service Centres was ranked twelfth with the least score of 412, indicating a comparatively lower level of satisfaction among respondents. Therefore, the study concludes that emotional branding factors, particularly brand reputation and trust, play a significant role in enhancing consumer satisfaction towards smartphone brands.

Formula Used

$$\text{Weighted Score} = (\text{HS} \times 5) + (\text{S} \times 4) + (\text{N} \times 3) + (\text{D} \times 2) + (\text{HD} \times 1)$$

Brand Reputation:

$$= (52 \times 5) + (41 \times 4) + (18 \times 3) + (7 \times 2) + (2 \times 1)$$

$$= 260 + 164 + 54 + 14 + 2$$

$$= 494$$

Satisfaction Pie Chart

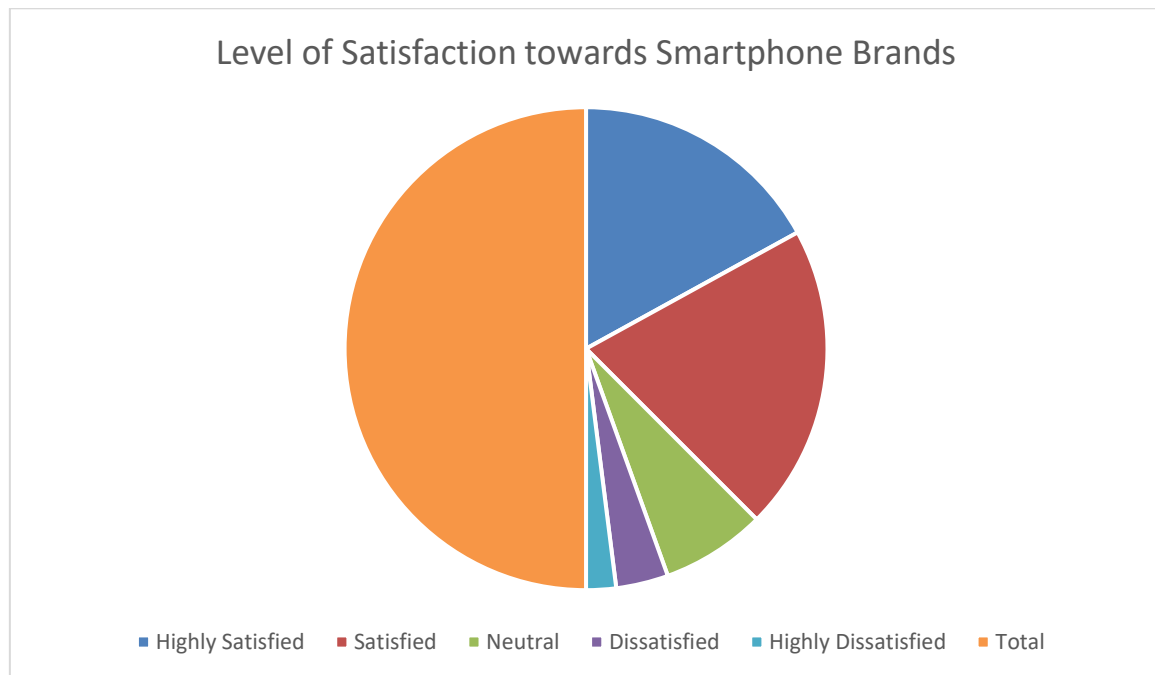


Table 8
Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Chi-square Value (Calculated Value)	Table Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level	Result
H1: There is no significant association between age and smartphone brand used among the respondents.	8.42	9.49	4	5%	Accepted
H2: There is no significant association between monthly income and smartphone brand used among the respondents.	12.76	9.49	4	5%	Rejected

Interpretation

H1: At 5 percent level of significance, the calculated value of χ^2 is less than the table value. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. From the results of the hypothesis testing, it is clear that there is no significant association between age and smartphone brand used among the respondents.

H2: At 5 percent level of significance, the calculated value of χ^2 is greater than the table value. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. From the results of the hypothesis testing, it is clear that there is a significant association between monthly income and smartphone brand used among the respondents.

FINDINGS

- It was found that 48 percent of the respondents belonged to the age group of 21–30 years, 44 percent were postgraduates, 38 percent earned a monthly income between ₹20,001 and ₹40,000, and 42 percent had been using smartphones for a period of 1–3 years. It was found that 55 percent of the respondents were male, indicating that the majority of the respondents were male smartphone users.
- The Garrett Ranking Analysis revealed that Brand Reputation was ranked first with a mean score of 63.3, followed by Emotional Attachment and Product Innovation.
- It was found that Brand Image obtained the highest mean score 4.36 among the consumer perception factors, followed by Product Quality and Brand Loyalty.
- It was found that 44 percent of the respondents exhibited a high level of emotional branding perception, while 37 percent exhibited a moderate level of emotional branding perception.
- The results of the One-Way ANOVA indicated that consumer perception differs significantly among Apple, Samsung, and Xiaomi smartphone users.
- The majority of the respondents were satisfied with their smartphone brands. Brand Reputation secured the first rank with a total score of 494, followed by Product Quality with a score of 480 and Brand Trust with a score of 473.
- The results of the hypothesis testing revealed that there was no significant association between age and smartphone brand used among the respondents.
- The results of the hypothesis testing further revealed that there was a significant association between monthly income and smartphone brand used among the respondents.

SUGGESTIONS

- Smartphone companies should focus on strengthening their brand reputation to build stronger emotional connections with consumers.
- Brands should develop emotional advertising campaigns that create trust and long-term relationships with customers.

- Companies should continuously introduce innovative features to improve consumer satisfaction and brand preference.
- Smartphone brands should enhance customer service and after-sales support to improve the overall consumer experience.
- Brands should engage consumers through social media platforms and interactive marketing activities to increase emotional attachment.
- Companies should focus on maintaining product quality and reliability to sustain positive consumer perception.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that emotional branding plays a significant role in influencing consumer perception in the smartphone industry. The findings reveal that factors such as brand reputation, emotional attachment, and brand trust have a positive impact on consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. Most respondents expressed satisfaction with their smartphone brands and demonstrated a favourable perception towards them. The study highlights that emotional branding is an effective strategy for creating stronger consumer relationships, enhancing brand loyalty, and achieving a competitive advantage in the smartphone market.

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