

Brand Switching Behavior of Nepalese Consumers on Smartphones

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Abstract

The study intends to find the factors that affect the switching behavior of Nepalese consumers toward smartphones. The study collected the opinions of 389 consumers to analyze their perceptions and intentions. The work has covered consumers of the Kathmandu Valley and the eastern part of Nepal. A convenience method of sampling has been employed to select a sample for research. A five-point Likert scale was the means of obtaining the perceptual information of respondents. Both descriptive and inferential analyses have been used to draw the description and inference. The findings of the study have been directed toward understanding and implementing some facts related to the reasons for brand-switching behavior among consumers, and they have managerial implications in the field of marketing. Reliability analysis of instruments was performed before the main analysis. The mean values indicate that consumers have positive opinions about the variables being studied. The value of correlation has shown that all independent variables (price, income, technology, and promotional tools) are positively and significantly associated with the brand-switching behavior. Additionally, the result of regression analysis has revealed that price plays a more vital role in switching brands compared to income, technology, and promotional tools. An independent sample t-test found the mean difference between the genders towards switching behavior at a 5% level of significance. At the 1% level of significance, it was also found that the opinion of consumers of different age groups varied on switching behavior. Push-Pull-Mooring (PPM) theory has been the main idea behind the investigation.

Key words: Brand switching behavior, income, price, promotional tools, technology.

SMS Journal of Entrepreneurship & Innovation (2025)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21844/smsjei.v11i02.30001>

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How to cite this article: Pokharel S., Neupane B.R., Luitel M.K., Ravi J. (2025). Brand Switching Behavior of Nepalese Consumers on Smartphones. SMS Journal of Entrepreneurship & Innovation. 2025; 11(2):1-11

Source of support: Nil.

Conflict of interest: None

Introduction

Companies can acquire and enhance the market position of smartphones both globally and locally through developing and implementing strategies of premium features with product modification and brand portfolio. Similarly, marketers can use a typical approach for Nepal, aligning with international trends such as feature-oriented marketing, market segmentation, and transparent pricing. It is becoming a greater concern for producers and consumers because Nepal is planning to execute 5G networks. Therefore, the owner can get a first-mover advantage targeting innovators and early adopters through operating educational activities to inform them about 5G technologies. Marketers can encourage and attract the switchers. It is possible to target the mass market by offering moderately priced smartphones with updated technology, including integrated features, through which a strong market position can be established. Ultimately, such efforts will enable companies to properly address their customers. Although consumers appear to be loyal to a specific brand, they also show interest in changing smartphones due to variety-seeking behavior influenced by individual personal and psychological factors. Various factors such as price, marketing, brand image, and brand promise influence consumers' involvement in changing their used brands (Kawengian, 2015). It is known that organizational success will vary as per the satisfaction level of consumers, and unsatisfied consumers are more likely to shift to the rival's brands.

Enterprises should be concerned with knowing the factors affecting the choice of smartphones for developing the appropriate strategy to retain old consumers and attract new ones. Price, convenience, product failure, unmet needs of consumers, competitive appeal, and switching costs were influencing factors in mobile service

consumers' choices to switch (Awwad and Neimat, 2010). Consumers consider the price as a crucial factor compared to others while making the decision (Worlu, 2011). The choices are also affected by the lifestyles of young clients and the features. Also, research showed that there is a strong link between young people's traits and their preferences for mobile phones (*Juwaheer et al., 2014*), indicating that demographic considerations are important in consumer purchasing patterns since consumers of different ages have distinct requirements, preferences, and perceptions. Similarly, gender mediates consumers' usage of cell phones to maintain social relationships (*Wei and Lo, 2006*). In a similar line, bad customer service, brand image, or shifting pricing had no clear effect (*Guo et al, 2021*). Customer switching behavior is similarly negatively impacted by pricing, edge-on competition (TEC), and technology. Likewise, switching behavior is affected by pricing, advertising appeal, celebrity endorsers, technological characteristics, and consumer unhappiness (*At-Thariq et al, 2023; Grigoriou et al., 2018*). Switching cost (SC) and unmet needs of the consumers are relatively more important factors of intention in switching the brand (*Patel, 2024*). *Shrestha (2024)* argued that innovative products and pricing hold a greater influence on consumer switching behavior compared to features and referrals. Individuals in Nepal are changing brands of smartphones based on previous benefits evaluations and future potential benefits associated with the new brand. Smartphones continually receive new features and models. This study examines technology, income, prices, and promotional methods to analyze individual switching behavior, with prior research having explored these factors as well.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Push-Pull-Mooring (PPM) theory

The PPM model (*Bogue, 1969; Lee, 1966; Moon, 1995; Ravenstein, 1885*) is based on migration theory, which says that good things at the destination draw people's attention there and bad things at the origin push them away. Additionally, social, cultural, emotional, and personal factors also determine the moving or staying decisions of people. When researching commercial issues, the PPM model is particularly useful for analyzing the switching behavior of consumers. The switching behavior of consumers can be analyzed in a better way, taking the reference of these three variables (*Bansal et al., 2005*). The approach can be used by linking these three components with factors affecting them, such as price, technology, promotions, and income, to the switching behavior of consumers of smartphone brands. Consumers might want to quit a brand because of push factors, such as high cost of use, inadequate service, or old technology, and want to switch to new brands when they find more benefits in terms of price, quality of service, technology, and beneficial deals. Similarly, consumers may choose to switch brands or remain with their current brand; this decision is influenced not only by the two indicators mentioned earlier but also by factors such as switching costs, difficulties, emotional connections to the existing brand, and their income. Researchers have utilized the PPM model to study how users switch smartphones and what the primary influencers and effects of pricing, technology, product quality, features, and switching costs are on this behavior (*Erdogan, 2023; Guo et al., 2021*).

The variables are clearly and precisely defined here:

Price: Price is the monetary value to be paid by consumers while buying and using products or services. Consumers are sensitive to the price factor compared to other marketing mix factors. The majority of consumers perceive the price as a

meaningful indicator while deciding on a purchase (*Grigoriou et al., 2018*), indicating that the impact of price has been evident. It is also seen in consumer buying decisions of smartphones. The study has collected the consumers' opinions, focusing on affordability, resale value, warranty, and price scheme to find what people think and expect about the price. Malaysian smartphone buyers have perceived the price as an important determinant of switching brands (*Koo & Abidin Abd Razak, 2023*). Previous findings reveal that consumers are interested in changing brands considering the price factor, indicating that proper attention is required in implementing an attractive pricing strategy. However, non-monetary switching expenses might also affect brand switching.

H1a: Price and brand switching behavior are significantly correlated.

Income: Consumers' income cannot be ignored while examining the switching behavior of consumers, believing that budgetary position may impact the switching intention in both smartphones and services. Consumers' income has more influence on switching mobile service providers than smartphone brands (*Pirc, 2008*). Likewise, income affects the purchase decision for mobile phones when customers follow the rational decision by comparing the cost-benefit ratio (*Shi et al., 2009*). Moreover, there was little evidence to substantiate the anticipated high association between smartphone adoption and income, indicating the significant but low effect of income on smartphone changes. Consumers who belong to underdeveloped countries have given less importance to income compared to other factors while purchasing smartphones (*Jamalova & Constantinovits, 2020*). However, it is important to acknowledge that people might switch smartphone brands if their income changes.

H1b: Income and brand switching behavior are significantly correlated.

Technology: Smartphones are an advanced version of the initially developed phones, and consumers select smartphones based on their improved features and technological advancements. This study is mostly about smartphones, which are a big part of technology. In the era of digital technology, consumers choose brands that provide regular upgrades and improvements to address technological deficiencies, especially to meet the changing expectations of young consumers who are more interested in gadgets and phones. Technological reasons make people want to switch cell phones (Haider *et al.*, 2014). Rapid technological developments motivate consumers to seek greater features and capabilities, which may influence the decision to switch cellphones (sajesh & Ramanathan, 2024). Technological changes require research to know the reactions of people to new breakthroughs, system upgrades, and updates, which helps to make corrections in efforts based on market needs. Previous research has mostly accepted the importance of technological factors for consumers to make the choice of a smartphone.

H1c: Technology and brand switching behavior are significantly correlated.

Promotional Tools: Promotions educate and inspire both the intermediaries and the consumer, which helps create and establish the brand's value and build its identity. Companies can use various tools, including both traditional and modern approaches, to promote the brand, which motivates consumers to purchase, along with raising awareness. These promotional tools help to achieve the competitive objectives through establishing a strong identity for the brand in the minds of the consumers. Advertising appeal and celebrity endorsement influence switching behavior (At-Thariq *et al.*, 2023; Grigoriou *et al.*,

2018). In a similar vein, Kansara and Kumar (2012) disclosed that many brands are available in the telecom sector, giving consumers the opportunity to select appropriate brands. Therefore, the study can include promotional tools as a determinant of brand-switching behavior.

H1d: Promotional tools and brand switching behavior are significantly correlated.

Research Gap

There isn't much research that looks at marketing and demographic factors (price, income, promotional tools, and technology) that predict brand switching behavior in the Nepalese market and other less developed economies compared to developed economies. It suggests that additional study is required to comprehend the issue, generalize the idea, and compare the contextual differences. Numerous brands are available in the Nepalese market, but Samsung, iPhone, MI, and VIVO have occupied significant market coverage. Therefore, the study is oriented towards knowing the possible reasons behind selecting and changing among these brands, even by accepting additional costs and efforts. This study has also used PPM theory, which says that there is push, mooring, and pull elements that make people want to switch from one brand to another. Earlier studies that have used the same variables in other situations did not come to the same conclusion, which shows the context gap. The faithful consumers have also switched brands because of advanced Android and iOS markets have grown rapidly. The emergence of new smartphone brands with a range of price points, technological features, etc., is the primary cause of switching in the mass technical market (Grigoriou *et al.*, 2018). This study examines price, income, technology, and promotional tools, all of which have also been researched in other contexts additionally; promotional tools are considered to be important independent factors that

play a significant impact in switching the brand.

Research Objectives

The success of smartphones is attributed to a variety of social dynamics and outside cues along with its technological features. Finding, analyzing, examining, and interpreting different aspects of brand switching behavior on smartphones is the primary purpose of the study. The main goal is to identify how Nepalese smartphone users' brand switching behavior is influenced by marketing and consumer factors as pricing, income, promotional tools, and technology. This attempts to shed light on the factors that most affect consumers' decisions to switch brands. Research objectives are:

- To assess the encouraging factors of consumers' switching behavior on smartphones.
- To investigate how price, income, promotions, and technology are correlated with consumers' switching behavior on smartphones.

Research Methodology

Despite the research issue appearing qualitative, the research is quantitative, as data was gathered through a closed-ended questionnaire. The study used both descriptive and analytical designs. In early 2025, Nepal had 39.0 million mobile users, which is greater than the country's population. Some of these might just offer phone and SMS services, and others might offer internet access as well (*Datareportal, 2025*). It's hard to tell which customers were using smartphones and which were using regular phones. Since the population is unknown, *Cochran's (1963)* suggestion was used to choose the final sample, which is 384 at a 95% confidence level.

The smartphone users were selected based on the

convenience of the researcher only in Kathmandu Valley and the eastern part of Nepal, indicating that the convenience sampling method was used. Earlier research showed that male consumers were more involved compared to female consumers in switching brands. The perception of consumers was grouped into a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, where respondents could rate their opinions on any point of the scale. The consumers' perceptual opinions were obtained using five items each for price, technology, income, and promotional techniques, and six items for switching behavior. Most of the items of the main variable-related questionnaire were taken from earlier studies, but the questionnaire was finalized after contextualizing and changing the items by taking the concerns of experts. It has helped to maintain the content validity of the questionnaire to some extent. Initially, questionnaires were given to the four hundred fifty respondents, but only four hundred ten were received. Finally, only three hundred eighty-nine responses were used for data analysis after removing the incomplete and inconsistently answered questionnaires. Therefore, the sample size of the study reached 389, more than the calculated value of the sample (384 samples). The finalized sets of responded questionnaires were coded and edited, then entered into the variable and data view of SPSS v.24. The Cronbach's alpha technique was utilized to ascertain the internal consistency or dependability of responses. The percentage of respondents' profiles was acquired for the gender and age demographics of customers. The mean and standard deviation were calculated to detect the respondents' general perceptual orientations about the variables. One-Way ANOVA and the independent sample t-test employed to identify the mean difference among the groups on switching behavior. Correlation was conducted to determine strength of association. Likewise, regression explained causal or predictive relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Proposed Model

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$$

Hence,

Y = Switching behavior

β_0 = Constant

β_1 = Slope of price

X_1 = Price

β_2 = Slope of income

X_2 = Income

β_3 = Slope of technology

X_3 = Technology

β_4 = Slope of promotional tools

X_4 = Promotional tools

e = error term

Analysis and Discussion

Twenty-six questions covering both dependent and independent variables were used throughout the entire analysis. a Cronbach alpha of more than 0.780 indicates that the questionnaire has a comparatively high level of internal reliability (*Guelford, 1965*). Therefore, the instrument's reliability is acceptable. The percentage of male and female consumers was 62.05% and 37.95%, respectively indicating that male consumers have higher tendency of using smart phones. Likewise, the participants have classified according to several age groups as group 1 (below 21) 10.28 percent, group 2 (21-40) 60.41 percent, group 3 (41-60) 19.79 percent and group 4 (above 60) 9.52

percent. It shows that elders were dominated by younger consumers on Smartphone users. Majority of the consumers (41.9 percent) have Samsung smart phone; MI received a weightage of 19.54 percent while 15.17 percent mark iPhone and VIVO of 9.77 percent as their current owned Smartphone. 13.62 percent respondents have others brand rather than asked brand in the questionnaire. The majority of consumers, 53.73 percent, want to switch to iPhone as the most preferred brand, then Samsung, MI, and VIVO, with 13.62, 9, and 8.48 percent, respectively, and the remaining respondents (15.17 percent) were interested in going for other brands rather than the asked brands. Out of 389 respondents, 40.10 percent admit to changing phones after two years, while 30.59 percent change within two years, 23.91 percent change their smartphones within a year, and 5.4 percent change within 6 months, indicating that most of the surveyed consumers have the intention to change their smartphones after two years of use.

Female consumers showed higher mean values (3.2945>2.9089) for switching behavior than male revealing that female consumers show high intention in changing cellphones. Similarly, consumers between the ages of 21 and 40 years have the highest mean value on switching behavior (3.8909), meaning that young consumers reflect a high intention in shifting the brands of cellphones. Although Samsung Smartphone users are currently more, the majority of consumers are interested in the iPhone

Table 1: Opinion of consumers on brand switching, Price, income, technology and promotional tools

Variables	Mean Value
Brand Switching Behavior	3.19
Price	3.52
Income	3.06
Technology	3.23
Promotional Tools	3.37

Source: Authors' calculation based on field survey, 2025.

The average scores for switching behavior, price, income, technology, and promotional techniques were 3.19, 3.52, 3.06, 3.23, and 3.37, respectively. Consequently, mean values over 3 suggest that consumers hold a favorable perception of all the research factors. These consumers exhibit a more

favorable perspective on price considerations relative to income, technology, and promotional techniques, indicating that price is perceived as a significant influencer of switching behavior, hence suggesting the necessity for an effective pricing strategy to retain and attract consumers.

Table 2 : Correlation Analysis

	Switching Behavior	Price	Income	Technology	Promotional Tools
Switching Behavior	1	0.508**	0.178*	0.243**	0.403**

Source: Authors' calculation based on field survey, 2025

The correlation coefficient of 0.508 between price and switching actions is significant (<0.01). It demonstrates the positive association between variables. The correlation coefficient between income and switching behavior is 0.178*, indicating a meaningful positive relationship similar to the finding of (Shi et al., 2009) who claimed that disposable income had an impact on switching behavior but Jamalova and Constantinovits (2020) argued income was not important to determine switching. This difference may have occurred due to new context. Analysis shows that technology and switching behavior are significantly correlated (0.243**) and this finding is within the line of (Haider et al., 2014; SAJESH &

RAMANATHAN, 2024) which stated that the main factor that involves the consumers to change their smartphone is technology. In case of promotional tools, it is positively related with brand switching behavior (0.403**) which coincides the study related to (At-Thariq et al, 2023; Grigoriou et al., 2018). Similarly, research shows that advertising efforts and brand switching behavior are positively correlated. Previous studies' findings demonstrated that advertising had a favorable impact on sales and it may encourage the consumers to reflect switching behavior. The outcome has sufficient capacity to claim that the dependent and independent variables are significantly correlated.

Table 3 : Output of Regression Result

Models	Beta	S.E	t-value	P- value	VIF
Constant	1.523	0.416	10.883	0.000	
Price	0.380	0.084	9.545	0.000	1.505
Income	0.139	0.051	2.159	0.033	1.604
Technology	0.194	0.066	3.645	0.000	1.088
Promotional Tools	0.337	0.092	5.197	0.000	2.185
R-Square	0.690				
F-statistics	32.82				
	(0.000)				
DW	2.220				

Source: Authors' calculation based on field survey, 2025.

The regression model is significant ($p<.000$) with $F = 32.82$ with enough evidence to conclude the

effects of predictors (income, price, technology, and promotional tools) on outcome variable

(switching behavior). The 2.220 value of DW indicates that the data is free from autocorrelation. The VIF value (less than 5) revealed that there is no multicollinearity among the relevant variables. Value of R^2 of 0.690 conveyed the explanatory variables explained only 69.0 percent variation in switching behavior. Analysis revealed the most influencing factor is price in switching behavior being similar with finding of (*At-Thariq et al, 2023; Shrestha, 2024*). Focusing on variation explained, this regression model cannot be generalized in Nepalese context because only four explanatory variables were taken to predict the outcome variable.

Regression Model

$$Y = 1.523 + 0.380 X_1 + 0.139 X_2 + 0.194 X_3 + 0.337 X_4$$

The independent sample t-test shows that the switching behavior of male and female consumers differs significantly ($p < 0.05$). There is enough evidence in the results to suggest that male and female customers have somewhat different opinions about brand switching behavior. In a similar vein, the result of the one-way ANOVA test shows, brand switching behavior across age groups is significant ($p\text{-value} < 0.000$) which indicates that brand switching behavior varies as per age groups. There is enough evidence in the data to show that different age groups have diverse opinions. All proposed hypotheses, that is, H1a, H1b, H1c, and H1d, have been validated according to correlation and regression analysis.

Research Findings

The value of cronbach's alpha reveals that the instruments exhibit great degree of internal consistency. Female consumers are more interested in brand switching than male consumers, even though the inclination to use cellphones among male consumers is larger than that of female consumers. Similarly, young consumers between the ages of 21 and 40 find great popularity for cellphones and also show a greater propensity to change brands. The mean values of customers' opinions being more than three indicate that consumers perceive all variables importantly and reflect positive opinions. Likewise, more people have the Samsung brand right now, and most of them are eager to change to iPhone brand. More users have the intention to replace their cellphones two years after purchase

All undertaken independent variables (price, income, promotional tools and technology) are positively correlated with outcome variable at five percent level of significance. Similarly, the regression model is significant at one percent significance level with R squared value of 0.69 suggesting 69% variations of model is explained by price, income, promotional tools and technology. Price was found most influencing factor compared to others. In addition, the finding of the independent sample t-test shows that the mean value of male and female consumers is significantly at five percent level of significance and significant difference at one percent level has been found among the age groups towards according to one-way ANOVA. Finally, all hypotheses have been accepted. (see Table 4)

Table 4: Results of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Results
H1a: Price and switching behavior are significantly correlated.	Accepted (<0.000)
H1b: Income and switching behavior are significantly correlated.	Accepted (<0.05)
H1c: Technology and switching behavior are significantly correlated.	Accepted (<0.000)
H1d: Promotional tools and switching behavior are significantly correlated.	Accepted (<0.000)

Source: Authors' calculation based on field survey, 2025.

Conclusion

Marketing and consumer-related aspects such as price, income, technology, promotion, and cost affect the smartphone users' choice of brand. This study underlines how crucial these elements are for guiding consumer decisions. The studies show that price, income, technology, and promotional tools, as well as their respective interactions, favorably affect the consumer shifting behavior. Since their features and capacities exceed those of other technical equipment, most people consider cellphones to be a must-have. This study reached its primary conclusions: price is the most important component of brand switching behavior then promotional tools, technology, and the income of consumers. Though Samsung dominates the Nepalese smartphone market, other companies still have chances to attract consumers. Understanding the reasons for brand flipping enables other businesses to create effective marketing plans to survive in a crowded industry. Likewise, most people are interested to switch in the iPhone brand rather than others. The paper offers fascinating information on the dynamics of brand switching in the smartphone industry, implying that businesses should modify their policies to control the unique aspects affecting consumer behavior in this competitive environment.

Recommendations

The results validate the Push-Pull-Mooring model, therefore augmenting the body of prior information; hence, marketers and professionals

should focus on this model to draw new consumers and keep present ones. The study has provided knowledge to marketers about the consumers' way of evaluating and reacting to the claimed benefits by competitive brands prevailing in the market. Generally, consumers select a particular brand of smartphone based on multiple features, even though they perceive some features as more important. Therefore, marketers should carefully combine various components in a product to meet consumers' needs. Marketers must be well-informed about the factors that consumers prioritize when choosing smartphones. To control switching and enhance market share, marketers should implement a pricing strategy that targets the competition, along with product augmentation and promotion. Companies can encourage brand-switching behavior to attract competitors' consumers by aligning their technological strengths with the changing needs of those consumers. Companies can follow the proper engagement strategy through a relational approach to connect with consumers emotionally. Similarly, companies should develop a quick response mechanism to address consumers' problems and meet their needs. The findings of the study are useful for businesses to develop management policies and design a strategy as per the nature and needs of the market to retain clients. This study is practically important for smartphone companies because it helps them retain existing customers and attract new ones, in addition to its academic contributions.

Scope for Future Research

The study on Nepalese smartphone users' brand switching through marketing and consumer factors brings up a number of research directions. The research can be extended to enhance the knowledge of consumers' behavioral dimensions and functional aspects when selecting the appropriate strategies for smartphones. Current conceptual and practical possibilities can be extended by taking more variables and a theoretical perspective while conducting the new study. This can explore a broader perspective on the issue and consumers' intention to switch. New research can be extended to new geographical regions again to comprehend the work and importance, since consumers' behavior may vary across different cultures or geographical areas. It is possible to conduct the study on different product categories and industries to know the disparity of consumers' behavior in switching brands, and it helps to make the issue clearer. A mixed approach can be followed to compensate for the shortcomings of a quantitative approach. This approach enables the understanding of contextual specialties and the confirmation of theories within a single study.

Limitations

The study concentrated only on the limited consumers of the Kathmandu Valley and the eastern part of Nepal, creating the fear about sample misrepresentation. The foundation of the study has given space to raise questions about generalizing the research findings due to the sampling method and size. This study carries the danger of biasing the responses depending on a convenience sample. The study ran upon false self-reporting risk and social desirability bias using a self-administered questionnaire. This work made a one-instant-in-time cross-sectional measurement. This strategy reduces the potential to monitor changes in consumer behavior over time by

ignoring the dynamic character of brand switching and its responsiveness to consumer tastes and market developments. The reliance of the study on a questionnaire causes response bias since participants could understand the questions differently. Research has applied the quantitative approach, but behavioral issues (switching behavior) cannot be measured properly in a quantitative way.

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