

The impact of digital marketing on consumer purchase decisions in Kathmandu valley

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of smartphones on youth of Kathmandu valley. Youth behavior is selected as the dependent variable. Similarly, price brand image product features product quality service quality and customer satisfaction are selected as independent variables. This study is based on primary data with 153 observations. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation coefficients and regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of different factors influencing impact on youth behavior of Kathmandu valley.

The study showed that price has a positive impact on youth behavior. It means that reasonable price lead to an increase in youth behavior. Similarly, brand image has a positive impact on youth behavior. It indicates that a good brand image leads to an increase in youth behavior. Moreover, product features have a positive impact on youth behavior. It means that an increase in product features leads to an increase in youth behavior. Likewise, product quality has a positive impact on youth behavior. It shows that the increase in product quality leads to an increase in youth behavior. Further, service quality has a positive impact on youth behavior. It shows that an increase in service quality leads to an increment in youth behavior. However, customer satisfaction has a positive impact on youth behavior. It shows that an increase in customer satisfaction leads to an increment in youth behavior.

Keywords: Price, brand image, product features, product quality, service quality, customer satisfaction, youth behavior.

1. Introduction

In the existing extremely competitive mobile phone market, manufacturers continuously struggle to find extra competitive perimeter and differentiating basic elements to convince consumers to select their brand as an alternative of a competitor's (Sharma *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, Bala *et al.* (2020) stated that brand switching behavior of the user is increasing dramatically day by day due to product price, innovative features of the new smartphone, social influence, the phone's color, the capacity of random access memory (RAM), read-only memory (ROM), display's size, and customer satisfaction.

According to Kumar and Chaubey (2015), product factors are given due care as compared to functional features while selecting a brand of mobile

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hand set. This study also showed that there is no significant difference on the customer preferences of product as well as functional attributes while switching smartphone. In addition, Althonayan *et al.* (2015) confirmed a significant negative relationship between customer satisfaction and brand switching intention. When a customer prefers one product over another, which is preference. Consumers buy goods that are more valuable to them (Auty, 1999). Consumer behavior is referred to as the procedures and actions by which people or groups select and use goods, experiences, ideas, and services (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006). A person is psychologically motivated to make a purchasing decision by customer preference (Lichtenstein *et al.*, 2006). Customers are more likely to identify with brand advertisements that convey emotive values and sentiments, which in turn increases consumer desire to purchase (Mehta *et al.*, 2006).

According to Narayan and Jain (2011), pricing and call rates are always among the factors determining brand switching based on studies conducted in Korea, Finland and India. Similarly, Bibi *et al.* (2015) stated that mobile phones are one of the technological innovations which have garnered immense public interest and have gained huge popularity across the globe. According to Irfan *et al.* (2018), brand image and product price simultaneously influence purchase decision. Furthermore, Isa *et al.* (2020) revealed that price and promotion have positive effects on brand switching towards smartphone.

Puth *et al.* (1999) stated that product's feature is the main criteria to evaluate a product when considering their purchase. The study also revealed that the features (size, shape, colors, LCD screen, camera pixel and etc.) have the strong ability to attract consumers' switching decision. Switching occurs when a customer is motivated to review their available alternatives in the market place due to a change in competitive activities in the market (Seiders and Tigerts, 1997). Therefore, Stern *et al.* (1998) stated that brands identity and reference group lead to switch brand.

Sathish *et al.* (2011) indicated that brand switching is a consumer behavior where the behavior of the consumers differs based on the satisfaction level of the consumers with providers or companies. Similarly, brand switching defined as the process of being loyal to one product or service, and switching to another due to dissatisfaction or any other problems. Further, Keller (1993) stated that brand is the perception of consumer and recognized as brand knowledge of the customer, consisting of brand awareness (recognition and recall) and brand image.

According to Lay-Yee *et al.* (2013), perceived quality is often associated with brands and the brand name has direct influence on customer's perception toward the quality of the offering the study stated that experienced consumers can give a reason why they want to repurchase a particular product and can differentiate among competitive brands. However, Kumari and Kumar (2016) found that the technical features of the mobile phone and looks, image and resource, entertainment have significant role in the choice of the mobile phone.

The brand loyalty concept is considered as a very strong tool for product differentiation, attracting new customers and retaining the old ones (Rajumesh, 2014). In addition, the long-term success of firms depends on maintaining consumer satisfaction, because a satisfied customer is expected to repurchase from the same firm (Heide and Weiss, 1995). Similarly, Nagar (2009) found sales promotion, free gifts have influence on the brand switching behavior of consumer.

According to Hus and Nguyen (2019), service quality, relationship quality, and inertia as expected, negatively influence customers' switching intention. Also, the study showed product quality and switching cost have insignificant influence on switching behavior. Therefore, Ahmed *et al.* (2015) stated that consumer switching behavior depends on the cause-effect relationship.

According to Shabrin and Vidyavati (2016), physical attributes, pricing, battery life and service facilities, size and weight, friends and social group recommendations and advertising has effect on brand switching behavior. However, Dholakia and Morwitz (2002) revealed that customer satisfaction has a significant effect on purchase behavior, loyalty, and switching behavior. Similarly, Pantano and Priporas (2016) found that dissatisfied customers can hamper the organization's image and customer base. Therefore, Sethi and Chandel (2015) found that brand, price, and purpose affect switching behavior.

According to Anderson and Sullivan (1993), when consumer switches to another brand, it because the strategy developed was not able to maintain or motivate existing consumers. However, Fintikasari and Ardyan (2018) found that lifestyle, variety seeking, customer trust and promotion were most influencing factor in smartphone brand switching. Further, Wong *et al.* (2019) found that emotional value, social value, epistemic value and confidence benefits increased consumer brand commitment and predicted

less smartphone brand switching behavior.

Soomro and Ghumro (2013) found the factor brand, price and characteristics of mobile phone are the main factors for purchasing new mobile phone and technical problems are the main cause for changing the mobile phone by users. Similarly, Feature is a characteristic of a product or service to meet the satisfaction level of consumers needs and wants, which comes with the ownership of the product, usage, and utilization of the product and smart-phone features includes hardware and software (Loahakosol and Sharma, 2018).

Gautam (2014) found brand creates confidence in quality and respect toward the product. The study also showed that branding in Nepalese market gives the social prestige as well. Similarly, Irfan *et al.* (2018) found brand image and product price have a positive influence towards purchase decision on Xiaomi smartphone. The study also showed that brand image is positively influence towards purchase decision.

Jiang *et al.* (2014) suggested that consumer switching behavior can occur not only from one object (product or service) to another but also across brands and within a brand. Similarly, Kuo and Hou (2017) revealed that highly brand committed consumers do not easily switch from one brand to another. The study also revealed that there is a negative relationship between brand committed and brand switching behavior.

In the context of Nepal, Gautam (2014) argued that brand switching depends on three factors which are aesthetics, added values or facilities and branding. Similarly, Shabrin *et al.* (2017) found that social influence, product feature, and brand image have significant positive impacts on the smartphone brand switching. According to Rai (2021), switching decision can be influenced by the price of the product, brand personality, perceived quality, and value of the product. Therefore, Shrestha (2017) found that brand name, marketing activities, and subjective norms were the most influential factors for customer response of smart phones for purchase intention, brand extension attitude and premium price. Similarly, Laohakosol and Sharma (2018) showed that attractive product features compatible with their needs and social sphere cause switching among Nepalese buyers.

The above discussion shows that the empirical evidence arrives greatly across the studies on the impact of smartphones on youth. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidence in the connect of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal.

Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The main purpose of the study is to analyze the impact of smartphone on youth of Kathmandu valley. Specifically, it examines the impact of price, brand image, product features, product quality, service quality, customers satisfaction and youth behavior of Kathmandu valley.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows. Section two describes the sample, data and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results, and the final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on primary data. The data were gathered from 153 respondents through a questionnaire. The respondents' views were collected on price, brand image, product features, product quality, service quality, customer satisfaction, and youth behavior. The study used descriptive and casual comparative research design.

The model

The model estimated in this study assumes that impact of smartphones depends on youth behavior. The dependent variables selected for the study are consumer youth behavior. Similarly, the selected independent variables are price brand image product features product quality service quality and customer satisfaction. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

$$\text{Model: } YB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 P + \beta_2 BI + \beta_3 PF + \beta_4 PQ + \beta_5 SQ + \beta_6 CS +$$

Where,

YB=Youth behavior

P=Price

BI=Brand image

PF=Product features

PQ=Product quality

SQ=Service quality

CS=Customer service

Youth behavior was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree

and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Online advertisement influences me to search more about the product information immediately,” “Online ads provide relevant information about products or services” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.779$).

Email marketing was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I frequently open and read promotional emails sent by the companies”, “I like to make a purchase after receiving a promotional email” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.932$).

Social media marketing was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I am more attracted to buy a product when I see it on social media”, “I enjoy purchasing on social media commerce site because of the services it offers”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.753$).

Mobile marketing was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Through advertisement messages via mobile phone, I receive timely and exclusive information about the products”, “Is information from mobile marketing sufficient in leading you to buying intention”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.769$).

Brand awareness was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I typically buy a brand that I can quickly recognize among competing brands”, “I look for a certain brand before I look for other alternatives of the brand.”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.753$).

Consumer purchase decision was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I rely on digital marketing activities for the product and service

information”, “Promotional marketing helps me to decide for the products”, and so on. The reliability of the feature was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.798$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with hypothesis formulation.

Price

Mathapati and Vidyavati (2016) revealed that price was considered by the customer while choosing a branded mobile phone. Similarly, Sharma *et al.* (2017) found price is a major factor to influence customers to replace the existing one mobile phone. Price has the biggest impact in influencing the brand switching decision on X generations (Korry and Suartini, 2018). Based on it, the study develops the following hypothesis:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between price and youth behavior.

Product features

Sata (2013) found six important factors such as price, brand name, product feature, social group, after sale services and durability influencing buying behavior. However, Hassan and Islam (2018) found that product features have a positive relation between smartphone and buying decision. Nepalese customers of smart phones are more attracted by the aesthetics i.e., features (Gautam, 2014). Similarly, Ling *et al.* (2018) found that a product features has significant relationship with brand switching. Based on it, the study develops the following hypothesis:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between product features and youth behavior.

Brand image

Soomro and Ghumro (2013) found brand characteristics respondents perceived the familiarity of company characteristics most as compared to other characteristics. The study also showed that purchase preference is not discriminated by the gender of the respondents. Therefore, Hassan and Islam (2018) found brand image and features are the most prevalent factors to influence customer buying and using decision. However, Bala *et al.* (2020) showed a positive brand image able to satisfy the customer’s expectation and suggest more benefits for building customer loyalty and trust. Based on it, the study develops the following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between brand image and youth behavior.

Product quality

Korry and Suartini (2018) found that product quality has a positive impact in influencing brand switching. Similarly, Sharma *et al.* (2017) found product quality is major factors to influence customers. Similarly, Irviandra and Trinanda (2020) found product quality has significant effect on brand switching iPhone smartphone. The study also concluded that the product quality negatively influences customers' switching intention. Based on it, the study develops the following hypothesis:

H₄: There is a positive relationship between product quality and youth behavior.

Service quality

Althonayan *et al.* (2015) showed if firms can guarantee service quality for customers, then firms are likely to retain and acquire more customers as it is the best way to eliminate uncertainty and gain satisfaction. Therefore, Liang *et al.* (2015) stated that service encounter failure includes bad attitudes from service firm personnel, the unresponsiveness to customers complaints, the unprofessional manners in dealing with customers, and the failure of service providers' call centers to provide support. This study also showed that service quality a heavily dependent on the quality of functional and technical measures and it has a direct impact on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Khan and Manthiri, 2016). Based on it, the study develops the following hypothesis:

H₅: There is a positive relationship between service quality and youth behavior.

Customer satisfaction

Althonayan *et al.* (2015) found that customer satisfaction has the largest attention when it comes to customer retention and loyalty. This study also showed that there is a negative relationship between the customer satisfaction and brand switching intention. Similarly, Irviandra and Trinanda (2020) found that consumer dissatisfaction, has significant effect on brand switching iPhone smartphone. This study also showed that satisfaction can be considered a more root factor in a considerable number of occasions. Furthermore, the study stated dissatisfied customers are more likely to search for what satisfies them in services provided by other competitors and can influence company's revenues more than satisfied customer (Andreson and Sullivan, 1993). Based on it, the study develops the following hypothesis:

H₆: There is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and youth

behavior.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients along with means and standard deviations have been computed, and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents Kendall’s Tau coefficients between dependent and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 153 observations. The dependent variable is YB (Youth Behavior). The independent variables are P (Price), BI (Brand Image), PF (Product Features), PQ (Product Quality), SQ (Service Quality) and CS (Customer Satisfaction).

Variables	Mean	SD	YB	P	BI	PF	PQ	SQ	CS
YB	3.790	0.831	1						
P	3.777	0.689	0.449**	1					
BI	3.282	1.071	0.638**	0.502**	1				
PF	3.452	1.090	0.756**	0.465**	0.756**	1			
PQ	3.475	0.984	0.699**	0.590**	0.771**	0.781**	1		
SQ	3.756	0.920	0.802**	0.476**	0.702**	0.810**	0.755**	1	
CS	3.776	0.840	0.762**	0.364**	0.629**	0.731**	0.709**	0.801**	1

Note: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows the Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients of dependent and independent variables for youth behavior. The study indicates that price is positively correlated to the youth behavior. This indicates that increasing price increase youth behavior. Likewise, brand image is positively correlated to the youth behavior. This indicates that increasing brand image increase youth behavior. Similarly, product features are positively correlated to youth behavior. This indicates that increasing product features increases youth behavior. However, product quality is also positively related to the youth behavior indicating that increasing product quality leads to increases the youth behavior. Service quality are positively related to youth behavior. This indicates that increasing service quality increases youth behavior. Likewise, customer satisfaction is positively correlated to the youth behavior which indicates that increasing customer satisfaction would result as increase on youth behavior.

Regression analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical process for estimating the relationships among variables. The regression results were estimated where are used as independent variables and dependent variable is the youth behavior, price, brand image, product features, product quality, service quality and customer satisfaction.

The regression result price, brand image, product features, product quality, service quality and customer satisfaction provided by respondent in is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Estimated regression result of price, brand image, product features, product quality, service quality and customer satisfaction on youth behavior

The results are based on 153 observations using linear regression model. The model is $YB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 P + \beta_2 BI + \beta_3 PF + \beta_4 PQ + \beta_5 SQ + \beta_6 CS$ where the dependent variable is YB (Youth behavior). The independent variables are Price, Brand image, Product Features, Product Quality, Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction.

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of						Adj. R_bar ²	SEE	F-value
		P	BI	PF	PQ	SQ	CS			
1	0.366 (1.476)	0.907 (14.050)						0.564	0.548	197.395
2	1.832 (13.150)		0.597 (14.779)					0.589	0.533	218.420
3	1.567 (13.064)			0.644 (19.429)				0.712	0.445	377.472
4	1.260 (10.051)				0.728 (20.972)			0.743	0.421	439.820
5	0.706 (5.966)					0.821 (26.845)		0.826	0.347	720.631
6	0.463 (3.272)						0.881 (24.079)	0.792	0.379	579.778
7	0.576 (2.765)	0.525 (7.365)	0.375 (8.159)					0.696	0.458	174.838
8	1.292 (10.500)			0.140 (2.855)	0.481 (5.178)			0.754	0.411	234.399
9	0.499 (4.043)					0.533 (6.978)	0.341 (4.072)	0.842	0.330	405.781
10	1.580 (13.110)		-0.97 (1.069)	0.733 (8.136)				0.713	0.445	189.462
11	0.728 (6.384)				0.217 (3.598)	0.614 (9.50)		0.838	0.334	395.285

Notes:

- i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values.
- ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at 1 percent and 5 percent level respectively.
- iii. Youth behavior is dependent variable.

The regression results show that the beta coefficients for are positive with youth behavior. It indicates that price has positive impact on the youth

behaviour. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Korry & Suartini, 2018). Likewise, the beta coefficients for brand image are positive with the youth behavior. It indicates that brand image has positive impact on the youth behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Gautam, 2014). In addition, the beta coefficients for product features are positive with the youth behavior. It indicates that product features have a positive impact on the youth behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Hassan & Islam, 2018). Further, the beta coefficients for product quality are positively related with the youth behavior. It indicates that product quality has a positive impact on the youth behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Recker & Salem, 2015). Moreover, the beta coefficient for service quality is positive with the youth behavior which indicates that service quality has positive impact on the youth behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Hati *et al.*, 2020). Likewise, the beta coefficients for customer satisfaction are positive with the youth behavior. It indicates that customer satisfaction has a positive impact on the youth behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Kim & Lee, 2010).

4. Summary and conclusion

Smartphones are small mini-computers, their impact on the environment is no longer small. This study shows that there is correlation of price, product quality, service quality, brand image, product features and customer satisfaction with youth behavior in Kathmandu. The study showed that brand effect partly mediates the connections between product, price and brand switching towards smartphones. In this study conceptual framework has been drawn where price, brand image, product features, product quality and service quality are taken as independent variables and youth behavior is taken as dependent variables.

The study is based on primary sources of data. The total number of observations for the study consists of 153 respondents for analyzing the impact of smartphones on youth of Kathmandu.

The major conclusion of this study is that higher the price, brand image, product features, product quality and service quality, higher would be the youth behavior. The result shows that price, brand image, product features, product quality and service quality are positively correlated to the youth behavior. This indicates that price, brand image, product features, product quality and service quality of the consumer provided for the impact of smartphones on youth of Kathmandu. The study also concludes that the most influencing

factor is product quality followed by Product features and price that explains the youth behavior.

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