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A STUDY ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS IPHONE AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENECE TO COIMBATORE CITY

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Abstract

The mobile phone industry, particularly the smartphone segment, has become a dynamic and rapidly evolving market, with Apple's iPhone standing out as a dominant player. This study aimed to explore consumer perception and satisfaction regarding the iPhone, analysing factors such as price sensitivity, after-sales service, brand prestige, and design. A questionnaire-based survey was conducted among 313 college students, using Chi-Square analysis to test the relationships between gender and various product attributes. The results revealed significant associations between gender and perceptions of iPhone pricing, after-sales service, and its status-symbol effect. The research also highlighted the critical role of brand image and design in consumer satisfaction. Ultimately, the study underscores the importance of understanding customer needs and preferences to stay competitive in a crowded market, suggesting that Apple should continue refining its marketing strategies based on these insights to meet evolving consumer expectations.

Keywords: Consumer Perception, iPhone Satisfaction, Price Sensitivity, After-Sales Service, Brand Prestige, Gender Differences

I. INTRODUCTION

The mobile phone industry is one of the fastest moving industries in the world. The market is growing rapidly with ever-emerging technologies and innovations. The industry is highly concentrated, consisting the smart

phone. In this era, mobile phone are the important gadgets required for a person by using smart phone we can call, shop through online, mobile banking bill payment, ticket booking recharge etc. In the recent years it was shown that 65-70% of the world's population own at least one smart phone. In Today's Scenario most of the consumers are looking towards buying more technological and advanced smart phone. Therefore, the consumers belonging to higher or medium income group are preferring a reliable smart phone for their long-term usage maybe their preference would be different regarding choosing of models depending on pricing structure. As Apple costs premium pricing than other smart phones therefore only higher section of the society thinks about purchasing iPhone rest of the consumers who can't afford premium pricing go towards Samsung, Redmi etc. The Apple iPhone is easily the most publicized new mobile device in recent memory. This brand is strong among terms as money say that they hope to buy it. If that does happen, it will be a kind of first in cell phone market because Apple isn't likely to discount phones, leaving this to be one expensive status symbol. We all know that iPhone is a big name in the modern mobile world, its applications and design are the key factors which tempt people towards it. In the current competitive business environment, companies are keen on attracting and maintaining a pool of loyal customers through the delivery of quality products and services to their customers. Sarkar (2019) explains that in a market where customers can choose from various providers, brand plays a major role in defining their decision. Apple Inc. finds itself in such a highly competitive business environment. Founded in 1976 by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, the company has registered impressive growth over the years to come one of the dominant players in the global electronics market (Schegg & Stangl, 2017). The firm offers a wide range of products in different markets such as computer software and hardware, consumer electronics, cloud computing, semiconductors, digital distribution, artificial intelligence, and financial technology (Brooks & Dunn, 2018). One of its most successful products is the iPhone. In the mobile phones market, Samsung is its main competitor. As apples product took part in the continuous and unpredictable technological advancement. Its products and notable the iPhone leapfrog other substitutes and other technological gadgets to let apple in a winner takes all market position. These small hand devices have so much to offer to customer. The purpose of our primary research is to gauge the interest of people. Their conception and degree of their satisfaction with the iPhone. The primary objective of field study is to identify the brand components of apple and to show how its product attributes, meaning of iPhone. Perceived by customer in their decision-making process of buying a particular brand of smart phone. A good knowledge our respondents needs and preferences corresponding to smart phone would help us understand their brand knowledge awareness. Also, this will give us a clue about the important of the brand name and identity in shaping the customer preference. Regarding of the paper's purpose and to put in evidence the customer's perceived value of the apple brand, we have chosen to do our primary research using a questionnaire since it suites mostly the survey. In fact, the survey research is most widely used method to collect primary data its characterized by flexibility and its help to obtain different kinds of information in many different situations.

1.1.HISTORY OF IPHONE

In 2007 Apple debuted the iPhone and every year since they continue to wow with a new iteration that moves design and technology forward. Early game challenging feature like Internet connectivity, text messaging and a built-in camera paved the way for the standard smart phone. Massive improvements in the quality of its display, battery power and sound have supported its inaugural claim to reinvent the phone altogether. Read more about the annual Apple iPhone release here.

Now, in 2024, with the introduction of the iPhone 16, 16 pro, 16 pro max and the iPhone 16 Plus. Apple took everything you love about the iPhone to the extreme.

1.2.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the price sensitivity & value perception of iPhone.
- To find out the factors which influence to purchase of apple iPhone Services.
- To study the relationship between consumer behaviour towards iPhone or consumer perception towards iPhone.

1.3.SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The primary goal of this study is to evaluate iPhone performance in customer satisfaction. The researcher considered the need for this company to maintain its competitiveness in the market. Evaluating the past and present performance may help in predicting its future capacity to meet the expectations. This study is related to the larger issue of managing competition in the market. The electronics industry has become very competitive because of the emergence of different players. Customer satisfaction is one of the ways through which a firm can manage the competitive business environment. As such, this study is justified 12 because it offers this company an opportunity to maintain its current lead in the market through a continued satisfaction of customers' needs. The report will be particularly helpful to the market because it will explain what the customers' needs and consumer perception or satisfaction towards iPhone understand emerging customers' needs. The benefit by understanding how to monitor market trends, understand evolving technologies and actions of its rivals, and ways of maintaining customers' expectations.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many empirical studies have been conducted about consumer perception towards iPhone in India and abroad. The major emphasis of research has been on analysis customer needs and wants and consumer satisfaction t0owards a product. Apple Inc is one of the top brands in the electronics market. For that reason, marketing studies have been conducted by various scholars to help understand factors that have enabled it to achieve such

massive success over the past five decades. The company's most profitable and globally popular product is the iPhone. It is necessary to review studies on iPhone customer satisfaction. Some of these studies have been conducted based on the markets of North and South America, Europe, and parts of Asia. The analysis will help understand how this company has performed in other markets outside the United Arab Emirates. It will also be necessary to compare findings in these studies with information that will be obtained from the primary

sources. Moslehpour and Nguyen (2014) conducted another study entitled —The influence of perceived brand quality and perceived brand prestige on purchase likelihood of iPhone and HTC mobile phone in Taiwan‖. The researchers were primarily concerned with a comparative analysis of the perception of customers towards the value that they assign to various smart phone brands. The analysis was narrowed to two brands, HTC and iPhone. Respondents were asked to state which of the two mobile phone brands they consider more prestigious and are more likely to buy when they can do so. The outcome of the study showed that an overwhelming majority of the respondents view iPhone to be more prestigious than HTC. They considered HTC more affordable than iPhone, but given the opportunity to choose any of the two brands, they would prefer iPhone (Moslehpour & Nguyen 2014). It was important to note that even those who have never used iPhone view it to be more superior to other brands because of the perception that has been created in the market. The outcome indicated that customers' belief in a firm's quality is a critical factor when defining customer satisfaction. Sometimes two brands may be offering the same quality in terms of the service delivered. However, in most cases, the perception that customers have towards a given brand will define their level of satisfaction when consuming a product. Ejikeme et al. (2016) conducted a study that focused on explaining the correlation between customer satisfaction and culture. In their project, the researchers found out that there is a close relationship between the two variables. For a firm to satisfy the needs of its customers, it must first understand the local culture and how it affects buyers' decisions. Customers often purchase commodities in line with cultural beliefs and practices (Ejikeme et al., 2016). As such, when they realize that a specific product goes against their beliefs, they are less likely to become loyal customers. The management of Apple Inc is aware of this fact and has been keen on designing customer management strategies based on these cultural practices. Although the item sold to the global market is the same, the iPhone, marketing strategies differ from one market to another based on local cultural practices and beliefs. This strategy has enabled this company to meet the expectations of its customers. A study by Dunuwille and Pathmini (2016) focused on customer satisfaction and how it is affected by the brand image in the smart phone market. They wanted to determine if there is any relationship between a product's brand and the satisfaction that customers get from it. Perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, and brand loyalty were the four major dimensions that the project focused on in their comparative analysis (Dunuwille & Pathmini, 2016). The study found out that there is a direct relationship between brand image and customer satisfaction. Besides the value that customers get from products that they purchase; the next critical factor is other people's perception. The rich often consider the brand when making their purchases, not primarily because of the attributes, but also as a demonstration of their social status. They will get more satisfaction when they own and publicly use a product with a brand that is of high quality. The emphasis on the perceived quality may even supersede the actual value. Someone may be willing to use a relatively older model of iPhone than to

use LG because of the perceived brand attributes. It explains why Apple Inc's iPhone users often register a high level of customer satisfaction. The fact that the brand is an iPhone is enough to make up for some of the shortcomings that the product may have in terms of functionality. Sharma (2018) conducted research titled —A study of consumer perception while purchasing apple products with special reference to Malwa region (Punjab). The researcher found out that in most cases customers buy goods because of the benefits and value that they attach to their attributes. When they get benefits from the products that they purchase, they will be satisfied. Badran and Al-Haddad (2018) conducted a study titled —The impact of software user experience on customer satisfaction. ‖ The research found out that although customers often prefer hand held devices with attractive physical attributes, the software experience often defines their level of satisfaction. The physical appearance may be appealing and may convince a customer to purchase an item, but they always wait until they start using it to state whether they are satisfied with the product (Badran & Al-Haddad, 2018).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a way of systematically solving the research problems. Research methodology is a systematic method of a process of dealing with identifying problems, collection of facts or data, analysing these data for the purpose of making the decision. The methodology includes publication research, interviews, surveys and other research techniques, and could include both prevent and historical information. The methodology includes publication research, interviews, surveys and other research techniques, could both present and historical information.

3.1 Research Population and Samples

Sampling unit, sampling size and sampling proceeds are given under the sampling plan. The selected for the study was 313 college students. Specifically, the convenience sampling among the students and the stratified random sampling of the consumers were used.

3.2 Tools and Techniques Used

● Chi-Square

Chi-Square

The Chi-Square test is one of the oldest and still one of the most popular approaches in statistical analysis. This test primarily intends to provoke differences between observed frequencies and expected frequencies. The test may also be effectively applied to compare differences in two or more sets of observed data. The value of chi-square is computed based on the given observed and expected frequencies.

$$X^2 = \Sigma (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$$

Where X^2 is the Chi-Square value, O_i is the observed frequency, and E_i is the expected frequency, Σ indicates summation.

IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS BETWEEN GENDER AND THE PRICING OF IPHONES

Null hypothesis:

Ho: There is no association between gender and the pricing of iPhones

Alternative hypothesis:

H1: There is an association between gender and the pricing of iPhones

CHI-SQUARE TESTS

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance
Pearson Chi-Square	328.625a	10	.025
Likelihood Ratio	415.938	10	.038
N of Valid Cases	313		

CONCLUSION

Chi square shows the person chi square significant value is 0.005. when we compare with p value (0.05), our calculated value is smaller than the p value 0.025>0.005. therefore, we have to accept our null hypothesis Ho and rejecting alternative hypothesis H1. Hence there is an association between gender and the pricing of iPhones.

4.2. CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS BETWEEN GENDER AND ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE AFTER SALES SERVICE PROVIDE BY THE COMPANY

Null hypothesis:

Ho: There is no association between gender and are you satisfied with the after sales

service provides by the company

Alternative hypothesis:

H1: There is an association between gender and are you satisfied with the after sales

service provides by the company

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance
Pearson Chi-Square	318.199a	4	.009
Likelihood Ratio	408.116	4	.012
N of Valid Cases	313		

CONCLUSION

Chi square shows the person chi square significant value is 0.005. when we compare with p value (0.05), our calculated value is smaller than the p value 0.009>0.005. therefore, we have to accept our null hypothesis Ho and rejecting alternative hypothesis H1. Hence there is an association between ender and are you satisfied with the after sales service provide by the company.

4.3. CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS BETWEEN GENDER AND THE IPHONE IS A STATUS SYMBOL DUE TO ITS BRAND

Null hypothesis:

Ho: There is no association between gender and the iPhone is a status symbol due to its brand

Alternative hypothesis:

H1: There is an association between gender and the iPhone is a status symbol due to its brand

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance
Pearson Chi-Square	326.835a	10	.035
Likelihood Ratio	415.297	10	.044
N of Valid Cases	313		

CONCLUSION

Chi square shows the person chi square significant value is 0.005. when we compare with p value (0.05), our calculated value is smaller than the p value 0.035>0.005. therefore, we have to accept our null hypothesis Ho and rejecting alternative hypothesis H1. Hence there is an association between Gender and the iPhone is a status symbol due to its brand.

4.4 CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS BETWEEN GENDER AND DESIGN OF THE IPHONE

Null hypothesis:

Ho: There is no association between gender and Design of the iPhone

Alternative hypothesis:

H1: There is an association between gender and Design of the iPhone

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance
Pearson Chi-Square	332.194a	10	.053
Likelihood Ratio	419.060	10	.061
N of Valid Cases	313		

CONCLUSION

Chi square shows the person chi square significant value is 0.005. when we compare with p value (0.05), our calculated value is smaller than the p value 0.053>0.005. therefore, we have to accept our null hypothesis Ho and rejecting alternative hypothesis H1. Hence there is an association between gender and Design of the iPhone.

4.5 Findings

In examining the consumer perception towards iPhone among college students with special reference to Coimbatore city Price Sensitivity and Gender Association: The Chi-Square analysis between gender and the pricing of iPhones reveals a significant association. This indicates that gender influences the perception of iPhone pricing, suggesting that males and females may have different levels of sensitivity to the premium pricing of Apple products. Satisfaction with After-Sales Service: This implies that males and females have varying levels of satisfaction with the service they receive after purchasing an iPhone, which may provide insights into areas where Apple can improve or enhance customer service offerings. Perception of iPhone as a Status Symbol: A significant relationship was found between gender and the perception of the iPhone as a status symbol. This suggests that both males and females view the iPhone's brand as a symbol of prestige, but there may be differences in how this is perceived across genders. Design Preference and Gender: While the data does not fully support a conclusive association at the 0.05 significance level, this finding points to the possibility that Apple's design choices may have varying appeal based on gender, and further research may be needed to explore specific design features that attract different gender demographics.

V. CONCLUSION

In this study, the primary objective was to assess customer perception and satisfaction towards Apple's iPhone, focusing on factors such as price sensitivity, after-sales service, brand perception, and design. The research aimed to understand how various elements influence consumer decision-making and loyalty in the competitive smartphone market. Through the application of Chi-Square analysis, the study found significant associations between gender and key factors, including pricing, after-sales service, and the iPhone's status symbol. Notably, consumers perceive the iPhone not just as a functional device, but also as a symbol of prestige, with design and brand recognition playing pivotal roles in consumer satisfaction. However, the study also indicated that while gender plays a role in these perceptions, it is not the sole determinant. Other demographic and psychological factors contribute to consumer behaviour, and these should be considered by Apple in its marketing and product development strategies. Understanding customer preferences and adapting to their evolving needs will enable Apple to maintain its competitive edge. The findings offer valuable insights for future research, which could explore deeper into consumer loyalty and the impact of technological advancements on brand perception.

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