



## **THE ROLE OF ONLINE REVIEWS IN SHAPING CONSUMER TRUST AND PURCHASE DECISIONS IN THE SMARTPHONE MARKET**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Aim:** This study examines the influence of social media on mobile phone purchase preferences among male and female users, comparing their behavior and evaluating the impact of advertisements and direct product experiences. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources, including questionnaires, books, records, and articles. The primary data was gathered from Sunguvarchatram, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, with a sample size of 130 respondents. Surveys were conducted via Google Forms. Statistical analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Version 26, employing One-Way ANOVA, One-Sample T-Test, and Pearson Correlation Analysis.

**Results and Discussion:** The study identified significant differences in purchasing decisions based on information sources ( $F(4, 125) = 3.357, p = 0.012$ ). A positive correlation was observed between direct product experience and perceived advertisement authenticity ( $r = 0.255, p = 0.003$ ). Media advertisements had a substantial impact on consumer behavior (mean difference = 2.054,  $t(129) = 25.288, p < 0.001$ ). Overall, consumer satisfaction with purchases was high.

**Conclusion:** The findings indicate that social media significantly influences mobile phone purchase decisions, with varying effects depending on the source of information. Direct product experiences enhance the perceived authenticity of advertisements. The study highlights the crucial role of social media in shaping consumer preferences, as reflected in high purchase satisfaction and the moderate impact of advertisements.

### **Introduction**

This study explores the relationship between brand choice and consumer purchasing decisions. It aims to understand the factors influencing consumer preferences for one brand over another and how these choices shape overall buying behavior (Yasmini A). Brands play a pivotal role in consumer decision-making by providing product information and fostering associations that impact consumer perceptions during the purchasing process.

A brand represents a specific value in the eyes of the consumer. Understanding consumer behavior and brand preferences is essential for businesses aiming to meet their target



audience's needs and preferences. Companies that gain insights into consumer decision-making can develop more effective marketing strategies, drive innovation, and achieve long-term success in the market (Meier, 2019). Research on consumer behavior and brand selection has practical applications across various business functions, including marketing, product development, brand management, and customer relationship management. By leveraging these insights, companies can strengthen their competitive position and better align with customer expectations (Shehzad).

A strong brand image significantly enhances a company's success. Brand names serve as powerful tools that influence purchasing decisions, as consumers tend to favor well-known and reputable brands (Foxall, GR). However, consumer loyalty varies—while some buyers consistently choose a single brand, most engage in multi-brand purchasing over time. (Akkucuk) Research suggests that brand loyalty and awareness play a major role in smartphone purchasing decisions. However, perceived quality and brand connection did not appear to significantly impact purchase behavior among the study's sample. A review of Google Scholar reveals approximately 85,000 articles analyzing consumer behavior (Yasmin, n.d.).

Branding combines marketing and communication strategies to distinguish a company or product from competitors, aiming to leave a lasting impression on consumers. In competitive markets, a well-established brand can significantly influence business dynamics. Brand image positively affects purchasing decisions (Dewanti, R), with brand trust playing a critical role in consumer confidence and purchase behavior. Consumers prioritize security and reliability when purchasing private-label products, underscoring the importance of strong brand trust (Saputro, EP).

Many factors influence purchasing decisions, making the process complex. Variables such as price fluctuations, product availability, and brand perception all contribute to consumer choice. Brand trust and image are deeply interconnected, reinforcing the impact of branding on consumer decision-making. (Kidane, n.d.) Studying the factors influencing online purchasing decisions across different cultures and societies is essential. In response, this research investigates the variables shaping e-commerce purchasing behavior. (Suki, n.d.) examined how consumer awareness of green products, pricing, brand image, and environmental concerns influence purchasing decisions. (Ali, BJ) explored pricing strategies as a key determinant of consumer behavior, employing a quantitative research approach with adapted survey questionnaires. (Ridwan, n.d.) assessed the impact of service factors on consumer choices using a quantitative methodology..

### Materials And Methods

This study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources to analyze consumer behavior and the impact of social media on mobile phone purchase preferences. The primary data was collected through structured questionnaires designed to capture respondents' viewpoints and experiences. These questionnaires included both quantitative and qualitative elements to provide a well-rounded understanding of consumer perspectives. Data collection was conducted in Chennai, with resources from Saveetha University used for analysis.

A total of 130 respondents participated in the study, divided into two groups. The research explores how consumer behavior is influenced by brand preference and advertising,



specifically examining the role of television commercials and brand perception in shaping purchase decisions. Factors such as perceived quality, brand image, and brand loyalty play a significant role in influencing consumer choices. Consumers tend to prefer brands that align with their lifestyle, values, and self-identity. Additionally, brand selection can vary based on specific needs—for instance, a consumer might choose one brand for athletic footwear and another for casual wear.

Television advertisements significantly impact purchasing decisions by enhancing brand awareness, shaping perceptions, and eliciting emotional responses. Well-designed ads communicate a brand's unique value, differentiate it from competitors, and create aspirational appeal among consumers. Through engaging storytelling and striking visuals, TV advertisements capture attention, build interest, and drive purchase intent. Moreover, repeated exposure to ads reinforces brand recognition and trust. However, the effectiveness of TV advertising depends on several factors, including target audience demographics, timing, creative execution, and market competition, making its influence on consumer behavior complex.

### Statistical Analysis

The study employed IBM SPSS for data analysis, ensuring efficient and accurate assessment of responses. The primary objective was to examine how brand preference influences consumer buying decisions and to evaluate the relationship between brand perception, purchasing behavior, and media influence.

A self-administered questionnaire was designed using Google Forms, a digital survey and quiz platform. Data collected from the responses was imported into spreadsheets, where SPSS automatically updated survey results for analysis and documentation. The data was visually represented using pie charts and bar graphs for better interpretation.

The following statistical tools were used to test the research hypothesis and analyze consumer behavior:

- **Pearson Correlation** – To measure the relationship between brand perception and purchasing decisions.
- **One-Way ANOVA** – To assess significant differences in purchasing preferences based on demographic factors.
- **One-Sample T-Test** – To determine the significance of media influence on consumer behavior.

This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how brand preference and advertising impact consumer purchase decisions, offering valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of consumer behavior.

### Results

**Table 1:** The ANOVA results indicate a significant difference in purchasing decisions based on the source of information ( $F(4, 125) = 3.357, p = 0.012$ ). The variation between groups

(SS = 12.273, MS = 3.068) is greater than the variation within groups (SS = 114.257, MS = 0.914), confirming that the source of information plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior.

**Table 2:** A Pearson correlation analysis reveals a statistically significant positive relationship between direct product experience and the perceived authenticity of advertisements ( $r = 0.255$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ,  $N = 130$ ). This suggests that consumers who engage in direct product experiences tend to view advertisements as more credible.

**Table 3:** Results from the one-sample t-test indicate a significant difference between the sample data and the population mean ( $t(129) = 25.288$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with media advertisements contributing to a mean difference of 2.054. This underscores the substantial impact of advertisements on consumer purchasing decisions.

**Figure 1:** A bar graph illustrating consumer satisfaction levels on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 = Highly Satisfied and 5 = Highly Dissatisfied) shows that the majority of respondents report high satisfaction with their purchases. The highest bar appears at level 1, indicating strong overall satisfaction, while the bar gradually decreases towards level 5, where fewer respondents express dissatisfaction.

**Figure 2:** A histogram depicting the influence of media advertisements on consumer decisions (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Highly Influential and 5 = Least Influential) shows a peak at level 2. This indicates that most respondents find media advertisements to have a moderate to high impact on their purchasing behavior, reinforcing the role of media in influencing consumer preferences.

## Discussion

The ANOVA test results reveal a statistically significant difference in purchase decisions among different groups ( $F(4, 125) = 3.357$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ). This suggests that factors such as marketing strategies, product attributes, or demographic differences play a key role in shaping consumer behavior. The between-group variance (Sum of Squares = 12.273) is notably higher than the within-group variance (Sum of Squares = 114.257), indicating that differences across groups are more substantial than variations within them. These findings highlight the significant impact of the studied factor on purchasing decisions. Further analysis, such as post-hoc tests or subgroup comparisons, could help identify which specific groups show distinct purchasing behaviors. Gaining insights into these differences allows businesses to refine marketing strategies, optimize product offerings, and target specific consumer segments more effectively, thereby improving market competitiveness and profitability.

The correlation analysis indicates a moderate positive relationship ( $r = 0.255$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ) between direct product experience and the perceived authenticity of advertisements. This suggests that consumers who have firsthand interaction with a product are more likely to trust the claims made in advertisements. This finding reinforces the idea that direct experience builds consumer confidence, as individuals rely on their own observations to assess the credibility of marketing messages. However, while the correlation is significant, it does not establish causation. Other factors, such as brand reputation, prior exposure to misleading advertisements, or personal skepticism toward marketing, may also influence consumer perceptions. Future research should explore these additional variables to gain a deeper

understanding of how trust in advertisements is formed and how brands can enhance credibility through consumer engagement strategies.

### Tables And Figures:

**Table 1: One way Anova**

ANOVA			
Source of purchasing decisions			
	Between Groups	Within Groups	Total
Sum of Squares	12.273	114.257	126.531
df	4	125	125
Mean Square	3.068	0.914	
F	3.357		
Sig.	0.012		

The ANOVA analysis indicates a significant difference in purchasing decisions between groups, with a p-value of 0.012. The variation between groups accounts for 3.068 units of the total variation.

**Table 2 : Pearson correlation**

Correlations						
	Direct product or trial experience			advertisements are genuine		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Direct product or trial experience	1		130	.255**	0.003	130
advertisements are genuine	.255**	0.003	130	1		130

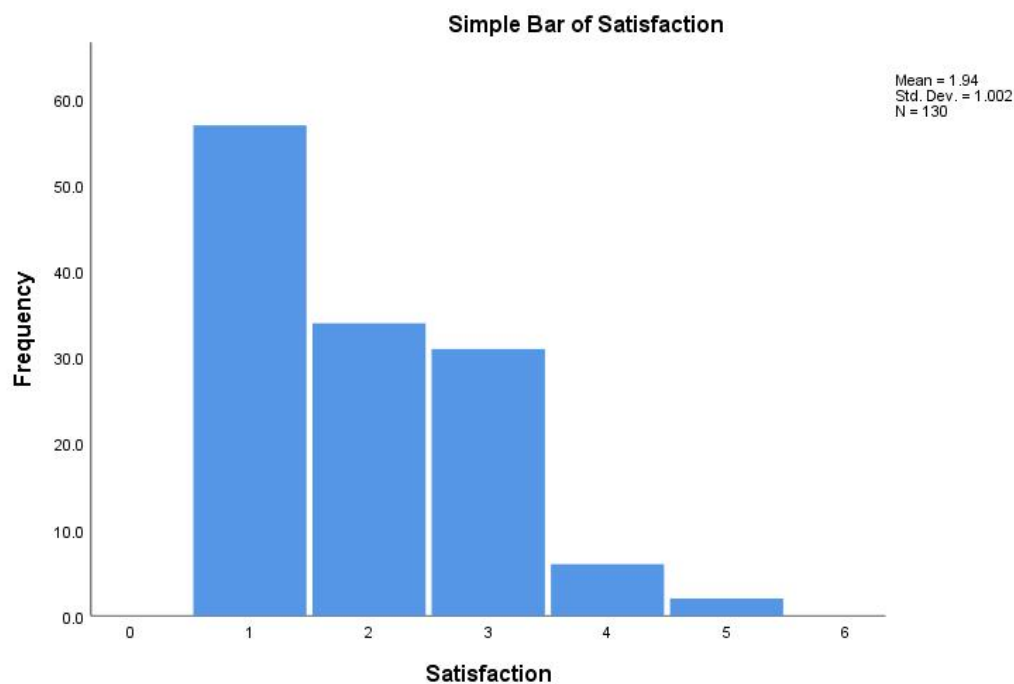
There is a significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.255$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ) between direct product/trial experience and perceptions of advertisement genuineness among 130 respondents, suggesting experiential knowledge influences trust in advertisements.



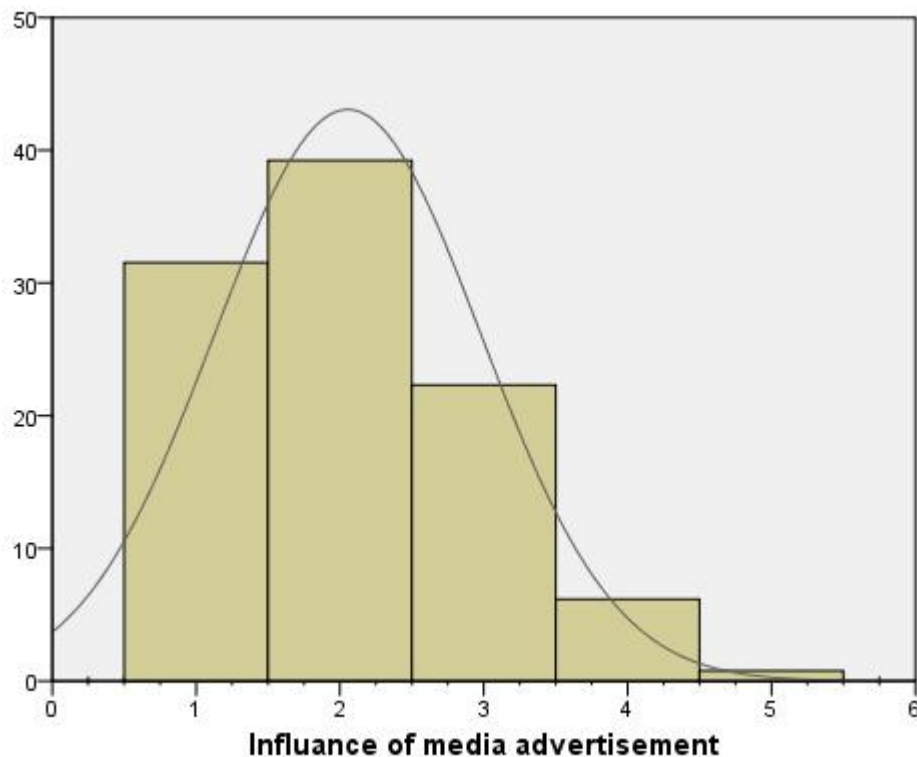
**Table 3: T Test**

One-Sample Test				
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Media advertisement	25.288	129	0	2.054

A one-sample t-test with 129 degrees of freedom reveals a highly significant difference in mean effectiveness for media advertisement, with a mean difference of 2.054 ( $t = 25.288$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Figure 1**

**Figure 2**



## Conclusion

This study confirms that social media significantly influences consumer decisions when purchasing mobile phones. It also highlights that consumer behavior varies based on the sources of information they rely on. The ANOVA results demonstrate that purchasing preferences are strongly shaped by the source of information, with differences more pronounced between groups than within them. Additionally, a positive correlation between direct product experience and the perceived credibility of advertisements suggests that consumers tend to trust ads more when they have personal experience with the product.

The one-sample t-test results indicate a significant difference between the population mean and the sample data, reinforcing the strong influence of media advertisements on consumer behavior. Furthermore, the histogram findings suggest that media advertisements hold a moderate but notable impact on purchasing decisions. At the same time, the bar graph data reflects high overall satisfaction among consumers regarding their purchases. These insights emphasize the critical role of both social media influence and personal experience in shaping modern consumer preferences.

## Limitations Of The Study

While this research provides valuable insights, it has certain limitations due to external and uncontrollable factors:

1. **Geographical Limitation:** The study is restricted to Sunguvarchatram, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, meaning the findings may not be fully generalizable to other regions or demographics.
2. **Sample Bias:** The sample size of 130 respondents may not be representative of the broader population, potentially influencing the findings.
3. **Data Collection Constraints:** The study relies on self-reported data from surveys, which may be subject to response bias or inaccuracies in participants' perceptions and recollections.
4. **Methodological Limitations:** While statistical tools like ANOVA, Pearson Correlation, and t-tests provide robust analysis, they may not fully capture the complexity of consumer decision-making, necessitating further qualitative research.

Acknowledging these limitations helps ensure transparency and provides context for interpreting the results.

## Scope Of The Study

This study aims to enhance the understanding of the relationship between brand choice and consumer purchasing behavior. By analyzing different consumer segments, brand categories, and the role of media influence, the research contributes to:

- Strategic marketing insights for businesses looking to refine their advertising and branding approaches.
- Consumer behavior analysis to help brands align their messaging with consumer expectations and preferences.
- Market competitiveness by identifying factors that drive brand loyalty and purchase decisions.

Future research can build upon this study by exploring larger sample sizes, diverse geographic locations, and in-depth qualitative methods to provide a more comprehensive perspective on consumer-brand interactions.

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