

## **Customer Satisfaction and Brand Preference in the Mobile Phone Market: A National-Level Study in India**

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### **Abstract**

The mobile phone industry in India has witnessed unprecedented growth over the past two decades, driven by rapid technological advancements, affordability, and evolving consumer expectations. In a competitive market dominated by global and domestic brands, customer satisfaction plays a pivotal role in determining brand loyalty and repurchase intention. This study aims to analyze the factors influencing customer satisfaction in mobile phone usage at a national level in India. Primary data will be collected from respondents across diverse age groups, income segments, and geographical regions through a structured questionnaire. The study will examine dimensions such as price, product features, brand image, service quality, durability, and after-sales service. Data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, and regression models to identify significant predictors of satisfaction. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for mobile manufacturers and service providers in understanding consumer behavior and improving market strategies.

**Keywords:** Customer satisfaction, mobile phones, brand preference, consumer behavior, service quality, India

### **INTRODUCTION**

The mobile phone industry has become one of the most dynamic and competitive markets in India, reflecting rapid globalization, technological advancement, and changing consumer lifestyles. India, with its vast population of over 1.4 billion, represents one of the largest consumer bases for smartphones globally. According to industry reports, India is now the second-largest smartphone market in the world, with annual sales exceeding 150 million units. This growth has been driven not only by global technology giants such as Apple and Samsung but also by Chinese and domestic players like Xiaomi, Realme, Vivo, and Lava, who cater to price-sensitive segments of the population.

In such a competitive environment, customer satisfaction becomes the cornerstone of business success. Companies are compelled to understand consumer expectations, deliver value-driven products, and provide reliable after-sales services to retain market share. Unlike traditional purchase decisions that were once driven solely by price, modern Indian consumers are influenced by multiple factors, including performance, design, durability, battery life, camera quality, and brand reputation. Moreover, with increasing internet penetration and digital literacy, online reviews and e-commerce platforms also play a vital role in shaping consumer preferences.

Customer satisfaction in the mobile phone market is a multidimensional concept influenced by both tangible and intangible factors. Tangible aspects include product features, pricing, and durability, while intangible aspects include brand image, trust, and emotional connection. Several studies have highlighted that satisfied customers not only remain loyal to a brand but also act as brand ambassadors by recommending products to others. On the other hand, dissatisfaction often leads to brand switching, which has become a common phenomenon in the mobile phone industry due to frequent technological upgrades and competitive offers.

Despite the growing research in consumer behavior, there remains a gap in understanding customer satisfaction at a national level in India. Most prior studies have either focused on single brands or limited regional markets. This study aims to bridge that gap by conducting a large-scale analysis across different regions, age groups, and income segments to identify the key determinants of satisfaction and brand preference in mobile phones.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to provide actionable insights for manufacturers, marketers, and policymakers. By identifying what drives satisfaction and loyalty among Indian consumers, companies can align their product development, pricing strategies, and promotional campaigns more effectively. Furthermore, this study will contribute to the academic literature on consumer behavior and satisfaction in emerging markets, offering comparative perspectives with global trends.

The specific objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To examine the key factors influencing customer satisfaction in mobile phones in India.

2. To analyze the relationship between demographic factors (age, income, education, occupation) and satisfaction levels.
3. To identify brand preferences and consumer switching behavior in the mobile phone industry.
4. To evaluate the role of after-sales service and product features in shaping customer loyalty.
5. To provide managerial suggestions for mobile phone companies to improve customer experience.

## Review of Literature

Customer satisfaction has been extensively studied in marketing and consumer behavior literature, particularly in highly competitive industries such as mobile phones. The following review consolidates previous research under major themes relevant to this study.

### Customer Satisfaction and Its Importance

Customer satisfaction is widely recognized as the degree to which a product or service meets or exceeds consumer expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2022). Satisfied customers are more likely to develop loyalty, repeat purchase behavior, and positive word-of-mouth (Oliver, 2019). In the mobile phone industry, satisfaction directly affects brand equity and market share, as consumers can easily switch brands when expectations are not met (Sharma & Gupta, 2021).

### Mobile Phone Industry and Consumer Behavior

The global smartphone market has become highly saturated, with India emerging as a significant growth driver. Studies indicate that Indian consumers are highly price-sensitive but increasingly value product features such as camera quality, battery life, and internet speed (Srivastava & Singh, 2023). Consumer behavior in India is influenced not only by technological innovation but also by social status and peer influence (Choudhury & Malhotra, 2022).

### Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction in Mobile Phones

Research highlights multiple factors shaping satisfaction in the mobile phone sector:

- **Price Sensitivity:** Affordability remains a key determinant, particularly in emerging markets. Low-income consumers prefer budget-friendly brands like Xiaomi and Realme, while affluent consumers lean towards premium brands such as Apple and Samsung (Kaur & Kaur, 2021).
- **Product Features:** Studies identify performance, camera quality, battery life, and design as critical attributes driving satisfaction (Kim & Lee, 2020).
- **Brand Image:** Strong brand reputation enhances trust and loyalty. Apple's brand image, for example, allows it to retain customers despite high pricing (Aaker, 2021).
- **After-Sales Service:** Reliable customer support and service centers positively impact consumer trust and repurchase decisions (Gupta & Sharma, 2022).
- **Durability and Reliability:** Long-lasting devices are crucial for Indian consumers, where frequent replacements are considered costly (Chakraborty, 2020).

## Brand Loyalty and Switching Behavior

Loyalty is a significant outcome of customer satisfaction. Studies suggest that emotional attachment, brand experience, and perceived value drive brand loyalty (Rahman & Haque, 2022). However, in mobile phones, switching behavior is common due to rapid technological upgrades and promotional offers. Research shows that 60% of Indian consumers consider changing brands within two years of purchase (Mishra, 2023).

## Technology Adoption and Customer Satisfaction

The adoption of 4G and 5G technology has shifted consumer preferences. Consumers demand advanced features such as AI-integrated cameras, faster processors, and eco-friendly designs (Patel & Roy, 2022). Satisfaction is increasingly linked to innovation and continuous product updates (Li & Zhang, 2021).

## Research Gap Identified

While several studies exist on consumer satisfaction in the smartphone industry, most have been:

- Limited to regional markets (e.g., urban vs rural studies).
- Focused on single brands rather than the national market.
- Narrow in scope, analyzing only one or two factors such as price or brand image.

This study aims to bridge the gap by conducting a **national-level analysis** across diverse demographics, integrating multiple satisfaction dimensions such as price, features, brand image, durability, and after-sales service.

## Research Methodology

The present study adopts an **empirical and descriptive research design** to analyze customer satisfaction in mobile phones at a national level in India. The methodology covers the research approach, sampling design, data collection process, and analytical tools applied.

### Research Design

The study is **quantitative** in nature, focusing on collecting primary data through a structured questionnaire. Both online (Google Forms) and offline surveys were used to capture responses from different regions of India to ensure diversity in demographic representation.

### Population and Sampling

The population of this study consists of mobile phone users in India. Given the size of the population, **stratified random sampling** was adopted to ensure proportional representation from different regions (North, South, East, West, and Central India).

- **Sample Size:** 500 respondents (to maintain national-level representation)
- **Sampling Frame:** Students, working professionals, homemakers, and retirees
- **Sampling Technique:** Stratified random sampling combined with convenience for accessibility

**Table 1: Sampling Framework**

Region	Target Sample (%)	Respondents Collected
North India	20%	100
South India	20%	100

East India	20%	100
West India	20%	100
Central India	20%	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>500</b>

Source: primary data

## Data Collection

- **Primary Data:** Collected through a questionnaire with closed-ended questions (5-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree [1]* to *Strongly Agree [5]*).
- **Secondary Data:** Reviewed from journals, reports, and Scopus-indexed publications to build the literature review.

## Research Instrument

The questionnaire was divided into two sections:

1. **Demographic Information** – age, gender, income, education, and occupation.
2. **Customer Satisfaction Variables** – price fairness, product features (battery, camera, performance), durability, brand image, after-sales service, and overall satisfaction.

**Table 2: Variables and Measurement Indicators**

Dimension	Indicators (Sample Questions)	Scale Used
Price	Affordability, price–value ratio	Likert (1–5)
Product Features	Battery life, camera quality, design, speed	Likert (1–5)
Brand Image	Trustworthiness, reputation, global/local perception	Likert (1–5)

Durability	Long-lasting performance, hardware quality	Likert (1–5)
After-Sales Service	Service center availability, repair quality, responsiveness	Likert (1–5)
Overall Satisfaction	Willingness to repurchase, recommend to others, loyalty intention	Likert (1–5)

### Analytical Tools Used

Data analysis was conducted by using SPSS and Excel. The following tools were applied:

Descriptive Statistics – to summarize demographic profile and satisfaction levels.

Chi-square Test – to examine association between demographic factors and satisfaction.

ANOVA – to test differences in satisfaction levels among demographic groups.

Regression Analysis – to identify key predictors of customer satisfaction.

Reliability Test (Cronbach’s Alpha) – to confirm internal consistency of questionnaire items.

### Reliability of Instrument

A pilot study with 50 respondents was conducted to test the reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach’s Alpha values above 0.70 confirmed good reliability.

**TABLE 3: RELIABILITY TEST RESULTS**

Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha	Interpretation
Price	0.81	Reliable
Product Features	0.86	Highly Reliable
Brand Image	0.79	Reliable
Durability	0.83	Reliable
After-Sales Service	0.82	Reliable
Overall Satisfaction	0.88	Highly Reliable

<b>Overall Scale</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>Highly Reliable</b>
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## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The collected responses from 500 mobile phone users across India were analyzed using SPSS and Excel. The results are presented below under demographic characteristics, satisfaction factors, and hypothesis testing.

### Demographic Profile of Respondents

**Table 4: Demographic Distribution of Respondents (N = 500)**

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	280	56.0
	Female	220	44.0
Age Group	Below 20 years	90	18.0
	21–30 years	180	36.0
	31–40 years	130	26.0
	Above 40 years	100	20.0
Education	School Level	75	15.0
	Undergraduate	200	40.0
	Postgraduate	175	35.0
	Professional Degree	50	10.0
Occupation	Students	160	32.0
	Working Professionals	210	42.0
	Business/Self-employed	80	16.0
	Homemakers/Others	50	10.0
Monthly Income	Below ₹20,000	120	24.0
	₹20,001–₹40,000	180	36.0

	₹40,001–₹60,000	120	24.0
	Above ₹60,000	80	16.0

Source: Primary data

## Inference

The demographic profile indicates that the sample is fairly representative at the national level. Out of the **500 respondents**, **56% were male (280)** and **44% were female (220)**, showing a near-balanced gender distribution. In terms of **age groups**, the largest segment was **21–30 years (36%, 180 respondents)**, followed by **31–40 years (26%, 130 respondents)**, **above 40 years (20%, 100 respondents)**, and **below 20 years (18%, 90 respondents)**.

Educational background revealed that **40% were undergraduates (200)**, **35% postgraduates (175)**, **15% school-level (75)**, and **10% professional degree holders (50)**, ensuring diverse academic representation. Regarding **occupation**, the sample included **students (32%, 160)**, **working professionals (42%, 210)**, **business/self-employed (16%, 80)**, and **homemakers/others (10%, 50)**.

Income distribution was also balanced, with **36% (180)** earning between ₹20,001–₹40,000, **24% (120)** below ₹20,000, another **24% (120)** between ₹40,001–₹60,000, and **16% (80)** above ₹60,000.

Thus, the demographic spread ensures that the study reflects **a balanced mix of gender, age, education, occupation, and income segments**, providing credible national-level representation.

## Customer Satisfaction Mean Scores

**Table 5: Mean Satisfaction Scores on Key Factors**

Factor	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Ranking
Price Fairness	3.92	0.82	3
Product Features	4.25	0.71	1
Brand Image	3.88	0.76	4

Durability	4.10	0.79	2
After-Sales Service	3.75	0.84	5
Overall Satisfaction	4.05	0.73	–

Source: Derived data

## Inference

Analysis of the mean satisfaction scores indicates that **product features** received the highest satisfaction rating with a **mean score of 4.25 (SD = 0.71)**, followed closely by **durability** with a **mean score of 4.10 (SD = 0.79)**. **Price fairness** also contributed positively to satisfaction with a mean of **3.92 (SD = 0.82)**.

**Brand image** was moderately rated at **3.88 (SD = 0.76)**, while **after-sales service** received the lowest satisfaction among the measured factors with a **mean score of 3.75 (SD = 0.84)**. The **overall satisfaction** across all respondents was relatively high at **4.05 (SD = 0.73)**.

These results indicate that **product features and durability are the most influential drivers of customer satisfaction**, whereas **after-sales service shows potential for improvement** to enhance overall satisfaction in the Indian mobile phone market.

## Chi-Square Test: Age vs. Brand Preference

Table 6: Association between Age and Preferred Brand

Value	df	Sig. (p-value)	Result
24.385	9	0.004	Significant

Source: Derived data

## Inference: Chi-Square Test

The Chi-square test shows a **Chi-square value of 24.385** with **9 degrees of freedom** and a **p-value of 0.004**, which is less than 0.05, indicating a **statistically significant association** between age and brand preference.

- **Younger consumers (below 30 years)** predominantly prefer brands like **Xiaomi, Realme, and OnePlus**, while

- **Older consumers (31 years and above)** tend to favor **Samsung and Apple** for reliability and durability.

This indicates that **age significantly influences brand choice** in the Indian mobile phone market.

## ANOVA: Income vs. Overall Satisfaction

**Table 7: One-Way ANOVA Results**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Between Groups	8.42	3	2.81	4.56	0.003
Within Groups	304.78	496	0.61		
<b>Total</b>	<b>313.20</b>	499			

Source: Derived data

## Inference: ANOVA

The One-Way ANOVA results show **F = 4.56** with a **p-value of 0.003**, which is significant at the 5% level. This indicates that **overall satisfaction differs significantly across income groups**.

- Respondents with income **₹40,001–₹60,000 and above ₹60,000** reported **higher satisfaction**, often associated with **premium brands** like Apple and Samsung.
- Respondents with income **below ₹20,000 and ₹20,001–₹40,000** reported moderate satisfaction, typically preferring **budget-friendly brands** like Xiaomi and Realme.

Thus, **income level influences overall satisfaction**, with higher-income respondents showing greater satisfaction with premium mobile phones.

## Regression Analysis: Predictors of Customer Satisfaction

**Table 8: Regression Model Summary**

Predictor	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t-value	Sig.
Price Fairness	0.184	3.12	0.002

Product Features	0.365	6.45	0.000
Brand Image	0.210	3.84	0.000
Durability	0.271	4.95	0.000
After-Sales Service	0.132	2.31	0.021

Source: Derived data

## Inference: Regression Analysis

The regression analysis identifies the relative impact of different factors on overall satisfaction:

- **Product Features:**  $\beta = 0.365$ ,  $t = 6.45$ ,  $p < 0.001$  → the **strongest predictor** of satisfaction.
- **Durability:**  $\beta = 0.271$ ,  $t = 4.95$ ,  $p < 0.001$  → a **significant driver**.
- **Brand Image:**  $\beta = 0.210$ ,  $t = 3.84$ ,  $p < 0.001$  → positively influences satisfaction.
- **Price Fairness:**  $\beta = 0.184$ ,  $t = 3.12$ ,  $p = 0.002$  → moderately impacts satisfaction.
- **After-Sales Service:**  $\beta = 0.132$ ,  $t = 2.31$ ,  $p = 0.021$  → the least but still significant factor.

The overall model is significant ( $R^2 = 0.62$ ,  $F = 72.34$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that **62% of the variance in customer satisfaction can be explained by these five factors**.

## DISCUSSION

The analysis of 500 respondents across India provides several insights into customer satisfaction in the mobile phone market.

### Product Features and Durability as Key Drivers

The study reveals that product features (Mean = 4.25, SD = 0.71) and durability (Mean = 4.10, SD = 0.79) are the most important factors influencing satisfaction. This aligns with prior studies (Kim & Lee, 2020; Srivastava & Singh, 2023), which emphasize that Indian consumers prioritize advanced camera quality, battery life, and long-lasting devices.

These findings suggest that manufacturers who continuously innovate and provide high-quality durable products are likely to retain loyal customers.

### **Brand Image and Customer Loyalty**

Brand image (Mean = 3.88, SD = 0.76) significantly affects satisfaction and loyalty, consistent with Aaker (2021). The Chi-square test confirms that age influences brand preference ( $\chi^2 = 24.385$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ), with younger consumers preferring emerging brands (Xiaomi, Realme) and older consumers favoring established brands (Samsung, Apple). This indicates that marketing strategies must be tailored to specific age segments.

### **Impact of Price and Income**

While price fairness (Mean = 3.92, SD = 0.82) is moderately important, ANOVA results indicate that satisfaction varies across income levels ( $F = 4.56$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ). Higher-income respondents show greater satisfaction with premium brands, whereas lower-income consumers prefer value-for-money devices. This finding is in line with previous research emphasizing price sensitivity in emerging markets (Kaur & Kaur, 2021).

### **After-Sales Service**

After-sales service received the lowest rating (Mean = 3.75, SD = 0.84) but remains significant in regression analysis ( $\beta = 0.132$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ). This highlights the importance of strengthening service networks and responsiveness to enhance overall satisfaction.

### **Predictors of Satisfaction**

Regression analysis indicates that product features, durability, and brand image are the strongest predictors of overall satisfaction ( $R^2 = 0.62$ ,  $F = 72.34$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Companies should focus on these factors while also improving after-sales service and price perception.

Overall Insight: Indian consumers value quality, durability, and brand trust over price alone, and satisfaction levels are influenced by age, income, and product experience.

### **Suggestions**

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1. Focus on Product Features and Durability: Continuous innovation in battery life, camera quality, and device longevity can boost satisfaction.
2. Targeted Marketing by Age: Develop marketing campaigns that resonate with younger consumers (trend-driven features) and older consumers (reliability and service).
3. Enhance After-Sales Service: Expand service centers, offer faster repair options, and provide proactive customer support.
4. Pricing Strategies: Offer value-for-money options for price-sensitive consumers while maintaining premium options for higher-income groups.
5. Brand Building: Strengthen brand image through advertising, CSR initiatives, and customer engagement programs to maintain loyalty.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that customer satisfaction in the Indian mobile phone market is multi-dimensional, driven primarily by product features, durability, and brand image. Demographics such as age and income significantly influence satisfaction and brand preference, while after-sales service requires improvement.

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