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Factors affecting the buying behavior of smartphones and electronic gadgets in modern dynamic environment

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Abstract

In the present scenario the technology is changing rapidly; which changed the way of conducting the business. In the recent past years, there is vicious competition in the market which made the electronic market very insecure. There has been a phenomenal development both in their product sophistication and their fast and adoption globally, since the mobile phones are launched. The mobile phone and electronic gadget market are one of the most tempestuous markets due to rapid change in technology and increasing competition. With this the attitude of consumers is also changing, as consumer behavior is the study of buying tendencies of consumers. The purpose of this paper is to study and assimilate the existing work of the different researchers to provide the framework for identifying the different factors which influence the consumers while purchasing the smartphones and gadgets. It is found from the various researchers that there are some physical attributes as well as the functional attributes of the product that affect the consumers. Consumer buying is strongly determined by various characteristics such as cultural, social, psychological and personal. This study also revealed that although physical parameters affect the most but there are some internal and external factors affect the buying decision such as social, demographic, economic environment and micro & macro policies. This study helps the marketers to understand the buyer behaviour and help them in designing the appropriate strategies according to the market environment.

Keywords: Consumer buying behaviour, mobile phones and gadgets, physical and functional attributes

Introduction

Companies are particularly concerned about future uncertainties in today's competitive environment because of shifting consumer attitudes towards their products. It is one of the main issues that the marketers are concerned about. Since a consumer's purchasing behaviour is the culmination of their preferences, intentions, perceptions, and choices regarding their behaviour in the market when making purchases of goods or services. According to Kotler and Keller (2011) [15], the study of how organisations, groups, and people acquire and dispose of products, goods, services, ideas, and experiences to satisfy their needs and wants is known as consumer purchase behaviour.

India presents a global opportunity for marketers for short- to medium-term growth in consumer electronics spending as growth in India's consumer electronics market can be attributed to rising disposable income, increasing household appliance demand, easier access to credit, and also changing consumer lifestyles. The market for mobile phones and other electronic devices is a prominent example of a market that is being driven by technology rather than consumer demand and needs (Gerstheimer and Lupp, 2004) ^[7]. The widespread use of electronic devices and smartphones prompts several studies and researchers to focus on adopting consumer behaviour postulates in the electronics industry and exploring the subject of customer happiness. Understanding consumer behaviour and how they select products and services is crucial for manufacturers and marketers since it enables them to compete with rivals on a variety of fronts. The marketers arrange their plans appropriately and provide the proper products and services to the right audience with the aid of their research (Kotler and Keller, 2011) ^[15]. Marketers must comprehend their target markets or consumers; they must abandon conventional marketing tactics and focus on developing fresh, creative approaches to draw in customers (Sanderson, 2010) ^[28].

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The shortening of the product life cycle, shifting customer attitudes, an abundance of brands, a complex competitive environment, and variations in consumer preferences make decisions for marketers and businesses extremely dangerous.

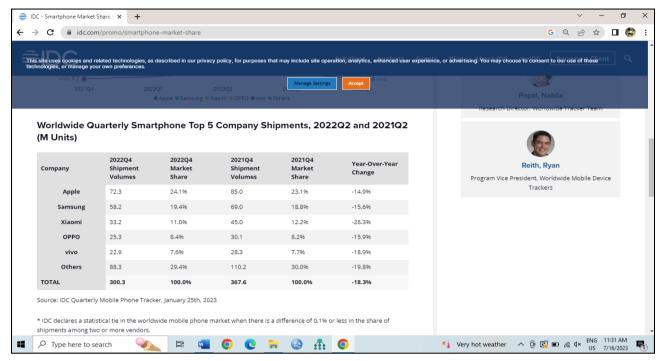


Fig 1: Show Worldwide quarterly smartphone top 5 company shipments, 2022Q2 and 2021Q2

Consumer behaviour is affected by a lot of variables ranging from socio-economic factors, personal-psychological characteristics, cultural, attitudes, values and perceptions, and many other internal as well as external factors which strongly influence the buyers. As per the previous research studies and review of literature, the various authors and researchers developed the conceptual framework of the consumer buying decision. According to them, there are six independent variables that influence the decision to buy a smartphone or any electronic gadget such as price, convenience, brand name, advanced value-added features, social influence and after-sale services.

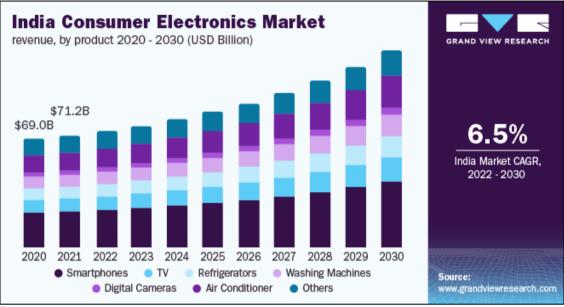
- Price: It plays a very significant role in the Buyer Purchase Decision as India is the one of the pricesensitive countries. Price has a great impact on the consumer perception for choosing smartphones or any other electronic device. If the one company charge the high price for any device as comparison to their competitors it could cause a major spike in sales. Shuffling in prices leads to unexpected results when it comes to buying a gadget. In the case of smartphones and electronic gadgets, the price of the device creates a greater impact than other factors (Hanif *et al.*, 2010) [8].
- Convenience: It is one of the integral influencing factors which affect students and the reason for the so much dependency on Smartphones (Yong, Boon and Chin., 2014) [36] Smartphones and electronic gadgets provide convenience to the working people. Rapid increase of internet and major expansion in Wi-Fi services makes it more connective.
- Brand Name: Brands create a major impact on customers who have limited buying capabilities. Consumer behaviour can easily oscillate by a strong brand. Distinguished and prestigious brands make products an object of desire in many unique ways. By

having a good brand name, companies gain multiple levels by creating significant and effective business plans and strategies that help them to promote the company and increasing sales. Developing a brand it's about creating an own identity that helps in differentiating one from the rest of the brands.

- Advanced value-added features: Software and hardware components are the important product features of the electronic device. There are many high technology features of electronic gadgets present in the market. Different features choose by different customers according to their needs and desires. (Ling *et al.*, 2006) [18] reveals that there are five design characteristics of any smartphone which preferred by the consumer such as a colour screen, camera, internet browsing, wireless connectivity, and voice-activated dialing. Colour, weight, design, and size are treated as additional motivating factors in consumer decision-making while buying any electronic device.
- Social Influence: It has a direct effect on behaviour aspirations. Social influence is all about the change in attitude, behaviour, thoughts and feelings Intentionally or unintentionally influenced by the family, friends, social roles and status (Kotler and Armstrong., 2010) [14]. People have their social network online; they can found information about electronic devices and gadgets. They also get reviews about the product from the other uses which are using that product currently or have been used previously.
- After-sale services: After-sale services are important for companies to compete with their competitors in the market by using search enlarge services (Vitasek, 2005) [33]. It does not only provide brand positioning but also provides a competitive advantage and contributes to increasing sales and significantly in the generation of

profit. (Saccani, Songini, and Gaiardelli (2006) [22] revealed in their research that after-sale services provide a strong base for company image, customer satisfaction and improve customer retention. The

companies should develop a strategic approach towards after-sales services and to meet the competitive challenges company system who developed the crossfunctional and cross-organizational feedback system.



Source: Market Research Report; India consumer Electronic market size, share and Trends analysis report by Product, Competitive Landscape and Segment Forecast, 2020-2030.

Fig 2: Show India's Consumer Electronics Market

According to Department of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, the consumer electronics market was USD 14 billion in 2015, has a 5-year CAGR of 18% and it is expected to be USD 29 billion by 2020.

Technology advancement is an important factor. The younger generation has better understanding of the innovative and new technology advancements in mobile phones and in electronic devices. For the young generation, technological advancement has a significant impact in their purchase decision (Mulondo 2014) [21]. The consumer behaviour in the field of electronic gadgets is influenced by the various parameters such as the cultural dimensions, situation and social influences, perception, involvement, motivation, learning, attitude, education, influences of salespersons and various other characteristics such as cameras, Bluetooth, colours, weight, design, shape, features etc.

Review of Related Literature

Moschis (1976) [1] examined that there are many internal, social, external and interpersonal factors that affect the customers to buy the product even in case of mobile and electronic gadgets also. The buyer behaviour influenced by lot of variables such as the personal motives, need for the product, usage of mobile phones, and availability of the goods. The choice of the mobile phone depends on the usage, price, brand and the most important advanced features in gadgets which give the better output in memory storage and functioning of the applications installed in the gadgets. Various factors such as demographic, income, friends groups, family etc., basically influence the choice of particular product especially in the case of mobile phones and electronic gadgets.

Palen, Salzman and Younngs (2000) [25] concluded in their research paper through the study of 19 first-time mobile

users during their first six weeks when service of obtainment is started. The purpose behind this study is that how mobile phones now become a necessity and up to what extent its usage affects the daily life routine. During six weeks a large number of interviews were conducted which based on the expectations by the customer, features in the new mobile phone, its adaptability. Mobile phones have set the standards of living of people. From this research, it was concluded that for purchasing the mobile phone, customers had several reasons such as safety, staying in touch, easily communication, good network, smart features, security, multiple already installed applications, speakers, camera etc. The need of contact or getting the information and for the employment purpose within short period of time is one of the important reasons while buying the mobile phone. Customer demands always rises in this dynamic environment.

Liu (2002) [17] observed that the choice of a mobile or smartphone is featured by two main factors i.e. brand and network. The choice of customers towards the mobile phone is mostly affected by their new features, advanced technology, storage facility, large screen with glass, speaker facilities as well as camera qualities. In 2002 report which is given by IN-STAT/MDR research institute stated that more emphasis is given on the colour display rather than high rates of the data due to rising demand among customers for colour screens. The shape of the screen and display of the mobile phone, the power section, touch screen digitizer, external glass sensors and various other characteristics and significant features of the devices affect the sales of the gadgets.

Kumiko Aoki, *et al.* (2002) ^[2] had conducted the research to study the teenagers attitude towards the mobile phone. He found that mobile phones were basically gets popularity in college students. The research is bifurcated between age

groups. The youngsters were more influenced by the different brands of mobile phones and covered the huge market share. In research both the sources of data collection were used i.e. primary and secondary data. In the study it found that different age groups had different attitude while buying the mobile phones. In case of any emergencies or in difficult situations the consumers thought about the security features, or when the mobile was lost then security and trapping techniques got priority on the other hand in daily routines the smart users using the mobile phones for the time saving by making financial transaction, to stay in touch with the family and friends, to study the different topics and to gain the knowledge about different matter; the mobile phone was one of the most convenient mode, hence it was getting popularity among teenagers.

Pakola J, Pietila M and Svento R (2003) [10] have specified that the factors which most affect the customer while purchasing of a new mobile phone are the price and its properties. On the other hand, for the mobile phones operators, the most important factors are audibility, price range, and availability of the product. Customers are now aware of the telephone features and not faltered to talk with customer care for their queries. There are many other factors which affect the sales of gadgets such as competitive cost, mobile-to-mobile phone free calls, free message service, and other call rates. The authors further stated that customers those having experience before about a product, they can easily augur their choices relatively well but sometimes is also overestimate the same.

Peter & Olsan (2005) expressed that marketers develop the various promotion techniques to influence the customers. Marketers choose various incentive programmes, contests, after-sale services, advertising, workshops and seminars to give the information about the product to the consumers so that they influence and purchase the product. In this price is considered as a major factor which decides to purchase the product or reject it. As there are various brands and various companies in the market for the same gadgets. So differentiate the one's gadget from the other, the price and the multiple functions of the gadget are the most influential factor while buying the product.

Karjaluoto *et al.* (2005) [11] in his research paper studied about the factor influencing the choice of mobile phones. He studied that from the basic features to new added features in the mobile phones it will lead to the change in the prices as well. The price was mainly fixed by adding value features such as brand, ringing options, display screen, video calling advanced techniques, sharing facilities, storage space and various other characteristics. In this study it was found that among all the characteristics, the price and the brand are one of the most important factors which had the impact and a great influence on the customers. The study also shows that the consumer wants all the features and properties in a minimum cost and can achieve high satisfaction.

P Chandiran (2005) [24] revealed that marketers adopt various marketing strategies as promotion strategies for increasing the market share in the market. These strategies lay when the product established in the market; to increase the profits, to increase the market share or sales volume. Emotional appeals, Brand name, Empathy strategy, demonstration strategy, competitive strategy etc. are various other advertising strategies which are used as promotional tools by the cell phone companies as well as electronic gadgets companies. Data rates, tariff plans, different

schemes for mobile users, call rates, roaming packages, free gifts, usable benefits, discounts should be considered important and must be given when the product its saturation point. A good and wise marketing strategy leads to a company to achieve its target and corporate objective and these strategies helpful in expanding the product's distribution, in increasing the market share of the product and coping with the competitors strategies.

V.M. Selvaraj (2005) [31] stated in his article that various marketing schemes influence the customers as companies should always strive to create a strong relationship with customers. He further discussed that current services provided by the cell phone companies have good perspective and existing customers are fully satisfied by the services provided to them. There are various promotional strategies such as creating more awareness, connectivity, better coverage, secure transactions, easy selection of data plans, providing affordable traffic plans and various others technique through which the companies increasing the mobile customer base rapidly maximizing the high revenues and margins, they also concluded that in future the dependency on mobile is increasing. Today mobile phones are not remaining simply an electronic gadgets, with the advancement in technologies, smartphones are becoming a way of life.

Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2006) ^[5] has reviewed that basically, consumer purchasing behaviour has affected by the two major factors i.e. individual factor which includes knowledge about the product, standard of living, perception towards product, beliefs, traditions income level, education, occupation, need, personality, motives, self-realization or self-concept and attitude towards the product while other is environmental factor which includes society, family, peer group, different background or culture, customs, moral laws, regional and national events, household these are the major parameters behind the decision of the buyer to choose the product or reject it. To opt for any type of the product or the service the consumer always thought about these parameters and then make decision whether he is willing to accept that product or not.

Kowalski and Goldstein (2006) [16] discussed in their paper about the security function available in the smartphones and various other electronic gadgets. They conducted a survey of 97 students aiming at Swedish security students' perception, attitudes, awareness, perspective, adoption and approach of smartphone functionality. In the research, they found that the younger generation is more willing to adopt the innovation. New techniques and functions in the gadgets attracting the youth towards the gadgets. They further concluded that apart from innovation; retailers assert that most of the customer does not ask regarding the security and privacy issues rather they focus about the fancy features. One of the factor i.e. age, plays the vital role in adoption of innovation and new techniques, pointed by 10 retailers approached during the study.

RC Natarajan (2006) [27] revealed from his study among the students of Manipal that uncontrollable factors such as consumer behaviour, government behaviour, economic condition, political environment, competitive forces, legal environment, and strategies regarding data and tariff rates are main parameters which are influencing the growth rate of mobile users. He expressed that earlier there is monopoly market structure in the telecommunication sector but now there is huge change in the sector. There is lots of

competitors in the market especially in the tele industry. Mobile service operators now have adopted different marketing strategies to establish the demand for their gadgets in the market and there is swift change in the behaviour of the buyer. Electronic gadgets industry is growing very fast, from a lower level of income to a higher level of income showing the greater interest in the various marketing strategies adopted by the marketers for sales promotion.

Pakola, et al. (2010) [10] found in his study that price and new features of mobile phones are important determinants which affect the buying decision of the customer but along this, there are other factors which affect the purchasing decision that are the audibility, better connectivity and the local mobile operators. Local mobile operators solve the grievances quickly as they are known to the customer and the customer feel satisfied by them because the customer think that they give the suggestion in very true and fair way about the gadgets as they deal in routine, they know loopholes better about every product of every brand. They play a role of mediator between the customer and the company. It can be lead in decrease the sales as well as increase the sales. Other two factors are depend on the company, their better technology and advancement features, the instalment programming will lead to increase in the sales.

Chaubey, Zafar and Hasal, (2011) [6] has studied in their research in which they taken the 306 people from the population Uttarakhand State. The sample consists of every level of the age group whether is employed or nonemployed. The study shows that the large share of the market is of males who are having average income and they are qualified but having a different our purposes forcing the gadgets whether it is keypad or touch screen mobile phone. This research is also concluding that customers are already aware about the different schemes, data rates and various other services which are purposed by the particular company so at the time of purchase customer has wide knowledge about the product and it leads ta o bet decision soon. Good network connections are also the major factor in the mobile phones and various other gadgets on which the consumer buying decision depends.

V. Mallikarjuna, D. Pradeep Kumar and G. Krishna Mohan (2011) [32] analyzed from their article that customers switch their prepaid numbers fast due to low switching costs and competitive tariff plans. Service plays a vital role in retaining customers as well as the mobile operators should also implement a number of strategies to manage the challenges in the market area or in the industry. In the prepaid segment, there are high chances for switching because of the e of the of business in entry barriers and the portability of mobile numbers in each area. There is a need for customer relationships at various stages to ensure customer intimacy and loyalty. For customer satisfaction, it is necessary to provide information on different plans, value-added services, provision and activation of additional services, and to customer-friendly friendly relations today's the today competitive environment. For better customer retention, mobile companies have to invest in networking and Technology so that customers have good network coverage, access, speed and connectivity in voice calls.

Monika-Anetta Alt, Laszlo Seer, and Zsuzsa Pal (2012) [19] found out that in Romania the mobile phones have been adopted rapidly, and the newer generation of these devices,

the smartphones follow the same pattern. The main purpose of the research was to study the smartphone adoption process among teenagers from the 1st Macro-region in Romania. They tested a simplified Technology Acceptance Model on a convenience sample and the sample size was 1864 which was collected online. The results show that in the high school students market the smartphone penetration is 60%, higher than in the case of other educational groups. They found that perceived usefulness of smartphones is influenced both by social norms and Behavioural control. In their viewpoint, the youngsters represent a new generation which may be called the smartphone generation as they are the real market are the real uses for the smartphones producers and marketers.

Agyeman (2013) [1] examined from his which is on 375 customers using the mobile phones the employees and the students of the institute to check the factors which influence the purchase of mobile phones and the electronic gadgets among the gender, cultural factor and the society. The research shows the results that large number of the respondents prefers the mobile with multifunction or having the advanced features. Income is also another factor, higher the income higher spending power of the customer. Demographic conditions has less influence on the buying decision whereas cultural factors, tradition, and customs are not considered as important which affects the buying decision but friends, colleagues or society has a major role while purchasing the mobile phones.

Nidhi (2013) [23] studied the satisfaction of consumers in Bhavnagar city of Indian state of Gujarat. The satisfaction was determined by relating various variables such as the price of the product, its brand name, features of the product. the resale value of the product etc. The author found the average satisfaction towards the Samsung Mobile Handset Users. For carrying out the result the author used the primary data analysis tools. Both primary and secondary data used for the study. The sample size was taken of 200 consumers. Various other factors like the income of the consumer, age of the user, his occupation etc was also considered while deciding sample size. Structured Questionnaires and statistical tools are used in the study. To know the correlation between the satisfaction level and the price, brand name & characteristics of the products the test on coefficient of correlation is used. The study showed that there was good brand awareness of Samsung among the respondents. It was further concluded that there was a meaningful relationship between satisfaction and the three variables viz. Brand name, price, and its features.

Ya-Ling and Siou-Ying (2013) [35] conducted a study to understand the immediate purchasing behaviour of consumers on mobile commerce platforms. To understand the impulsive behavior of consumers the author conducted a survey of 322 customers of iTunes. The authors also suggested that mobile and internet technology services have influenced the consumer shopping behaviour as well as ecommerce pattern. It was found out that a high level of impulsiveness decreases the effect of enjoyment on the urge to buy. The other important factors are also responsible for the impulsivity formation and important in regards to buying intention such as positive buying emotion, cognitive deliberation; mood management, emotional conflict, and unplanned buying behaviour.

D.S. Chaubey, Sandeep Kumar (2015) found out that market of mobile phones and electronic gadgets are becoming very

insecure, because of the fierce competition in the market. The study was conducted in Dehradun and the sample of 151 consumers was taken. The researchers tried to detect the choice and as well as the basis on which the customers purchase the smartphones. They investigated the product as well as functional attributes affecting the consumer's decision of buying mobile phone devices. The connivance sampling technique was opted to collect the data. The study indicated that consumers give due consideration on product attributes as compared to functional factors while making purchases of mobile handsets. It was also found out that that there is no major difference on the customer preferences of products as well as functional attributes across the different demographic statuses of respondents.

Savitha Nair, *et al.* (2016) [29] in their work "Consumer preference towards mobile phones: An empirical analysis," stated that today's uses for mobile phones are more varied than those they were employed for in the beginning. Consumers think about a lot of things when making a purchasing decision since there are so many brands available on the market, at comparable rates, and because they believe that mobile phones are a necessity rather than a luxury. This study aims to identify the driving forces behind consumer decision-making when it comes to mobile phones. Both primary and secondary data were examined in order to achieve the study's goals.

Vishesh MS, Bali S (2018) [30] explained that mobile phones have evolved into essential components of communication. The Indian mobile market has undergone a paradigm shift and is now the one with the fastest rate of growth worldwide. Due to the wide range of uses for cell phones, consumers are demonstrating a preference for them. The current study's goal is to look at the variables that influence customer purchasing decisions for mobile phones. 638 mobile phone users in the Indian state of Haryana participated in the survey. Multiple regressions and factor analysis were both used to analyse the data. Ten choice criteria for consumer purchasing behaviour were derived using factor analysis.

Kaushik, et al. (2019) [12]. Focused on identifying the elements influencing the online purchase of electronic items in India. Consumers' online shopping behaviour is influenced by a variety of variables, including risk associated with online shopping, product inquiries, product price, expected features, time, and website features. A sample of 500 respondents who had made at least one online transaction was chosen for the descriptive study. The findings of the regression analysis demonstrated that the risk is larger when shopping online since the item might not be exactly as it is represented on the website. A key draw element for internet shoppers is product price. E-retailers provide a variety of discounts, sales offers, appealing rates. etc. that entice clients to switch from offline to online shopping. The main benefit of internet buying is that it is convenient for clients and saves time. The findings also indicated that website features draw customers to online purchases of electronic items.

Khan, et al. (2020) [13] There has been extensive research on affiliate marketing. The first step in affiliate marketing is choosing whether to offer tangible, digital, or service-based goods and services. When compared to physical goods, the commission generated on information products is typically higher. On services, there are frequently ongoing commissions. It is determined that it is more difficult to

generate money with affiliate marketing in India than it is in the US since there are fewer individuals who are aware of it and fewer good affiliate marketing companies in India. In India, many fresh purchasing portals are debuting. Art and photography are determined to be the lowest affiliate category, while fashion (clothing, accessories, and footwear) is found to be the highest.

Islam MT, et al. (2021) [9] intend to offer essential input for creating a more consumer-centric CE framework. One of the earliest systematic reviews of research on e-waste consumer behaviour can be found in this article. The findings of the study demonstrate that the two primary areas of research interest in the articles we analysed are consumer disposal and recycling behaviours. Reuse and repair behaviour, on the other hand, received little attention. This study identifies a number of research gaps and areas for additional investigation, as well as ideas for a CE framework that focuses on the e-waste industry and incorporates new business model innovations and legislative activities. Researchers who are beginning to work on consumer behaviour-related e-waste research will find the studies that have been identified and presented here to be a useful place to start.

Bigliardi B, et al. (2022) [4] seeks to add to the body of knowledge on consumer behaviour and the circular economy by examining the factors that influence a refurbished smartphone buyer's intention to make a green purchase. Applying a discriminant analysis, it was discovered that psychological variables, such as green perceived value and environmental knowledge, are the most effective predictors of green purchase intention of refurbished smartphones, whereas social and emotional variables, such as collectivism, subjective norms, and environmental concern, have no effect. Our findings can help remanufacturers and retailers of refurbished goods develop more successful marketing methods, and they can also help legislators specify particular measures and legislation that can better address end users' environmental concerns.

Wang Q, et al. (2023) [34] A theoretical framework based on data mining and analysis of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) has been suggested to examine and describe the influencing elements of online consumer purchasing behaviour (OCPB). The two most well-known Chinese online retail websites, Jingdong.com and Taobao.com, were crawled for information on e-WOM. Data processing designed to remove noise and convert complex text review reviews' unstructured data into structured data. The contributing factors of OCPB were clustered using the machine learning-based K-means clustering approach. The influencing elements of OCPB were grouped around four categories when the clustering results were compared to Kotler's five product levels: Perceived emergency situation, product, innovation, and function attributes. By effectively identifying the influencing elements based on e-WOM through data mining and analysis, this study makes a valuable contribution to OCPB research. Both OCPB and ecommerce may greatly benefit from the definition and explanation of these categories.

Conclusions

From the study, it is concluded that India's electronics industry is very high-spirited. Due to the changing conditions of competition; companies have to make their

strategies in that way that they easily react to these changes more quickly and promptly. This research work has been done for judging the consumer behaviour before purchasing the gadgets in the existing market scenario. It is found that there are a lot of parameters influencing the consumer in different ways. Consumers think about a lot of things when making a purchasing decision since there are so many brands available on the market, at comparable rates, and because they believe that mobile phones are a necessity rather than a luxury. While choosing the smartphones and electronic gadgets customers considered factors such as brand name, pricing, operating facilities, a recommendation from friends and colleagues, size and weight, product features, good connectivity, influenced by advertising, better quality with new techniques and advancements and many others affecting their buying decisions. The main benefit of internet buying is that it is convenient for clients and saves time. Technological advancements bridge the connectivity that brings people as one big community, from the smartphones to the superfast data. It causes all the changes consumer behaviour, experiences and customer perceptions. It was found out that a high level of impulsiveness decreases the effect of enjoyment on the urge to buy. Local mobile operators solve the grievances quickly as they are known to the customer and the customer feel satisfied by them because the customer think that they give the suggestion in very true and fair way about the gadgets as they deal in routine, they know loopholes better about every product of every brand. Today most of the buying decisions are made out of the product which fulfils their needs; not the customer experiences with the companies.

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