ST.MARY'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

BRAND PREFERENCE FOR MOBILE PHONES AMONG STUDENTS (THE CASE OF SAINT MARRY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS)

BY

YOHANES TADESE

JUNE, 2019

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN MARKETING MANAGEMENT

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APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS

_____	_____
Dean, Graduate studies	**Signature**
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Advisor	**Signature**
_____	_____
External examiner	**Signature**
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Internal examiner	**Signature**

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned ,declared that this thesis is my original work, prepared under the guidance of Dr.Asfaw yilma .All sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged, I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any degree.

Yohanes tadese _____

St. Mary's University College, Addis Ababa **JUNE, 2019**

ENDORSEMENT

This thesis has been submitted to St. Mary's University College, School of Graduate studies for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

_____ _____

Advisor Signature

St. Mary's University College, Addis Ababa June, 2019

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Yohanes tadese

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ETA: Ethiopian Telecommunication Agency

ETC: Ethiopian Telecommunication

SMS: Short Message Services

SMU: Saint marry university

AMA: American Marketing Association

WOM: Word of Mouth

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

S-R: Stimulus-Response

MBAGM: MBA General management

MBAHRM: MBA Human resource management

MM: Marketing management

PM: Project management

CS: Computer science

QPM: Quality and production management

AE: Agricultural economics

MBA A &F: MBA in accounting & finance

MBAIM: MBA in impact

SW: Social work

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Abstract

In order to understand mobile phone brand preference and how consumers consider in making such purchases. A number of studies have been conducted in other countries on brand preferences, but because of different reasons their findings were not applied in our country, so the primary objective of this study is to assess brand preference for mobile phones among students in the case of saint marry university postgraduate students, , the study considered some factors after looking to the literature review and developed self-generated conceptual framework. A sample size of 291 out of 1123 students was selected using convenience sampling technique. Based on the theoretical frame work and objectives of the study the questions items were provided to the respondents in cross sectional data collection method. After distributing questioners data's was analyzed using descriptive analysis. The study findings showed that brand popularity, prices, product attributes, social influences and marketing communications all affect mobile phone brand preferences among students. The study results also showed, however, that there were some product attributes and social influences that did not influence these preferences.

Key words: Brand, Brand Preference, Mobile phone brands.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Mobile phones have become a necessity in the daily lives of consumers. However, due to advancements in technology the mobile phone industry has shown rapid growth, and this makes it important for marketers to obtain information on brand preferences for mobile phones.

According to Henderson (2012), the mobile phone industry is experiencing a fast growth rate with many affordable and similar phones being introduced.

ADDIS ABEBA – State-owned Ethio Telecom's subscriber numbers have exceeded 62.6 million in the second half of the 2017/18 budget year. Last year the telecom service provider reportedly surpassed MTN Nigeria to become Africa's largest in terms of its mobile customer base. A six months performance report sent to The Daily Monitor has now said the number is still on the up. The operator put its success down to an expansion drive that has cost over USD 1.6 billion in the last few years. "The number of subscribers has now increased to 62.6 million and this has shown a 7.6 percent increase in the first half of this fiscal year," the report says. Ethiopia‟s budget year starts on July 8. Ethio telecom's total number of subscribers of all its services has now reached 64.4 million. This too has shown an increase of 7.1 percent increase as compared to the last quarter of the previous budget year (Ethiodaily post, 2018).

Ethiopia is Africa's second most populous nation behind Nigeria and the numbers are believed to have played a significant part. State-owned Ethio Telecom said, with the help of improved service provision, I has managed to collect 18.4 billion revenue in the first two quarters of the 2017/18 budget year. Ethio Telecom says this income has shown a 700 million increase from the target the operator set for the period (Ethiodaily post, 2018).

According to African news Mobile phone service has grown dramatically throughout the world. It has become a necessity in our day to day life activities since their invention in 1980‟s. Ethiopia, which is no exception to this phenomenon, is rapidly becoming a country with an increasing level of mobile phone users. The number of mobile phone subscribers has gradually increased throughout the years. From IT Web's report "Ethio Telecom of Ethiopia is now the largest mobile operator in Africa in terms of subscriptions, with 57.34 million mobile subscriptions at end-2017.

The introduction of mobile phones is a recent technological occurrence in Ethiopia. Mobile phone services were started in the country in 1999 with a capacity of 36,000 lines in Addis Ababa (Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation, 2005). By the end of 2012, the number of subscribers reached about 20 million (ITU). Ethio telecom mobile services include; prepaid service, satellite mobile service, international mobile roaming services, short message services (SMS), call diverting, call barring as well as call waiting services.

At the introduction of the service, the mobile handsets were dominated by the Ericson brand since subscribers of the service were provided with this brand by the service provider. Therefore, users of this service had few alternatives when it came to selection of mobile phone brands. However in 2003, with the introduction of prepaid mobile service, customers were allowed to buy their own handsets (Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation, 2005). Advances in the mobile technology and the availability of different mobile brands has provided the Ethiopian consumer with a wide variety of choices be it low end brands to respected brand of Smartphones. This paved the way for many international brands into the market such as Nokia, Samsung, and Techno (imported) also recently Smartphones like iPhone and Samsung galaxy are a common sight among the Ethiopian mobile phone users. Combined with the international brands, locally assembled phones have also emerged to compete for the market share of Ethiopian mobile phone users. These locally assembled mobile phone brands include Techno, SMADL, Tana, and Geotel.

In order to understand the concept of brand preference, it is essential to know what a brand is. The definition of brand according to different scholars throughout time has been broad and varying, some of these definitions are included as an entry to this study.

Kotabe and Helsen (2010) defined a brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers as to differentiate them from those of competitors." Linked to a brand name is a collection of assets and liabilities--the brand equity tied to the brand name. These include brand-name awareness, perceived quality, and any other associations invoked by the brand name in the customer's mind.

According to Kotler and Keller (2012), a brand is a product or service whose dimension differentiates it in some way or form other products or services designed to satisfy the same needs. These differences may be functional, rational, or tangible. They may also be more symbolic, emotional or intangible related to what the brand represents or means in a more abstract sense (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

A successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added values which match their needs most closely. Furthermore, its success results from being able to sustain those added values in the face of competition (DeChernatory & McDonald, 2003).

According to Keller (2004), brands use to identify the source of a product and allow consumers to assign responsibility to a particular manufacturer or distributor. Brands play a significant role by signaling quality and other important characteristics of a product. In effect they can reduce the risk associated with a product purchase decisions.

According to the American Marketing Association (2014), brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or differentiate them from those of competitors. Brand preferences occur when consumers choose one available brand over others, because they have developed a habit or favorable past with that brand (Perreault, Cannon and McCarthy 2014). According to O.C. Ferrell and Michael D. Hartline, 2011 Brand preference is a stronger degree of brand loyalty where a customer prefers one brand to competitive brands and will usually purchase this brand if it is available.

In recent years, cell phones have gained popularity among a wide variety of users in Ethiopia. The usage of cell phones is particularly spreading among the younger generation (Meredith and Schewe, 2002). Young Ethiopians especially university students favor this technology in their daily activity of communication. Students use their mobile phones to interact with people of similar age group as well as interest by means of texting, phone call, surfing the internet and social media.

Therefore, this study focuses exploring and gaining a clear understanding by assessing brand preference for different mobile phone brands. This study is done in a specified sample of students in Saint Marry University which attends in Postgraduate level.

1.2. Background of the Organization

St. Mary's University was established in 1998 under St. Mary's University General Educational Development PLC with its head office in Hawassa and a branch in Addis Ababa. It commenced its operations in the same year with 33 students in Hawassa and 37 in Addis Ababa, studying in three departments (Departments of Accounting, Marketing, and Law). Later in the same year, 49 students joined the Dilla Branch, 90 kilometers from Hawassa, which is found in the southern part of Ethiopia. In the last quarter of 1998, it admitted more than 300 students in Addis Ababa (Lideta Campus located opposite the Federal High Court) and 25 students in Dilla.

The last quarter of 2002 was spent on restructuring previous offices as well as establishing new ones that would provide the needed support and services both to the students and the staff. In 2003, the College further expanded its services and started offering degree programs in Marketing, Management, Accounting, and diploma programs in Teacher Education (in the fields of English, Mathematics, and Geography). A year later, the Computer Science Department, after being beefed up with the needed manpower, facilities, and equipment, started offering Degree programs. In the same year, the Natural Science Stream (comprising the subjects Biology, Chemistry, and Physics), began offering diploma level training under the Teacher Education Faculty.

By August 2005, St. Mary's University had more than 15,000 students in the distance mode of learning and 5,000 in the regular and extension programs. The institution was promoted to the level of University College in February 2006. In the same year, SMU, in collaboration with IGNOU – a leading distance education provider in India, started offering Masters Programs within St. Mary's University newly acquired campus. The program was introduced at a time when the wide gap between the demand for tertiary-level quality education and the supply side of the services called for such programs.

In 2009, IGNOU‟s office moved to a building secured for the School of Graduate Studies located off-Bole Road near to the Meskel Square. The Institute of Agricultural Studies was also housed in the same building. At Midir Baboor Campus, where the Teacher Education Faculty had its offices and a library, the Testing Center of the University runs its day to day activities. This center is entrusted with offering training to the entire academic staff on matters pertaining to measurement and evaluation.

St. Mary‟s University is a founding member of the Ethiopian Private Higher Education and Technical Institutions Association and is a member of the African Association of Universities,

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), African Quality Network, and International Council for distance Education (ICDE).

1.3. Statement of the Problem

In present context, mobile phone has a huge impact in lives of people daily. In our country the mobile phone industry is still in its growth stage, as compared to the industrially advanced countries. It is for the fact that the economy of our country has been in the developing stage. Now-a-days, the customers are more dynamic. As it was known mobile phones are useful for communication, and are convenient, especially for university students. Mobile phones are now a necessity in the lives of people. Due to rapid developments in technology, modernization and new innovations, there is a short mobile phone lifecycle, which has a tremendous impact on the manufacturers and retailers of such products (Henderson 2012). Manufacturers are forced to upgrade and design new models of mobile phones on an ongoing basis. However, the rapid introduction of cheaper versions of mobile phones in Ethiopia has increased the rate of competition between companies in the mobile industry. It is worth noting that many studies have been conducted in the area of brand preference of mobile phones among students. Nevertheless, previous studies conducted by Petruzzellis (2010), Bhukya and Singh (2013), Shahzad and Sobia (2013), Karjaluoto, et al. (2005), and Dadzie and Boachie-Mensah (2011) do not provide a common answer regarding the factors that influence brand preferences. Also that most studies were conducted in other countries on the undergraduate's students so this study will focus only in postgraduate, these findings do not exactly reflect the situation in the Ethiopian market, which therefore leaves a gap with regard to brand preference on mobile phones among students in this country.

The purpose of the study was to explore and gain a clear understanding of the factors that influenced brand preferences among students in a specified group in a specific geographical location within the Saint marry university postgraduate students.

1.4. Research Questions

To address the above problem, this study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- ✓ Is there a relationship between brand popularity and mobile phone brand preferences?
- ✓ Does prices influence's students mobile phone brand preference?
- ✓ Does the social influence affect brand preferences?
- ✓ What factors of product attributes influence student choices of mobile phone brands?
- ✓ Does marketing communications have influence on mobile phone brand preferences?

1.5. Objectives of the Study

1.5.1. General Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to assess the brand preference for mobile phones among students at Saint marry university; the primary objective of this was to determine factors affecting brand preference for mobile phones among students at the Saint marry university Postgraduate students.

1.5.2. Specific Objectives of the Study

To achieve the general objective of the study, the following specific objectives are designed and are as follows:

- ✓ To assess the relationships between brand popularity and mobile phone brand preferences;
- ✓ To examine the influences of prices on student choices of mobile phone brands;
- ✓ To investigate the product attributes influences on mobile phone brands preference;
- ✓ To assess the extent to which brand preferences were affected by social influences; and
- ✓ To determine the influences that marketing communications had on mobile phone brand preferences.

1.6. Significance of the study

This study can be important to different individuals and organizations. The significance of the study is listed below:

- ✓ Finding of the study will be useful and important among students and academician as an input for doing similar research in this field in the future.
- ✓ This study will be useful to local and foreign mobile phone manufactures and retailers since they can identify the brand preference of youngsters' specially Saint marry university postgraduate students.
- ✓ The identification of students' preference towards mobile phone brands will assist local companies to develop an effective marketing strategy and to help them compete effectively against foreign brands in the market.
- ✓ This study will also help as a guide to foreign companies who have limited information on university students' mobile phone preference.

1.7. Scope and limitation of the Study

The study was geographically limited to St marry university Postgraduates students which is found in Addis Ababa City; Because of this the findings of this study may not be applicable in all cases, so it limits the generalizability of the results in the research.

The study can be further analyzed in terms of different dimensions like brand preference among different psychological aspects, gender, Specific product features based as well as various factors students chooses mobile brands since most of this is not included in this study. One of the major limitations of this study is the sample coverage. The populations of the study are SMU Postgraduate students that have a mobile phone.

Since, this target population is very small only SMU Postgraduate program students were considered. Taking only SMU students might not represent or reflect the brand preference of all university students in Addis Ababa. The targeted population for the study (students) cannot be regarded as providing a true reflection of all consumer brand preferences.

1.8. Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters. The five chapters included introduction, Review of Related Literature, Research Methodology & Design, Finding of the study & Summary, Conclusions & Recommendations.

The first chapter provides a general introduction of the study including background of the study, statement of the problem, basic research questions, and objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, organization of the study. Chapter two covers the literature relevant to the study. It includes concepts and theoretical framework as well as brand preference models. Chapter three elaborates the type and design of the study. It includes research method, sampling technique, data collection method and method of data analysis that was used in the study. Chapter four summarizes the findings of the study and discusses the findings. Finally chapter five includes four sections which include summary findings, conclusions, recommendations and limitations & suggestion for further study.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITRATURE

2.1. Theoretical Review

A theoretical framework is a structure which describes the concept for the research study, and also explains why the research problem under study exists (Swanson 2013:350). For this study, self-concept and stimulus-response learning theories provide the foundation framework for the research. These theories were selected based on their relevance to the study.

2.1.1. Conceptual Definition of terms

Brand: - The basic definition of a brand is a name, symbol, icon, design, or a combination of these, that identifies the maker or marketer of a product. But truly understanding what a brand is, and the important role it plays in marketing, is far from simple (Gary Armstrong et.al, 2017). According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), a *brand* is a "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition." Technically speaking, then, whenever a marketer creates a new name, logo, or symbol for a new product, he or she has created a brand.

Brand preference:- Brand preference is the extent to which the customer favors the designated service provided by his or her present company, in comparison to the designated service provided by other companies in his or her consideration set" (Alamro and Rowley, 2011).

2.1.2. Self-concept theory

The self-concept theory is defined by Rosenberg (1979) as the entirety of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to themselves as objective beings, and is associated with behavior and feelings. Solomon (2013) argues, however, that the self-concept theory is based on the perception and responses of other people, because the appraisals that individuals obtain from others greatly influence their behavior.

In addition, Pride and Ferrell (2010) state that self-concept theory defines the consumer within individuals, which can be a person with many images of themselves. This plays a significant role in identifying how consumers behave, since the way in which they perceive themselves influences the brands they prefer, since they wish their choices to be reflected in the products they purchase.

Escalas and Bettman (2005) found that Consumers usually prefer brands that match their self-concepts in order to express themselves to those around them, and show that they conform to the concept being emphasized by the brands usage. Moreover, consumers prefer certain brands to maintain or create self-images for either themselves or their group members. Consumers prefer brands matching their own self- images, thus the greater the relationship between self-images and brands, the stronger will be specific brand preferences.

Pride and Ferrell (2010) says Self-concept is the way in which individuals see themselves, and includes the entirety of their thoughts and feelings when looking at themselves. Consumers define their own self-concepts, which change based on interactions between their psychological and social dimensions. Furthermore, consumers choose brands or products that match their own self-concepts, which therefore influences them in preferring certain brands, and can also affect the place where products are bought. According to Hoyer, et al. (2013), the self-concept theory assists in defining who consumers are, which directly influences their behavior, and also takes into account how consumers view themselves and how they consider others to view them.

2.1.3. Stimulus-Response theory

Sahnay (2007) says stimulus-Response (S-R) is a classic psychological conditioning model used to explain how individuals behave. Consumers react largely to external stimuli when faced with purchasing situations says Schiffman and Kanuk (2010). S-R, also known as Classical Conditioning, involves the study of the connections between stimuli and the behavior with which consumers respond. According to the S-R theory, certain stimuli trigger responses from consumers. In this case, stimuli such as brand popularity, prices, social influences and marketing communications affect the mobile phone brands consumers prefer. Stimuli are external objects, situations or cues that consumers perceive, whilst responses are behaviors by consumers in reacting to these (Sahnay 2007). Stimuli such as advertisements, brand prices, social influences and marketing communications influence these consumer responses, which can lead to either negative or positive brand preferences evolving.

Similarly, Perreault *et al.* (2010) explain S-R theory as a learning process whereby stimuli encourage actions. These consumer actions depend on the types of stimuli to which they are exposed. Stimuli are cues which decide when, where and how individuals respond, and marketers influence consumer brand preferences by providing such cues to motivate them. This theory only focuses on external cues, however, and ignores internal cues which also influence mobile phone brand preferences.

Stimuli here refer to brand attributes, such as popularity, price, marketing communications and social influences that affect individuals in responding with specific behavior. When consumers respond to stimuli, these therefore influence their behavior.

2.1.4. Branding

Brands are not new to marketing. Historically, the concept of brand was first used by the ancient Egyptian brick-makers who drew symbols on bricks for identification (Farquhar, 1990). According to a Smithsonian.com article, an ancient Egyptian tomb painting depicting a cattle roundup and branding from 2700 BC is the earliest record of livestock branding. There are also allusions to the practice in Roman literature and in the Bible, namely with Jacob the herdsman. Other examples of the use of brands were found in Greek and Roman times; at this time, due to illiteracy shopkeepers identified their shops using symbols. Moreover, in the Middle-Ages, craftsmen marked their goods with stamps as a trademark by which to differentiate their skills. The next milestone of brand evolved in North America with the growth of cattle farming as a kind of legal protection, proof of ownership and quality signals (De Chernatony and McDonald, 2003).

Brands are important valuable intangible assets for companies, a distinctive tool that builds a long-term relationship with the consumers, and protects its‟ rights (Kolter *et al.*, 2009).

Brand management is given a high priority and the spectrum of brand has been broadened beyond marketing communication and the resource-based theory of marketing strategy. The approach of brand orientation places consumers and brand at the pivotal point of company strategy Wong and Merrilees, (2007). Kay (2006), reports that building a successful brand achieves a high market share and increases profitability. He defined successful brands as the associated elements that cannot be copied by competitors, enhancing consumer preferences over competing brands. Evidence of brand strength is its success, illustrating its ability to win consumer preferences and construct long-lasting relationships.

There are many definitions of brand according to different authors to provide their own explanation towards the meaning of brand. These varying definitions are useful for the understanding of the complete picture regarding what a brand is. According to Kotler and Kotler (2012), a brand is a product or service whose dimensions differentiate it in some way or from other products or services designed to satisfy the same needs. These differences may be functional, rational, or tangible. They may also be more symbolic, emotional or intangible related to what the brand represents or means in a more abstract sense.

According to Keller (2004), brands use to identify the source of a product & allow consumers to assign responsibility to a particular manufacturer or distributor. Brands play a significant role by signaling quality and other important characteristics of a product. In effect they can reduce the risk associated with a product purchase decisions.

Strong brands act as an important factor of differentiation of firms, because it helps assist customers in the evaluation and choice process (Davis et al., 2008). In general, marketing is defined as a consumer-based process that permeates organizational functions and processes, and it balances the companies‟ objectives and customer satisfaction. Branding is a marketing tool perceived to be important for both the company and consumer.

Brands are important valuable intangible assets for companies, a distinctive tool that builds a long-term relationship with the consumers, and protects its‟ rights (Kolter et al., 2009). For consumers, brands reflect their experience and knowledge; simplifying the processing of information accumulated over time about the company and its products or brands. In addition, brands reflect consumer‟ experiences and knowledge; thus, simplify the processing of information accumulated over time about the company and its products or brands. Consequently, brands act as signals for products of high quality and low perceived risk, thus, enable the consumers to capture both cognitive and non-cognitive values expressed in the positive feelings or self-expression experienced Kotler et al., (2009). Mobile telecommunication services are considered the most high-technological products in the market Alamro and Rowley, (2011).

2.2. Brand Preference

Kapferer (2012) says Preference for a specific brand hence assumes that brands, adjusted for price and availability, are perceived different in the hearts and minds of consumers. Brand preference is defined differently by many authors. According to Keller (2013), and (Chang and Ming 2009), brand preference is discussed as a factor in brand equity, whilst other authors use the term interchangeably with brand loyalty. Kotler (2003) says brand preference as a type of brand loyalty could be described as when customers choose a certain brand in presence of competing brand while yet accept substituting brands in its absence.

Preference for a specific brand hence assumes that brands, adjusted for price and availability, are perceived different in the hearts and minds of consumers (Kapferer, 2012). Brand preference is defined differently by many authors. According to Keller (2013), and (Chang and Ming 2009), brand preference is discussed as a factor in brand equity, whilst other authors use the term interchangeably with brand loyalty.

Brand preference is a measure of brand loyalty whereby consumers select one brand over other competing brands, and only accept substitutes when those they want are not available on the market Business Dictionary (2018). Brand preference features in all of the major texts on brands and brand strategy. Brand preference precedes consumer loyalty and influence attitudinal Kim *et al.,* (2011) and behavioral loyalty (Tolba and Hassan, 2009). Thus, loyalty can be perceived as a true measure of brand preference (Gupta, 1988; Hardie *et al.*, 1993).

Different authorities also conceptualize brand preference in different ways, and propose different relationships between brand preference and other branding variables. For example, Keller (2004) discusses brand preference as an antecedent of brand loyalty and brand equity, whereas Chang and Ming (2009) discuss brand preference as a consequence of brand loyalty and brand equity. In this study brand preference is defined as the degree of brand loyalty in which a customer definitely prefers one brand over competitive offerings and will purchase this brand if it is available.

2.2.1. The influence of brand popularity on brand preference

For the purposes of this study, brand popularity and familiarity are used interchangeably. Brand popularity concerns the number of consumers who know about a particular brand, and is increased by word of mouth. The more consumers become familiar brands, the more popular they become. Popular brands are widely sought after and purchased by consumers Winther (2011). Perreault *et al.* (2010) found that brand familiarity is also considered to be how well consumers recognize particular brands.

According to Hult *et al*. (2012), brand popularity can be used as an external indicator of the quality of products available to consumers which influences their choices. According to Wood (2000), brand popularity provides value to consumers by raising their confidence levels in the brands they select or purchase. Popularity can provide consumers with assurance, especially where comparing the features of products is difficult. Mobile phones, for example, have very similar features, so it is difficult to compare the different phones, and brand popularity provides consumers with assurances about which brands to choose. Consumers can therefore reduce their perceived risk by selecting and preferring popular brands over those that are unpopular.

According to Schiffiman and Kanuk (2010), found that consumers rely mostly on well-known brands as an indication of their quality. This perceived quality, in association with their popularity, can add to the value of brands, and this positively influences the probability of a

single brand being chosen from amongst the competitive brands available. Consumers therefore prefer well-known brands to unknown brands. This is supported by Ramesh (2013), and Khan and Rohi (2013) when they maintain that consumers view popular brands positively when choosing mobile phones. Negi and Pandey (2013) add that consumers filter out unknown brands and mostly, the known brands will be preferred when making such choices. Consumers prefer brands which they can associate with their self-concepts, and brand popularity is therefore also used to evaluate a brand's prestige.

Consumers mostly use brands that come to mind first Wang *et al.(*2009). Lin, et al. (2011) also found that the more popular a brand, the more consumers feel that they can trust that brand, which thereby influences consumer brand preferences. Saif *et al. (* 2012) says Consumers mostly prefer well-known brands to those that are not popular.

In addition, consumer's associate brands with particular qualities and brand names can be used to signify quality in products. Most consumers are not easily able to judge the quality of products, however, and so rely on brands as indicators of such quality instead. Brand popularity influences brand preference in either a positive or negative way, depending on each brand of mobile phone (Pride and Ferrell 2010:331).

In the results of their study, Soomro and Ghumro (2013:512) show that a large number of respondents prefer mobile phone brands with which they are familiar. Moreover, consumers usually ignore brands which they do not consider popular. Consumers do not choose brands that are unknown to them, but prefer brands of whose popularity they are aware, especially where products are expensive Ayanwale, etal. (2005). In addition, Rijal (2013) suggests that students do not choose unpopular brands because they want to create self-images, but because they believe that by choosing popular branded mobile phones, they reduce the risks they might otherwise encounter. Popular brands project images of quality, and many people therefore believe that brand names help to show consumers the quality and value of products. It is believed that if you were to show an individual two mobile phones, one having a popular brand name, and the other without, they would always choose the one with the popular brand, and always believe it to be of higher quality. Consumers, however, also therefore believe that unpopular or unbranded products are of poor quality, and that such companies are therefore hesitant to promote their brands.

Pride and Ferrell (2010) say that a familiar brand is more likely to be selected by consumers than those brands with which they are unfamiliar. This is because consumers perceive familiar or popular brands to be reliable and of high quality. Consumers are more likely to

choose brands that are popular over those that are unpopular; Soomro and Ghumro (2013). In addition, Sardar (2012) asserts that unpopular and unbranded products are usually of uncertain quality, which consumers believe they cannot depend on when compared to popular and branded mobile phones. Branded products hold a great place in the minds of consumers when they make choices as to which brands they prefer. Consumers usually choose well-known brands that they are familiar with. They do not wish to purchase new or unpopular brands, because they have insufficient information about these lesser-known brands. Alamgir et al. (2010) People trust popular branded mobile phones, because they know how they function, and also may have had past experiences with such brands.

Chi, Yeh an Yang (2009) mention, furthermore, that when consumers wish to purchase products, and a particular brand name comes first to mind, this shows that they are familiar with that brand. Consumer behavior can be influenced by how familiar they are with certain brands. Consumers have a propensity to prefer brands they are familiar with, and which are known to them. They can easily recognize brands with which they are familiar from the many brands of mobile phones available on the market. Brands with higher popularity levels therefore receive higher consumer preference levels.

Hoeffler and Keller (2003) suggest that when consumers have limited knowledge about products, brand names may be the most accessible cue available for them for making purchasing decisions. The more consumers are familiar with brands, the more such decisions will be influenced. The popularity of brands influences the decisions consumers make, since some consumers only prefer well-known brands. Therefore, the more a brand is known, the more this influences the formation and strength of brand associations with its brand image, thereby creating brand preference. Faryabi, Fesaghandis and Saed (2015) Consumers, however, mostly use brand popularity to judge product quality when they have limited information, which they use as a strategy for dealing with risks and uncertainty. This reduces the risks involved in assessing the quality of brands.

Similar studies indicate that consumers prefer internationally-known brands of mobile phones Das, (2012) & Zhou and Shanturkovska, (2011). Furthermore, Faryabi *et al*. (2015) have realized that it is important to introduce new products with well-known brand names, since it is easier for consumers to accept these already-popular brands than to choose products with unknown or new brand names. This is because a transfer of beliefs to consumers occurs with known brands. This transfer, however, includes both positive and negative factors related to these brands.

2.2.2. The relationship between product attributes and brand preferences

Zhang *et al.* (2015) state that product attributes are crucial, because they change the perceptions that consumers have of brands, and may change the brands that consumers prefer. The authors divide product attributes into three inter-related groups, which are: character-related, beneficially-related and image-related attributes.

Character-related attributes refer to the physical properties of products, whilst beneficially-related attributes are the benefits or risks that the use of products brings, and image-related attributes are those properties of products that have the ability to define the owners of such products in relation to other people.

Various product attributes influence mobile phone preferences in students. This is because students consider the attributes of brands before price when they choose mobile phones Malasi (2012). Product attributes are the physical aspects of products, and when consumers select products or brands, they consider such characteristics. Product attributes are therefore used to compare product alternatives Zhang *et al.* (2015). According to Gwin and Gwin (2003), product attributes are features that products either have or do not have, and which are either in-built or extrinsic. Attributes can have either positive or negative impacts on mobile phone brand preferences. In addition, Jandaghi and Hashemi (2010:960) state that mobile phone attributes are divided into two groups, which are either hedonic or applied features.

Knowing the product attributes that influence consumer mobile phone choices is important for marketers and manufacturers in new product development. A variety of mobile phone brands is available, and it is difficult to differentiate between these. Features which distinguish mobile phone brands from each other are: shapes, colors, sizes and production materials Han et al. (2004).

Zhang *et al.* (2015) says that Product attributes are important, because consumers look for particular attributes in mobile phones, and it is therefore important for manufacturers to know the features that consumers consider most when choosing their products. Consumer perceptions of these attributes can affect the formation of, or change, consumer attitudes towards products, thereby influencing which brands they prefer. Moreover, product attributes are important in understanding the preferences that consumers have for particular brands of mobile phones, since these influence consumer perceptions of their products.

The influences of product attributes on mobile phones

Zhang, Rau and Zhou (2015) define product attributes as the descriptive features of products or brands. In recent years, the number of mobile phone attributes has increased, with manufacturers introducing new features to distinguish their phones from others. This increase in product attributes makes it difficult for consumers to choose the brands they want, with mobile phones now having many attributes that increase their uses, and can make calls, send messages, access the internet, and so forth. There are certain product attributes that consumers desire in preferring certain brands over available others (Hledik 2012). Product attributes are the descriptive components of products required for their functioning Dadzie and Boachie-Mensah (2011). In addition, Hellier *et al*. (2003:149) state that product attributes are divided into either product- related or non-product-related features. These define the actual brands being offered, and determine how consumers accept and prefer these brands over other available products.

The influence of mobile phone appearance and battery life on brand preference

The physical appearances of mobile phones, including sizes, colors, designs, weights and keyboards, influence the choices consumers makes Park *et al. (* 2014). In addition, Tallberg, etal (2007) agree that mobile phone appearance is one of the most important factors influencing consumer preferences. Karjualuoto *et al.* (2005) agree that mobile phone designs, in terms of appearances and sizes, influence the brands that consumers prefer. Uddin etal. (2014:26) define physical attributes as being all the physical characteristics that mobile phones have, which include cameras, Bluetooth, colors and weights.

According to Sata (2013:13), mobile phone features are the second most important factors correlating with consumer decisions to buy or prefer particular devices. Mobile phone features include Internet access, Bluetooth, video, colors, FM radios, designs, media players, touch screens, stores, sizes, accessories, speakers and weights. All these factors are considered to have connections with the decisions consumers make in buying or preferring mobile devices. The results of this research study correspond with previous research conducted in other countries by Pakola *et al.* (2010), Das *et al.* (2012), Saif *et al.*, (2012), Malasi (2012), and Aidoo and Nyamedor (2008), who all consider mobile phone features as leading factors influencing consumer behavior in brand preference.

The physical appearances of phones often influence the way consumers‟ judge or perceive brands, and affect the impressions that consumers have of those brands, which they communicate to others, thereby influencing the choices they in turn make. These attributes communicate different messages to consumers, especially phone colors, since consumers

prefer colors that match the messages they wish to pass to those around them Schiffman and Kanuk (2010).

Physical appearances include the aesthetic features of mobile phones, which also impact on mobile phone brand preferences. Mobile phone brands possess different aesthetic aspects, and these differ from one brand to another. The manner in which screens display, and the quality of phones differs between brands, and factors such as these influence the purchasing choices consumers make Juwaheer *et al. (*2013). Mack and Sharples (2009) establish aesthetics as one of the most important factors influencing mobile phone brand preferences.

Malasi (2012), in a study of the influences of product attributes on mobile phone preferences amongst Postgraduate university students in Kenya, indicates that various product and brand attributes, such as colors, visible name labels, and the designs of phones, exert important influences on student preferences. The author concludes that these attributes are considered by students when differentiating between different mobile phone brands, and choose those that have attributes which meet their needs.

Furthermore, Uddin *et al.* (2014), in their study of factors affecting customer buying decisions for mobile phones in the city of Khulna in Bangladesh, conclude that physical attributes are the most important factors influencing the choices consumers make with regard to purchasing mobile phones. These factors show a 30.99% variance in consumer decisions with regard to purchasing mobile phones. The physical appearances of mobile phones communicate a great deal about these phones, and influence the brands that consumers want. Physical appearances should be meaningful and understandable to consumers, since they assist consumers in assessing the other attributes these products. If the physical appearances of mobiles phones do not convey the required message, however, this negatively affects brand preferences (Blijlevens, Creusen and Schoormans, 2009). Physical appearances influence consumer perceptions of other mobile phone design features, such as colors, shapes and sizes. Physical appearances influence the overall impressions consumer form of brands, and also provide consumers with information that manufacturers are attempting to communicate. This information influences consumers in their brand preference decisions (Blijlevens *et al.* 2009).

The influence of mobile phone quality on brand preference

According to Hult et al. (2012), quality is considered to be made up of the overall characteristics of products which allow them to perform in certain ways. The issue of quality is diverse, depending on the products and types of consumers being targeted. Some consumers

consider high quality products or brands to be reliable, durable and easy to maintain. The quality of products is therefore an important attribute that consumers consider when choosing or purchasing mobile phones. Consumers prefer mobile phone brands of high quality that last over lengths of time.

This view is supported by Liu (2002), who maintains that consumers prefer mobile phone brands of perceived qualities, which they have used before, or which are recommended by family or friends. Khan and Rohi (2013:374) establish in their study that quality is a significant factor influencing the choice of mobile phone brands in Peshawar, Pakistan. Moreover, Raj (2013:52), in a similar study of brand preferences, includes quality as one of the variables that assists consumers in making decisions about the brands they prefer. The author concludes that consumers make choices based on the quality of brands, and also on the services that manufacturers provide. In most cases, quality plays a major role for consumers in choosing brands, since they believe that this helps them to decide whether or not to buy particular products. Consumers usually believe that there is a link between quality and price, and consider that the higher the price of a brand, the higher is its quality Yusuf and Shafri (2013).

The influence of mobile phone user-friendliness on brand preference

Aidoo and Nyamedor (2008) assert that consumers prefer user-friendly mobile phone brands. Owusu-Prempeh *et al.* (2013) furthermore conclude that ease of use is one of the factors that consumers consider when selecting mobile phone brands. According to Khan and Rohi (2013) user-friendliness is the ability of products to be easily used and understood. This includes the software with which phones are installed, and the ease of its learning and use. It is important for companies to produce mobile phones that are user- friendly, because the market is saturated with competing brands. Consumers usually prefer brands that are easy to use, and whose operations can be easily learned, and user-friendliness therefore has an impact on mobile phone brand preferences.

The influence of mobile phone reliability and durability on brand preference

According to Aidoo and Nyamedor (2008), the reliability of mobile phones brands impacts significantly on the brands consumers prefer. Raj (2013) similarly asserts that when consumers make brand choices, they focus mainly on the reliable service given, and also the reputations for reliability of their manufacturers.

In addition, Ling et al. (2007) state that durability can be defined as how long devices last with regular use, or whether devices resist the impacts of irregular use. Ala‟a and Yaser (2015) furthermore assert that mobile phones should have tough cases and be made of hardy materials (waterproofing devices, for example, which then allows them to be used in

bathrooms), or contain applications and services that can be applied for educational purposes, by allowing devices to be used in classrooms for study purposes, since most students own mobile phones.

Other studies consider the durability of mobile phone batteries to be their most important characteristic Zhou and Shanturkovska (2011). A study of consumer choice criteria for mobile phone selection indicates that mobile phone durability is the fourth most important factor influencing mobile phone brand preferences, with a mean scoring of 5.034 Mokhlis and Yaakop (2012). Similarly, Wilhem (2012) states that durability is the second most important factor that influences consumer mobile phone brand preferences. In another study, durability is seen as one of the three most important mobile phone attributes, with 93.4% of respondents agreeing to this Owusu- Prempeh *et al.* (2013).

According to Sata (2013), two factors that correlate equally and have reasonable relationships with decisions made to choose mobile phone brands are brand names and product durability, with Pearson correlation coefficients of 0.557 and 0.555 respectively. Both factors are heavily associated with the quality of given products.

Durability is linked to the use of mobile devices for long periods without any defects, and high-quality phones are considered to work well, with not faults, over long periods of time. In their study results, Ala˝a and Yaser (2015) furthermore show that most respondents consider the durability of mobile devices to be their first priority when choosing brands. This finding is not surprising, since other factors are of similar importance between brands, and this therefore makes durability one of the most fundamental factors affecting these consumer choices.

2.2.3. The relationship between price & brand preference

Price directly influences brand preference, especially when this is the only information available to consumers. Price is the first thing that consumers see, and creates an initial impression of quality in brands or products. In addition, consumers obtain their perceptions of the quality of products from their prices. The various pricing models used have different effects on consumer brand preferences, where unexpectedly low prices can trigger fears that brands are of low quality, whilst unexpectedly high prices cause buyers to question the true worth of brands Yusuf and Shafri (2013). A study conducted by Sata (2013) on factors affecting consumer buying behavior for mobile phone devices, explored six important factors: prices, social groups, product features, brand names, durability and after-sales services. The

author concludes that price is the most important factor influencing the choices consumers make in purchasing mobile phones.

Ala"a and Yaser (2015) conclude that price is an issue with regard to brand preferences for mobile phones because of the economic situation in the country of their study. The researchers expected that price would appear in the first level of criteria affecting preferences for mobile phones in Jordanian consumers, but their results show that price is not as important as mobile phone design for these consumers when making such purchasing decisions. Juwaheer *et al.* (2013), in their study of factors influencing the selection of mobile phones amongst young Mauritian customers, reveal that they are influenced by pricing as a major factor in mobile phone selection. Price is therefore also considered an important factor influencing the choice of mobile phones amongst young people (Karjaluoto et al. (2005).

Similarly, consumers of mobile phones consider price an important factor in showing perceived brand values and quality, where the high prices of products indicate advanced technology and improved features Kabadayi, Aygun and Cipli. (2007). Furthermore, Mannukka (2008:190) highlights the positive relationships between consumer price perceptions and their purchasing choices or behavior. According to Akhtar *et al.* (2013), in their study of mobile phone feature preferences and consumer patterns for students at the University of Sargodha, 68.8% of respondents preferred moderately-priced mobile phones, whilst 14.2% preferred high-priced phones. Park *et al.* (2014) also identify price as the most critical factor affecting choices for mobile phones, especially with regard to younger consumers.

Khan and Rohi (2013) furthermore emphasize that price is the most important factor affecting consumer mobile phone brand choices, especially amongst youth, for whom this is the key attracting factor. The prices of mobile phones may also vary due to economic conditions and consumer perceptions. Park *et al.* (2014:9) agree that price has an influence on the selection of mobile phone brands by young consumers, and Mack and Sharples (2009) confirm that the cost of mobile phones is the most significant factor affecting consumer choices. Owusu-Prempeh, Antwi-Boateng and Asuamah (2013) conclude, however, that the cost of mobile phones has the least influence on the brands consumers prefer, with only 55.2% of respondents agreeing with the statement that cost influences consumer brand preferences. The price of mobile phones as a deciding factor also depends on the group of people, since students prefer reduced costs in phones, since they cannot afford those that are costlier.

Mokhlis and Yaakop (2012), in their study of consumer-choice criteria in mobile phone selection, also find that price is an important factor influencing student brand choices. This is because the spending power of students is limited, and they therefore prioritize how they spend their money. Students feel that they have insufficient funds to cover both their own financial needs and expensive mobile phone brands. In addition, Owusu-Prempeh et al. (2013) assert that the prices of mobile phones should be taken into consideration when dealing with low-income consumers, who are usually more price-sensitive and for whom price therefore directly influences brand choices.

Pakola *et al.* (2010) investigate consumer behavior in mobile phone markets in Finland. The authors reveal that the choice of mobile phones by consumers is affected mostly by price. The authors find, however, that this may have been the dominant factor because of low incomes in the sample population. Aidoo and Nyamedor (2008) in their study also highlight that the most popular brand is Nokia because of its affordable price ranges compared to other brands, which are more expensive.

According to Saif *et al.* (2012) price does not affect consumer choices or preferences of mobile phone brands, since it becomes less of a contributing factor as consumers change from being lower income earners to higher income earners. A recent survey carried out by Malasi (2012), however, describes price as an important factor in shaping or influencing the future habits of young consumers, since it does not affect current consumer preferences for mobile phones, but their preferences in the future.

Dziwornu (2013), in a study of factors affecting mobile phone purchases in the greater Accra Region of Ghana, finds no significant relationship between price and mobile phone purchasing decisions. The author suggests that consumers are rational, and always prefer lower priced mobile phone brands, even though they associate higher prices with better quality. Mobile phone users usually prefer lower priced mobile phone brands, which is supported by Kajaluoto *et al*. (2005), who find that consumers are price-sensitive, such that when their mobile phone brands increase in price, they may shift to cheaper competing brands.

According to Hult et al (2012), if price is the main factor for consumer brand preferences, then price cuts will best influence consumers in purchasing certain brands. Although price exerts an important influence on consumer purchasing decisions, they nevertheless hold different views concerning its importance, since some are price-sensitive whilst others are not. Hoyer *et al. (*2013) they found that Price-sensitive consumers are affected by small changes in price,

which affect their brand preferences, whilst price-insensitive consumers are willing to buy products, regardless of price

Aaker (1997) says Price is a simple way for consumers to compare brands or products .When retailers price their products, they should consider the quality perceptions of their brands in the minds of customers. High prices can be expected by consumers if this affects the relationship between brand price and quality. Price is, however, not the only factor used to influence consumer brand preferences and expectations Lattin and Bucklin (2001). Additionally, Khan and Rohi (2013) assert that price affects the perceptions that consumers have of brands, and is used to indicate the quality of brands, which directly influences purchasing decisions that consumers make.

In addition, brand prices assist in reducing any doubts consumers may have associated with purchasing particular brands. These doubts are, however, mostly for brands that are not well known. Price is, however, not the only stimulus that consumers respond to when making brand preference choices Casielles and Alvarez (2007). In addition, Moon and Voss (2009) state that internal price-reference consumers switch brands less frequently than external price-reference consumers, who have intermediate levels for brand preferences and respond less to promotions. Reference pricing plays an important role in influencing brand preferences. Some researchers argue that reference prices are based on past consumer experiences, whilst others say these develop when consumers see and compare the prices of their brands with those of other available brands Casielles and Alvarez (2007).

Yusuf and Shafri (2013) Price is usually the first factor that consumers consider before choosing mobile phone brands. This is because consumers review product affordability to establish if they are able to purchase such brands. Price also indicates levels of consumer income, where the higher the income, the higher is the purchasing value that consumers can afford, which hence allows them to afford expensive brands such as Apple.

Pricing strategies used in the mobile phone industry

Pricing strategies refer to the approaches that companies employ in pricing their products. Companies base their pricing strategies on various factors, for example marketing and advertising. A number of different pricing strategies are used, and these include: penetration pricing, price skimming, deferential pricing, product-line pricing, psychological pricing, promotional pricing and professional pricing. In addition, the specific strategies that companies use to price their products grow out of their marketing strategies. Companies may price their

products to attract customers, to appeal to smaller groups within larger markets, and also to match the pricing of their competitors Kurtz and Boone (2012).

2.2.4. The role of social influences on brand preference

Verkasalo (2010:243) defines social influences as the degrees to which people consider what others say to be important. According to Park et al. (2014), social groupings influence the products consumers choose from amongst competing brands. Hult et al. (2012), moreover, state that social influences are forces that people exert on the behavior of others. Kotler and Armstrong (2014) these are grouped into reference groups, families, cultures, roles, opinion leaders, social classes and peers. Consumer behavior is influenced by social factors, groups, families, social roles and their statuses.

Social influences are the degrees to which individuals perceive that others believe that they should use new systems. These influences are exerted when one person or group causes others to undergo changes in their feelings, attitudes, mind-sets, or in how they behave. This can take place either intentionally or unintentionally, and results from the interactions of individuals with others. Social influences include the influences of groups, parents and peers Malviya, etal (2013).Hoyer et al. (2013) Social influences are exerted when the information provided by groups and the media influences how individuals behave, and are therefore greatest when individuals are constantly in communication with others.

Likewise, Yusuf and Shafri (2013) assert that social influences affect consumer decisions when purchasing mobile phones, because people always communicate with others in their daily lives. Such people are categorized as being families, friends, relatives, colleagues, and so forth. Discussed below are the social factors that influence consumer brand preferences for mobile phones.

Reference groups influences on brand preference

According to Hult *et al.* (2012), reference groups are those with which individuals are identified, and whose values, attributes and behaviors they adopt. Reference groups are made up of people with whom individuals spend the most time, with individuals belonging to many different groups. There are three major types of reference group, which are: membership, aspirational and dissociative. Solomon (2013) agrees that reference groups are groups with which individuals are identified, and which can exercise important influences on their preferences and behaviors. Reference groups influence people in three distinct ways, which are: informational, utilitarian and value-expressive.

Reference groups are groups that serve as references for individuals when making decisions, and are therefore usually perceived as reliable sources of information Schiffman and Kanuk (2010:). In addition, reference groups are either actual or imaginary, and exert significant influences on the behaviors of individuals. Reference groups affect consumers in three ways, which are: informational, utilitarian and value- expressive. Reference groups can be large, formal, well-known organizations with frequent meetings, but can also be small, informal groups, for example, where friends are staying together. In the mobile phone industry, marketers directly influence these formal groups, because they are easy to identify and access Mohan (2013).

McDaniel *et al.* (2012), moreover, describe reference groups as formal or informal groups that influence the decisions and behaviors of consumers. Consumers usually prefer brands that identify them with particular reference groups, and learn from the consumer choices of such groups, which influence the brands they prefer. The influences of reference groups can be either direct or indirect. Direct reference groups are face-to-face groups, which directly affect the lives of people, and these can be either primary or secondary groups, where primary groups consist of people who interact regularly in informal face-to-face ways, such as families and friends, and secondary groups are those in which people communicate less frequently, and in more formal ways.

Social class influences on brand preference

Social classes are relatively standardized and stable divisions within societies made up of members who share the same principles and behaviors. Social classes possess different characteristics which allow for differentiation between them Kotler and Keller (2009). According to McDaniel et al. (2012), social classes are groups of people who are similar in their behaviors and statuses, and who regularly socialize amongst themselves, both formally and informally.

Societies are made up of different social classes, which are determined by the incomes, occupations and residential locations of their members. All social classes have their own standards, which dictate the behaviors of the individuals belonging to them. Social classes display separate product and brand preferences in many areas. People from different classes prefer different types of media, which influence their exposure to brands, and therefore affect which brands they prefer. Upper class consumers usually prefer reading magazines and books, whilst lower class consumers prefer watching television Kotler and Keller (2009).

In conclusion, social classes indicate the social statuses of consumers, and are important factors in affecting their interests. Consumers usually prefer brands matching their social statuses and classes, which demonstrate differences in product and brand preferences, including lifestyles. Consumers differ in their lifestyles due to their social statuses, for example when an individual is a professional post-graduate, their preferences will be different from those of Postgraduates (Schiffman and Kanuk 2010).

The authors cited agree that social classes are influential on the types of mobile phones that students prefer. This is because students wish to communicate certain social class statuses to those around them.

Cultural influences on brand preference

Cultures are accumulations of shared meanings, norms and traditions amongst people in societies. They can be considered as being those lifestyles passed on from one generation to the next, and are always changing Mohan (2013). Hult et al. (2012) similarly assert that cultures are accumulations of values, beliefs and concepts that communities use to cope with their lives and that are passed on to future generations. Cultures are the combined results of factors such as religions, languages, upbringings and educations. They are the traditions, values and attitudes of the societies in which consumers live. People acquire their preferences, perceptions and behaviors through their societal cultures, which are therefore essential factors affecting the preferences and behaviors of individuals Kotler and Keller (2012).

The cultures of consumers determine the priorities they place on owning or using different products and brands. Brands that provide benefits similar to those required by the members of cultures stand better chances of being preferred over other available brands Mohan (2013). In addition, cultures affect consumer behaviors and preferences. They influence communications, attitudes and values, which affect consumer preferences and behaviors, and determine how consumers rate certain brands over others available in the market. Consumers therefore usually prefer brands that resonate with their cultural priorities Solomon (2013).

Cultures have enormous impacts on how and why consumers prefer certain brands and products. They influence behaviors, because they permeate the daily lives of consumer, and therefore determine which products or brands consumers use. Cultures also influence the levels of satisfaction obtained by consumers from the brands they use Hult et al. (2012).The way consumers behave, and the brands they prefer, are very much influenced by their cultures, and studies agree that the usages and preferences of technological products such as mobile phones are therefore heavily influenced by them.

Family influences on brand preference

Families are where two or more people related by blood or adoption live together. Family members influence the choices and behaviors of consumers, and they are therefore very important and influential factors Schiffman and Kanuk (2010). According to Hoyer et al. (2013), families are groups of individuals living together who are related by birth, adoption or marriage. People in families play different roles, which influences their choices and the brands they prefer. Hong and McCullough (2010) agree that suggestions from family members have strong effects on the choices and decisions consumers make. Khan and Rohi (2013) further agree that recommendations by family are important factors influencing the mobile phone brands that consumers prefer.

According to Mohan (2013), families are considered the most important groups in society that influence consumer choices and decisions. Family members play a number of different roles, such as information gathering, decision making and purchasing. Therefore, families are the most influential primary social references for individuals, and have more direct effects on the behaviors of individuals, especially where students, for example, live with them. Families are less influential, however, when students live away from home (Kotler and Keller 2009:195).

Information gathering is when families influence how and where its members obtain information about products or brands. They provide such consumers with the information they need to make decisions regarding which brands to prefer. Influencing is where families play a role in influencing the evaluation of different brands by its members. Families play a role in influencing which brands consumers eventually prefer from the different brands available, and also affect when consumer purchases are made, since they buy the brands they prefer as they become available (Mohan 2013).

Families influence many aspects of consumer behavior. Family members usually share attitudes, values and opinions, which affect how its members spend their money. Family members who make decisions also influence the brands that consumers prefer Perreault et al. (2014) In addition, Lee (2014) states that the influence of families depends on the types of product being chosen. Moreover, youths and students are generally influenced in the brands they prefer by families, because most of them rely on their families financially. However, if students or youths no longer depend on families financially, then these have little or no influence on the choices they make. From the arguments given, a conclusion can be drawn that families exercise great influences on brand preferences. Such influences are greater when consumers live with their families, and also depend on the types of products being chosen.

Opinion leaders influences on brand preference

Opinion leaders are those who influence others in the decisions they make. Marketing managers usually attempt to persuade opinion leaders to purchase their brands first, so that they in turn influence others with their choices. Youths are generally key opinion leaders for technological products such as mobile phones McDaniel et al. (2012). In addition, Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) state that opinion leaders are those who informally influence the attitudes, behaviors, preferences and values of those consumers categorized as being opinion seekers.

According to Hoyer et al. (2013), opinion leaders are special sources of social influence. These leaders act as conduits for information between mass media and the opinions and behaviors of people. Opinion leaders therefore behave as important sources of information, and can influence the choices that other individuals make.

In addition, opinion leaders are people who influence the decisions of others by their opinions. Word-of-mouth (WOM) from opinion leaders affects consumer brand preferences. By contrast, if opinion leaders are not satisfied with products, they spread negative WOM, and this affects the brand choices that others make Perreault et al. (2014). Opinion leaders can, however, be celebrities, sports people or civic leaders, and their influence therefore depends on how popular, familiar and credibility they are Nagarkoti (2009).

2.2.5. The impact of marketing communications on brand preference

Marketing communications are the ways in which marketers persuade, inform and remind consumers about the brands they sell, and show how and why their products are used. Marketing communications include advertising, sales promotions, personal selling, public relations (PR), WOM and direct marketing Kotler and Keller (2012). McDaniel *et al.* (2012) additionally link marketing communications with the process of mass communication, where marketers publicize their products and brands to consumers using the various available media.

The impact of advertising on brand preference

Advertising is a form of impersonal paid communication, and is one of the ways in which well-known companies inform consumers about their products, since it can be used to communicate such messages to large numbers of people McDaniel et al. (2012). Similarly, Perreault et al. (2010) agree that advertising is a paid, non- personal form of communication used to pass product information to consumers. Advertising is included in media such as television, radio, newspapers, signs and magazines. Pride and Ferrell (2010) add that advertising has a number of benefits and reaches a large number of people, which makes it cost efficient.

Advertisements are also often repeated, which encourages the popularity and remembrance of brands or products.

Share and Salaimeh (2010) moreover agree that advertising plays an important role in influencing the decisions consumers make. These authors agree that television advertising helps consumers choose between the many brands available. Advertising influences brand preferences by creating brand awareness and stimulating brand choices. Kotwal, Gupta and Devi (2008) support the concept that television advertisements are the most effective in reaching the target markets of companies, with their study results showing that the largest number of respondents made their choices of given brands using the information provided by advertising. Advertising is one of the four major tools companies use to persuade consumers. It is a non-personal; paid form of communication distributed through available media, and is used to improve consumer brand preferences. It provides information, and gives consumers desires and reasons for preferring one brand over others available on the market (Kotler and Keller 2012). Advertising is a form of communication formulated to persuade consumers to prefer, choose or purchase one brand over others, and therefore influences consumer choices when selecting between brands. Marketers communicate their messages and try to connect with their consumers in order to influence them to prefer their brands Akhtar et al. (2013).

Arshad et al. (2015) states advertising is therefore a tool used to draw the attention of consumers to particular products, and is therefore used to popularize brands. It guides consumers in their brand choices, because they use advertising to obtain information and make choices. It provides detailed, up-to-date information on products, such as their benefits, prices and availability, which helps consumers learn more . Advertising is a major tool used to develop product awareness and attract consumers to brands. Yanwale et al. (2005) Advertising alone, however, does not make consumers prefer brands, but only attracts their attention towards them.

Sethi and Chawla (2014) states that advertising is a well-planned form of communication that uses both verbal and non-verbal elements to inform potential consumers of brands and products. If advertising is effectively performed, it leads to positive brand preferences by providing consumers with the knowledge of different brands they require when choosing products. It is a very important marketing tool that affects how consumers respond to mobile phones especially, because new brands of these are regularly being introduced to the market Sethi and Chawla (2014).

Through advertising, consumers are led to believe that brands are magical, and this convinces them that owning such brands gives them power. Advertising provides simple, anxiety-reducing answers to consumer problems by providing them with information about brands, which therefore influences consumer brand preferences. Advertising provides consumers with information that helps reduce their search times for products or brands, and also communicates brand availability. Solomon (2013) found that if advertising is too often repeated, however, this may result in it becoming ineffective, whereby consumers become so used to adverts that they no longer pay them any attention.

The impact of word-of-mouth (WOM) on brand preference

WOM is information obtained about brands or products that consumers communicate verbally to others. WOM usually originates with people with whom individuals are familiar, and this makes such information appear more reliable and truthful when compared to the messages obtained from other channels. There are two forms of WOM, and these are either negative or positive WOM. Negative WOM is the passing on of negative experiences with brands or products by consumers to others which affects their choices, whilst positive WOM is where consumers pass on favorable information about such brands and products Solomon (2013).

According to Pride and Ferrell (2010) WOM consists of personal information about brands and products that consumers share with each other. Due to the increase in the use of technology, WOM now takes place electronically, whereby information is posted on websites, and in blogs and other online forums. Joubert, (2010) adds that, with the growth in internet technology, WOM is no longer restricted to face-to-face communications, but also occurs online, which impacts greatly on how consumers behave.

In addition, WOM is an important component in creating publicity for brands and products, and consumers are much influenced by what that they hear, where they stay, where they work and the roles they play within their societies. The opinions consumers obtain from those around them therefore influence the choices they make Sethi and Chawla (2014).

WOM is powerful, and can influence many of the decisions consumers make. WOM is at its most powerful when the products or brands discussed are technological in nature, such as mobile phones Solomon (2013). According to Pride and Ferrell (2010), marketers who know the importance of WOM communication, and its impact on consumer choices, look for opinion leaders who they encourage to test their products in the hope that they will then spread positive WOM to other consumers. Apple, for example, uses this form of marketing

communication to promote its mobile phones and other products. WOM is therefore crucial, and the benefits associated with positive WOM include the uptake of brand preferences and purchases. Negative WOM should also, however, be taken into consideration to improve brand images.

According to Mokhlis and Yaakop (2012), the second most important factor affecting student mobile phone brand preferences is WOM. The reason for this finding is that the purchasing of mobile phones is characterized by a high degree of consumer risk aversion, due to their sought and experienced qualities. To manage the risks of buying high-risk products, consumers tend to rely on WOM recommendation as risk- relievers, or as risk-reduction strategies. The importance of WOM recommendations arises from their ability to assist consumers in making more informed choices.

The impact of sales promotions on brand preference

Sales promotions are activities that directly encourage consumers to prefer brands by providing them with the incentives to do so. Marketers spend more on sales promotions than on advertising Pride and Ferrell (2010). Furthermore, Chandranath (2015) agrees that sales promotions cost more money than advertising, and are now bigger business. Sales promotions include price reductions, free gifts, coupons, special displays and points of sale. Sales promotions tend to affect the decisions consumers make, and increase the use of certain brands than advertising, which brings mostly product awareness. Sales promotions use incentives and rewards to induce consumers to buy or prefer particular brands.

Mondal and Samantaray (2014) agree that sales promotions may increase sales for in the short term, but have little impact in convincing consumers to develop lasting brand preferences for promoted brands. Sales promotions such as advertising promote brand familiarity rather than brand preferences.

Similarly, DelVecchio, et al. (2007) adds that the types of sales promotions used also affect consumer brand preferences. Unexpected price cuts impact negatively on brand preferences, whilst coupons and premiums impact positively on these preferences. Omotayo (2011) asserts that sales promotions influence consumer brand preference decisions on the types of mobile phones they choose. Achumba (2002) considers sales promotions to be marketing tools that can be used, instead of personal selling, advertising and publicity, to encourage consumers to prefer or purchase certain products. Sales promotions are therefore direct stimuli that add extra importance to brands.

Mondal and Samantaray (2014) argue that sales promotions do not influence brand preferences, but simply prompt brand switching amongst consumers, especially those most affected by product prices. Chandranath (2015) agrees that sales promotions taking the form of price reductions present disadvantages, because they are damaging to brands in the long term. Brand values are thereby reduced and their images damaged, with some consumers only purchasing brands when they are promoted, and returning to their original brands when promotions are over.

Sales promotions cannot be conducted on an ongoing basis, because this would be unproductive, and should therefore be of short durations only. Sales promotions offer consumers reasons to prefer and purchase brands immediately, with their main aims being to inspire consumers to act now. Sales promotions provide consumers with incentives to make choices by increasing the value that brands offer. Some managers view sales promotions as ways of differentiating their brands from those of their competitors Darko (2012).

DelVecchio et al. (2007), however, argue that sales promotions performed for unpopular brands are more harmful than for popular brands. Furthermore, discounted price sales promotions can lead to negative brand preferences and poor product confidence, because they redirect consumer attention to financial incentives in encouraging them to switch brands. They also increase consumer price sensitivities, and make quality criteria less significant for them when preferring brands. Sales promotions can lead to major decreases in brand preferences and loyalties by their double-edged influences on consumer behaviors, although this also depends on the levels of consumer dedication to mobile phone brands.

Some researchers argue that sales promotions have no effect on brand preferences and loyalties. Even if brands are of high quality, and their competitors offer better products and support services, sales promotions will yield poor results. Sam and Buabeng (2011) sates that consumers develop brand preferences and loyalties over time, and this is where the conclusion that sales promotions have little direct influence on product sales and brand preferences can be made

2.3. Consumer Buying Decision Process

Consumer buying decision process consists of a series of processes or steps, beginning with a felt need or want arising from either internal or external services and terminating with a confirmation of the decision. The need may be an urgent or compelling one, demanding immediate satisfaction; or it may be one for which the satisfaction can be delayed or postponed. In any event a tension is created which sooner or later must be quit. In order to

further understand the decision making process study has taken the consumer buying decision making process model from David Jobber (2007).

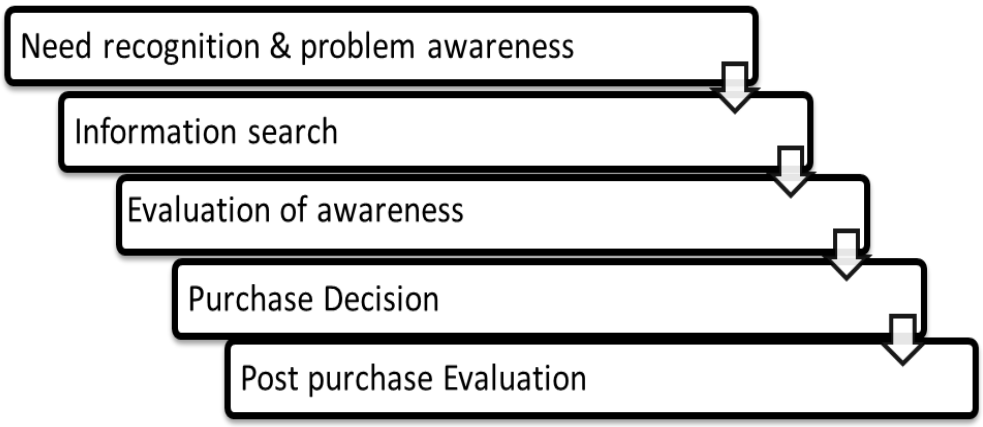


Figure 1 Consumer decision making process, Jobber D. (2007)

Need recognition: Accordingly to Jobber D. (2007) the need recognition is essentially functional and recognition may take place over a period of time. The study select and use "mobile" is the basic need students need to run in daily activities.

Information search: the information search began with the identification of alternatives ways of gathering information about the product consumer intend to purchase (Jobber. D.2007). the information was collected from the respondents.

Evaluation of alternatives: Consumers evaluate or assess the various alternatives, using the information they have at hand to come to a decision (Jobber.D.2007.p 120). The study analyzed how the various criteria they preferred to select the alternatives mobile. The various criteria are the factors that influences consumer to take the decision. The factors are the product price, Brand popularity, social influences and Marketing communication.

Purchase decision: Consumers buy the product they have chosen. This was analyzed using which brand selected by the consumers.

Post-purchase behavior: consumers use the product and evaluate their satisfaction levels with it. They study assess whether the consumers were satisfied by the brand price and purchased mobile phone function or not.

2.4. Empirical Reviews

A variety of studies conducted by many authors have emphasized on different factors that influence consumers in forming their own brand preference towards mobile phone brands.

2.4.1. Brand preference between Apple and Samsung Smartphone (University of Mälardalen Högskolan)

Maha Al-azzawi and Mac Anthony (2012), studied student's brand preference between Apple and Samsung Smartphone with a sample size of 214 students from the University of Mälardalen Högskolan in Sweden. Through quantitative research approach, they found that price, brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand identity and satisfaction are the most important factors affecting Smartphone brand preference. In conclusion, they stated that each of the brand equity and identity dimensions of Apple Smartphone when compared to Samsung brand equity and identity dimensions reveals that Apple has relatively high strong brand equity and brand identity than Samsung.

2.4.2. Brand preference on mobile purchase among students in Roskilde University

Ramesh Rijal (2013), explored brand preference on mobile purchase among students. The purpose of the research was to analyze the student preference on mobile purchase among the students of Roskilde University obtained from the survey of 100 students. The study analyzed which criteria were used by students most for decision making of purchase of mobile phones. The study came to a conclusion that, Technical criteria (reliability, durability, performance) and Economic Criteria (price) played a very important role in brand preference. In addition, internet and friends were the main sources of information about the branded mobile phones.

2.4.3. How a brand's equity drives Uppsala University students brand preference within the Swedish Smartphone market

Sara Djerv & Zeina Malla (2012) explored how a brand's equity drives Uppsala University students brand preference within the Swedish Smartphone market. The study used a sample size of 400 Uppsala University students with a qualitative approach adopted through semi-structured interviews. The main findings suggest that brand preferences within the target group are driven by brand's equity. However, not all the factors that constitute brands equity appear to be equally influential on brand preference, as the most influential factor emerge as perceived quality. Perceived quality in these findings consists of durability and functionality.

In order to form perceptions on quality, awareness of the brand is a prerequisite and thereafter, clear associations linked to the brand. Brand awareness, brand associations and perceived quality are the result of the prior formed brand perceptions. The findings implicate that the

main building blocks of brand perceptions within this market are what others in the respondent's surroundings think and discuss about the Smartphone and not the Smartphone brand itself, and to a lesser extent the influence of advertising.

2.4.4. Impacts on the selection of mobile phones mobile phone users in Mauritius

Thanika Devi Juwaheer et al (2013) explored the various factors which impact on the selection of mobile phones through a survey instrument administered to 150 young mobile phone users in Mauritius. The various constructs such as branding, pricing, mobile phone features, lifestyle, and demographic variables such as age groups and gender have been conceptualized into an integrated framework to investigate the factors which can affect the selection of mobile phones. The analysis has revealed that young customers have identified pricing as a key determinant while selecting mobile phones. The results of the analysis have also suggested that top of mind awareness and perceived brand values are key factors contributing towards mobile phone selection. Results also unveiled mobile phone features and young consumers" lifestyle impacting on mobile phone selection. Further examination of the inferential analysis have also depicted that significant relationships exist between mobile phone selection and the demographics of the young consumer segment.

2.4.5. Consumer's behavior which influence their brand choice towards mobile phones in Addis Ababa.

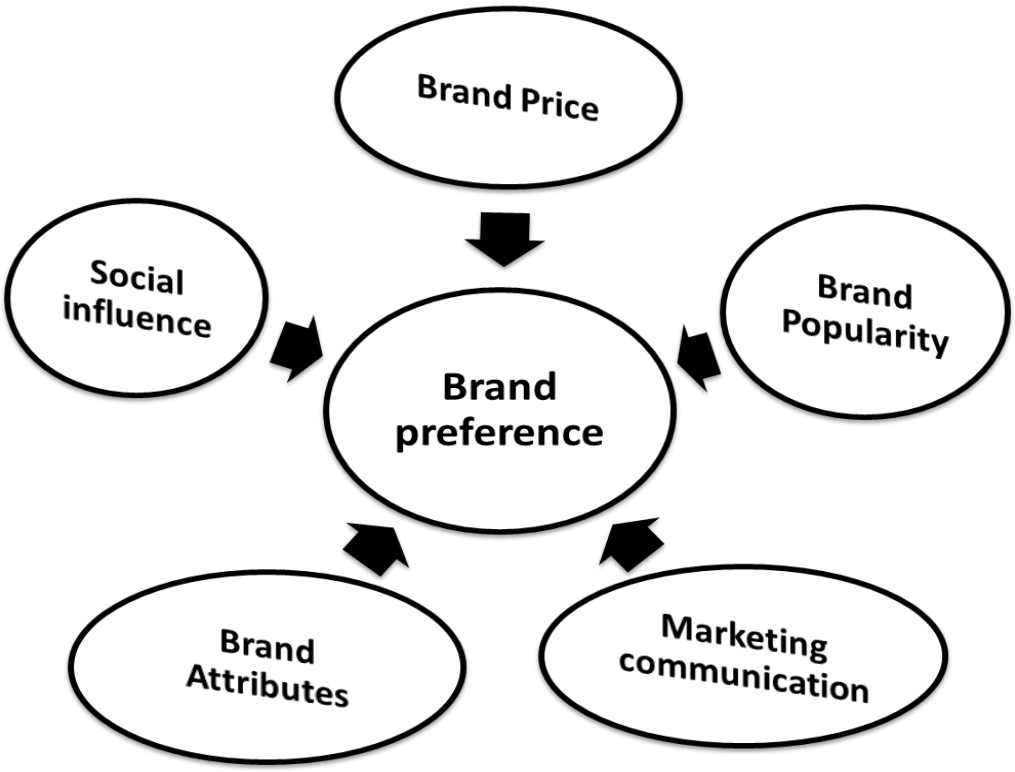
Solomon Alene (2013) studied the most influential factors which influenced the behavior of consumers in their brand choice towards mobile phones in Addis Ababa. A sample of 254 individual mobile phone users was taken by convenience sampling technique. Eight factors namely; new technological features, price, product attributes, after sale service, brand, media, and influence of others, were selected and analyzed. The study concluded that new technological features, product attributes and price as the most important factors influencing the behavior of consumers in their mobile phone choice. The study also stated that brand familiarity, advertising and recommendation from others as the least important factors in affecting consumer's choice in selecting mobile phones. The study also showed that the importance of the factors identified as most influential were the same regardless of gender and age category of consumers.

In summary, all previews literature reviewed in this chapter indicate the factors that affect mobile phone brand preference. Thus, mobile phone brand preference is affected by brand equity elements such as Brand popularity, Product attributes, Price, Social influences and marketing communications. Accordingly, this research is designed in line with these variables.

2.5. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The review of literature, as discussed in the preceding sections, gave the basis for the conceptualization of the research, which is presented diagrammatically in the conceptual framework (Figure 2). Two types of variables were discussed, namely dependent and independent variables. Brand preferences show dependencies upon 5 independent variables, namely brand popularity, brand attributes product prices, social influences and marketing communications.

Figure 2: Conceptual framework for the study



Source: A conceptual model for Brand Mobile Purchase (Own Source).

2.5.1. Justification of the Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is the foundation on which the entire research is based. It is a logically developed, described, and elaborated network of associations among variables that have been identified through such processes as observations and literature survey. These variables are relevant to the problem situations. Sekaran (1992). The study identified some variable which is shown in the above figure from the literature review, and then integrates these variables on one of the components of the consumer decision making process. These variables are used in order to design question in survey and conclusion of the report based on the variables.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1. Research Area

This study was done in Saint marry university Mexico campus in Main campus located 300 meters below the Federal Police Headquarters in Mexico square houses the School of Graduate Studies, the headquarters of the university and the college of open and distance learning. In regular basis regular students there are 1123 students with in 10 departments.

3.2. Research Design

The research design that was used for this study is a descriptive research design. Mcnabb (2002) states that in order to develop snapshot of a particular situation, descriptive research was used it involves large samples which are used to give description of an event or define attitude, options or behaviors that are measured or observed in a particular environment. Ronald F. Bush & Alvin C. Burns (2014), found that Descriptive research is undertaken to describe answers to questions of who, what, where, when, and how. Descriptive research is also desirable when we wish to project a study's findings to a larger population. If a descriptive study's sample is representative, the findings may be used to predict some variable of interest such as sales. Leedy and Ormrod (2014) described that cross-sectional studies are where research data is collected at a single time. They are quick and cheap to perform, and their results are easy to analyze. Cross-sectional studies cannot, however, measure changes that may occur over time This method was implemented because of its simplicity, and also because it is considered most appropriate for the study's subject matter.

The most distinguishing feature of this method is that the researcher had no control over the variables. Since the objective of the study is to find the brand preference of SMU postgraduate students, the descriptive design is the most appropriate.

3.2.1. Data Type and Source

Both primary and secondary source of data was used in this study. Primary data is collected by the administration of close ended questionnaire to the identified respondents. Secondary data relevant to this study collected from publications including journals, books, researches and various materials. This secondary data also used to construct the basic framework of the study.

3.2.2. Target population

Hair *et al.* (2013) define populations as entire groups of elements in which researchers are interested, and which can be used in their studies. Elements within populations can take

many forms, such as people, products or organizations. Study populations are defined by sets of common characteristics which their members share, and which are related to research problems and objectives Zikmund and Babin (2010). (Hult et al. 2012) states that populations include all units or elements of interest those are relevant to research studies. The target population for this study consisted of Postgraduate students at SMU; According to saint marry university registrar office (2018) where the total student population is 1123.

3.2.3. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

In order to select the sample size out of the total population of SMU regular Postgraduate program which is 1123 students, convenience sampling was used. Convenience sampling which is a non-probability sampling technique was used by administrating prepared questionnaires. Bryman, (2008) states that even though there were some risks in adopting a convenience sampling technique such as a questionable representativeness, hence questionable credibility of the findings,

Burns and Bush (2014) states non-probability sampling involves selecting samples in non-statistical manners that are also not based on randomness or chance. Samples are selected rather by means of inherently biased selection processes based on the knowledge, intuition and convenience of researchers. In addition, (Hult et al. 2012) states non-probability sampling is a method in which members of populations are not aware of the possibility of being selected. This was therefore the most appropriate sampling method for this study, because it gives a fair representation of the target population.

Given a population of 1123 SMU regular Postgraduate program students, a sample of 291 students were chosen for the study. The sample size is determined using the table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) using the formula for sample size determination when the population size is known

Table 1: Regular Postgraduate program students for academic year 2017/2018

Department	No of student	Calculation	Sample size
MBA General management	420	(420/1123) 291	108.8334817
MBA HRM	15	(15/1123) 291	3.886910062
Marketing management	189	(189/1123) 291	48.97506679
Project management (PM)	132	(132/1123) 291	34.20480855
Computer science	72	(72/1123) 291	18.6571683
Quality and production management	28	(28/1123) 291	7.25556545

Agricultural economics	15	(15/1123) 291	3.886910062
MBA in accounting & finance	187	(187/1123) 291	48.45681211
MBA in impact	36	(36/1123) 291	9.32858415
Social work	29	(29/1123) 291	7.514692787
Total	1123		291

Source: SMU registrar office

3.3. Data Collection

One of the most important research instruments for collecting primary data is the questionnaire, which was used for the purpose of this study. Structured close ended questionnaires were distributed to SMU regular Postgraduate program students. The choice of using pre-coded close ended questionnaire was based on Fisher's view on structured questionnaire. According to Fisher (2007), if the researcher wants to quantify the research material, then it is best to use a structured approach. He further noted that in order to compare the views and experiences of a great many people it is easier if pre-coded approach is used. Given that this study aims to compare the brand preference of university students on mobile phone using structured close ended questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed in a way of clear, brief and understandable to the respondents. It was also cover the relevant aspects of the model used. According to Fisher (2007) it is recommended to keep the questionnaire as short as possible and give it a logical and sequential structure so that the respondent can easily see what the questionnaire is about and can follow its themes as they go through them. The questionnaires have three parts. The first part of the questionnaire contains and explained general information of the question purpose to the respondent, the second part focus on basic information on the students and their mobile phone and finally the third part consisted of variables that measured the factors that are considered to make up students‟ brand preference.

The most important part of the questionnaire is part three that could reflect the students affecting factors on brand preference of mobile phone brands and is divide in 5, based on the Specific objective of the research and it was measured using a five point Likert scale.

3.4. Data Analysis

Analysis of the primary data was collected through close ended questionnaires, and then analysis of the variables was presented in reliable manner. To ensure reliability of this research, the questionnaire was designed to measure the concepts in the theoretical model in a consistent way. This could imply that the research study can be conducted by other

researchers to arrive at the same findings. The validity of the research is concerned with the measurement of the data collection process implemented regarding the quality of the study. It outlines the evaluation of the quality of both the primary and secondary data used in the research. To ensure that validity of this study, each question in the questionnaire was designed to represent the concepts that are used in the conceptual framework of the study.

The findings of the study were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 & 25 program. This program assists in generating descriptive data analysis which can measure frequencies, percentages and graphic representation that was used in presenting the data correctly as possible. According to Bruce Wrenn et al, (2002) Marketing researchers may find that they seek to know the association between two variables that are ordinally (i.e., rank ordered) rather than interval or ratio scaled. The feedback of the respondents for the variables indicated below were measured on five point Likert scale with measurement value 1= strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

3.4.1. Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics concern the development of certain indices from the raw data C.R Kothari, (2004). Descriptive research is pre-planned and structured. It is typically based on large representative samples. A descriptive research design specifies the methods for selecting the sources of information and for collecting data from those sources. Descriptive statistics are the most efficient means of summarizing the characteristics of large sets of data. Descriptive statistics, moreover, indicate the actual characteristics of samples. Thus, calculating mean and standard deviations to "describe" or profile samples is a commonly applied descriptive statistical analysis approach. In this research, findings from the data were analyzed and present using tables, charts and descriptive statistics, such as percentage and response frequency graphs. Frequency counts are the number of times certain values occur in datasets, for example the number of respondents giving a particular answer.

3.5. Pre-testing

A pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted in to order to make any improvements required. Questionnaire pre-testing involves performing surveys on small, representative groups of respondents before final surveys are launched. The survey tool is also pre-tested. This was to ensure that all responses to the questions were not misunderstood. Their purpose is to expose problems and errors, so that corrective changes and adjustments can be made before questionnaires are properly administered. Welman et al. (2005) Furthermore, when new

measuring instruments are developed, it is important to test them on small samples before being administered to larger populations.

A pre-test of the questionnaire for this study was conducted to ensure validity. Pre- testing the research measuring instrument is important in determining if there were any problems with it before administering it to the larger sample. Pre-testing was conducted with a limited number of representatives from the targeted population, and any mistakes detected were corrected before final distribution of questionnaires. The pre-test for this study involved administering of questionnaires for 20 respondents of Postgraduate students at St. marry university.

3.5.1. Validity

Aaker, et al. (2013) validity is the ability of the measuring instruments used to measure what they are supposed to In addition, Leedy and Ormrod (2014) agree that the validity of measurement instruments is the degree to which they measure what is supposed to be measured. Researchers attempt to provide such validity in their measuring instruments in a variety of ways, which include:

- Face validity is the extent to which the measuring instruments used are perceived to measure certain characteristics. Because this is a subjective form of judgment, researchers cannot rely entirely on its veracity Leedy and Ormrod (2014). In addition, face validity is the logical scale used to reflect what is intended to be measured Zikmund and Babin 2007);
- Content validity is the extent to which measurement instruments represent samples in the areas of content being measured Leedy and Ormrod (2014);
- Construct validity, which is the level to which study instruments measure characteristics that cannot directly be observed, but are believed to exist based on how people behave Leedy and Ormrod (2014).

Content validity was guaranteed for this study by ensuring that questions used in the questionnaires were in line with the research objectives and literature reviews. Face validity for the research was ensured by consulting a supervisor about the questionnaire before administering it to the sample population. In addition, the questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure that its questions were well- structured, and that all respondents could understand and answer them. Doing such validity check helps the researcher to make some modifications in the

questioners. Such modifications are done to make clear for the respondents in the actual survey to clearly see what was being asked and so they can answer correctly.

3.5.2. Reliability

A Cronbach's coefficient alpha test was conducted with SPSS, which was therefore used to calculate reliability, since this is the most common measure of reliability for questionnaires Welman *et al. (*2005). A rule of thumb for interpreting alpha for dichotomous questions (i.e. questions with two possible answers) or Likert scale questions is:

Table 3: Cronbach's alpha figure

Cronbach's alpha	Internal consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

This indicates an acceptable degree of consistent scoring for these sections of the research instrument.

Table 2: Research instrument reliability test

No	Items	Question Number	Cronbach's Alpha test results
1	Biographical data	1-6	-------
2	Brand popularity	7-9	0.711
3	Product attributes	10-14	0.718
4	Prices	15-18	0.708
5	Social influences	19-23	0.737
6	Marketing communications	24-28	0.709

3.6. Ethical considerations

One of the main ethical issues of this research is the level of voluntary involvement of the respondents. The efficiency of information collected in the primary data collection phase depends on the availability of data to each respondent. Relevant data might be collected due to the confidential nature of the data.

This study was done with the ethical standards of academic research. The following code of ethics followed during the research process:

- Permission was obtained from the St. Marry University in order to conduct the interviews.
- Each respondent was informed of the purpose of the study.
- Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality.

- The questionnaire was not contain any questions unfavorable to the self-interest of respondents as per most of them answers them easily while the researcher was examining them when they fill.
- Respondents was not forced to complete the questionnaire
- The results of the research was given to the department of marketing management

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYZING

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter both results and discussion are intensively discussed from the analysis output and literatures reviewed. Descriptive statistics together with inferential statistics have been appropriately applied in order to come up with an overall better result of the research studied. The general information and survey questions results are plainly discussed here under by applying frequencies, percentages, correlations, factor analysis and multiple regression outputs. The questionnaire was the main tool used to collect data, and it was distributed to St. marry Postgraduate students. The data collected from questionnaire responses were analyzed with the SPSS Version 20 software. The results for the data collected are presented as descriptive statistics in the form of graphs, cross-tabulations and other figures.

4.2. Response rate

A total of 291 questionnaires were administered to students at St. marry Postgraduate students for the purposes of this study, and all questionnaires were valid as completed. Therefore, a 100% response rate was achieved.

4.3. Research instrument

The research instrument consisted of 28 items, with measurements being made at nominal or ordinal levels. This questionnaire was divided into six sections which measured several different themes Reliability is determined by making several measurements of responses to the same subject. Reliability coefficients of 0.70 or higher are considered to be "acceptable" Andrew, et al. (2011). The Cronbach's Alpha scores for all items presented in the questionnaires (Table 5) reflect that reliability scores for each section approximated or exceeded the recommended Cronbach's Alpha test value of 0.70.

4.4. Biographical data

This section summarizes the biographical characteristics of respondents.

4.4.1. Age and gender

The ratio of male & female respondents was (55 % and 45% respectively). In the age of 25 & below Category, 66.67% were male, and 33.33% were female, from this category Males and female cover (4.8 % & 9.6 % respectively) total sample group. From the second category which is from 26 up to 32 age females have 45.7 % and males have 54.3 %, with this category also forming 16.5 % female and 19.6 male of the total sample group. In the third category of age starting from 33 up to 39 years 47.9 % are females and 52.1 are males and this category shares 32.3 % of total sample respondents individually females and males have 15.5 % & 16.8 % respectively. From the last category which is above 40 years

of age females share 48 % & males share 52 % this category contribute 17.2 % of total sample respondents.

Table 3: Gender and age distributions of respondents

			Gender		Total
			Female	Male	
Age (years)	below & 25	Count	14	28	42
		% within Age	33.33	66.67	100.00
		% within Gender	10.69	17.5	28.19
		% of Total	3.7	6.0	9.7
	26-32	Count	48	57	105
		% within Age	45.7	54.3	100.00
		% within Gender	36.6	35.6	72.27
		% of Total	16.5	19.6	36.1
	33-39	Count	45	49	94
		% within Age	47.9	52.1	100.0
		% within Gender	34.4	37.4	71.8
		% of Total	26.3	23.4	49.6
	above 40	Count	24	26	50
		% within Age	48.0	52.0	100.0
		% within Gender	18.3	16.3	34.6
		% of Total	14.0	10.2	24.1
Total		Count	131	160	291
		% within Age	45.00%	55.00%	100.00%
		% within Gender	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		% of Total	45.00%	55.00%	100.00%

(Survey data, 2019)

4.4.2. Respondents department at the University

The study shows that 31.3% of the respondents were MBA General Management students and are the largest group in terms of department. Students from MBA Accounting and finance are the second by 25.1 % then Marketing management by 17.2 %, Students from project management have 10.7 % this are the highest (have 2 digit percentage share) the rest percentage (15.7 %) was taken by CS ,MBAIM, QPM, SW, AE, MBAHRM by having 7.2 % ,2.4% , 2.1%, 1.7%, 14%, 1 % respectively.

Table 8 departments of the respondents

Your Specialization in St. Marry University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	MBAGM	91	31.3	31.3	31.3
	MBAHRM	3	1.0	1.0	32.3
	MM	50	17.2	17.2	49.5
	PM	31	10.7	10.7	60.1
	CS	21	7.2	7.2	67.4
	QPM	6	2.1	2.1	69.4
	AE	4	1.4	1.4	70.8
	MBA A &F	73	25.1	25.1	95.9
	MBAIM	7	2.4	2.4	98.3
	SW	5	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	291	100.0	100.0	

(Survey data, 2019)

4.5. Mobile phone brand ownership

The greatest rate of brand was shown from study results **(Table 8)** is Samsung with a percentage of 31.6 %, the second highest is iPhone by 19.2 % then HTC by 14 % then HTC by 11 % then Nokia and Techno score almost equal by 10 % & 10.3 % respectively 8.2 % is found for LG brand and next Huawei by 4.8% also Alcatel have 3.1 % finally respondents that owned other brands, indicating that most of the respondents owned mobile phone brands that were not included on the list provided.

Table 4: Mobile phone brand ownership data

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Samsung	92	31.6	31.6	31.6
Iphone	56	19.2	19.2	50.9
Nokia	29	10	10	60.8
HTC	32	11	11	71.8
LG	24	8.2	8.2	80.1
Alcatel	9	3.1	3.1	83.2
Techno	30	10.3	10.3	93.5
Huawei	14	4.8	4.8	98.3
Other	5	1.7	1.7	100
Total	291	100	100	

(Survey data, 2019)

4.6. Price ranges for mobile phones

Students were asked the price ranges of the mobile phone they purchased was discussed here. The results indicated most (41.2 %) of the respondents, purchased mobile phones with a price range of 6501 & above and, 24.1% purchased mobile phones price between 5501 up to 6500, 13.7% purchased in the price range between 2001 up to 3500, and at 12 % purchased phones with price ranges of 2000 & less. This shows that most of the students were not price-sensitive when buying mobile phones.

Table 5: Price ranges for mobile phones

Price range of mobile phone you purchased.				
Price ranges	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2000 & less	35	12	12	12
2001 - 3500	40	13.7	13.7	25.8
3501 - 5500	26	8.9	8.9	34.7
5501 - 6500	70	24.1	24.1	58.8
Above & 6501	120	41.2	41.2	100
Total	291	100	100	

(Survey data, 2019)

4.7. Levels of mobile phone brand preferences

The respondents select's future potential brand preferring in the survey (Table 10); Samsung was ranked the most preferred brand by the students, with a 43.3 %. iPhone scored 18.6 % and HUAWEI 7.6 %, others brands was preferred by 7.2 % that were not specified, LG and techno have equal rate by having 6.2 % each of them, ALCATEL mobile phone brands that were not specified has 5.8 %. Lastly HTC mobile phone brands have 5.2 %.

Selected brands	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SAMSUNG	126	43.3	43.3	43.3
iPhone	54	18.6	18.6	61.9
HTC	15	5.2	5.2	67
LG	18	6.2	6.2	73.2
ALCATEL	17	5.8	5.8	79
TECHNO	18	6.2	6.2	85.2
HUAWEI	22	7.6	7.6	92.8
Other	21	7.2	7.2	100
Total	291	100	100	

(Survey data, 2019)

Table 6: Levels of mobile phone brand preferences

4.8. Motivations for mobile phone brand preferences

As it was shown in Table 11 Mobile preference by their own choices has the highest percent (46.7%) from the respondents, 24.4 % were motivated by other factors, 21.3 % were referred brands by referrals, and 7.6 % of the respondent's motivation is because of advertisement.

Motivations to prefer a brand

Items	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Advertisement	22	7.6	7.6	7.6
Referrals	62	21.3	21.3	28.9
Own choice	136	46.7	46.7	75.6
Other	71	24.4	24.4	100.0
Total	291	100.0	100.0	

(Survey data, 2019)

Table 7: Motivations for mobile phone brand preferences

4.9. Factors that influence brand preferences

This section shows scoring patterns of respondents across the variables investigated in each questions. To measure levels of agreement & disagreement, the respondent chooses three categories which are positive, neutral and negative. As a negative (Strongly disagree and disagree) and on the positive side (Strongly agree and agree) the researcher also uses neutral as one selection in the questions. Levels of disagreement, or negative statements, were combined to show only a single "Disagree" category, and a similar procedure was followed for levels of agreement, or positive statements by using "Agree". The scoring patterns are presented first using summarized percentages for variables making up each section, and are then further analyzed.

4.9.1. Brand Popularity

This section deals with the popularity of mobile phones brand, and whether it can be considered true that respondents associate their purchasing choices with product quality. The first objective of this study was to determine the relationships that existed between brand popularity and mobile phone brand preferences. According to Negi and Pandey (2013:131), consumers filter out unknown brands in their choices, and prefer mostly known brands. Consumers prefer brands they associate with their own self-concepts, and brand popularity is therefore also used to evaluate prestige.

The scoring patterns obtained for brand popularity as a factor influencing consumer brand preferences are presented (Table 12), displaying that the average level of brand popularity statement agreement from study participants was 51.73%, whilst approximately a quarter of the respondents, at 30.68%, disagreed with these statements. Responses for brand popularity statements therefore showed greater degrees of agreement than disagreement.

Table 8: Brand popularity scoring patterns

Brand Popularity	DISAGREE		NEUTRAL		AGREE	
	COUNT	%	COUNT	%	COUNT	%
I consider brand popularity when choosing a mobile phone.	95	32.60	52	17.87	144	49.48
I associate brand popularity with mobile phone quality.	76	26.12	40	13.75	175	60.14
I associate brand popularity with the choice i make.	97	33.33	61	21.0	133	45.70

(Survey data, 2019)

I consider brand popularity when choosing a mobile phone

Around half of respondents (49.48%) agreed that they considered brand popularity when choosing mobile phones, whereas (32.60%) disagreed with this statement. This agree with the literature The more popular a brand, the more consumers feel that they can trust that brand, which thereby influences consumer brand preferences (Lin, Cheng and Hung 2011:5911).

I associate brand popularity with mobile phone quality

The highest percent (60.14%) of respondents agreed that they associated brand popularity with mobile phone quality, while 26.12% disagreed (Table 12). Sardar (2012) asserts that unpopular and unbranded products are usually considered of insignificant quality, which consumers believe they cannot depend on, compared to those mobile phones that are branded and popular. In addition, Schiffiman and Kanuk (2010), consumers rely mostly on well- known brands as an indication of their quality.

I associate brand popularity with the choices I make

The study results (Table 12) indicate that 45.7% of the respondents agreed that they associated brand popularity with the choices they made, where as 33.33% disagreed with this. Branded products have a greater place in the minds of consumers when making choices regarding which brands they prefer. Rijal (2013) suggests that students do not choose unpopular brands because they want to create self-images, but because they believe that by

choosing popular branded mobile phones, they reduce the risks they might otherwise encounter.

Generally because of most respondents agree with the factors we can include that brand popularity have an effect on preferring brand.

4.9.2. Price of mobile phones

This section deals with the influences of prices on mobile phone brand choices, since the second objective of this study was to ascertain the influences of these prices on student mobile phone brand choices. Mokhlis and Yaakop (2012), in their study of consumer- choice criteria in mobile phone selection, also find that price is an important factor influencing student brand choices. The scoring patterns from study respondents for statements on mobile phone prices are indicated (Table 13).

Table 9: Price scoring patterns

Price	Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
	Count	Percent (%)	Count	Percent (%)	Count	Percent (%)
Price affects the mobile phone brand I prefer.	175	60	29	10	87	30
Price is important when I choose a mobile phone.	90	30.9	44	15	157	54
The mobile phone is good value for the money paid.	81	27.8	63	21.6	147	50.5
I associate mobile phone price with quality of the phone.	136	46.7	46	15.8	109	37.5

(Survey data, 2019)

Price affects the mobile phone brand I prefer

Respondents were asked if prices affected the mobile phone brands they preferred, with the results (Table 13), indicating that 60% of respondents disagreed, and 30 % agreed, with this statement. Khan and Rohi (2013) furthermore emphasize that price is the most important factor affecting consumer mobile phone brand choices, especially amongst youth, for whom this is the key attracting factor. however, argue that prices do not affect consumer choices or preferences of mobile phone brands, which become less contributing factors as consumers change from being lower to higher income earners.

Price is important when I choose a mobile phone

The response for that price was important when choosing mobile phones, the study results showed that of the respondents, 30.9% Disagreed, and 54% agreed, with this statement. Khan

and Rohi (2013) emphasize that prices are the most important factors affecting the mobile phone brand choices that consumers make, especially for youths for whom these are key attracting factors. In this study most of the respondents are independent regarding income.

The mobile phone is good value for the money paid

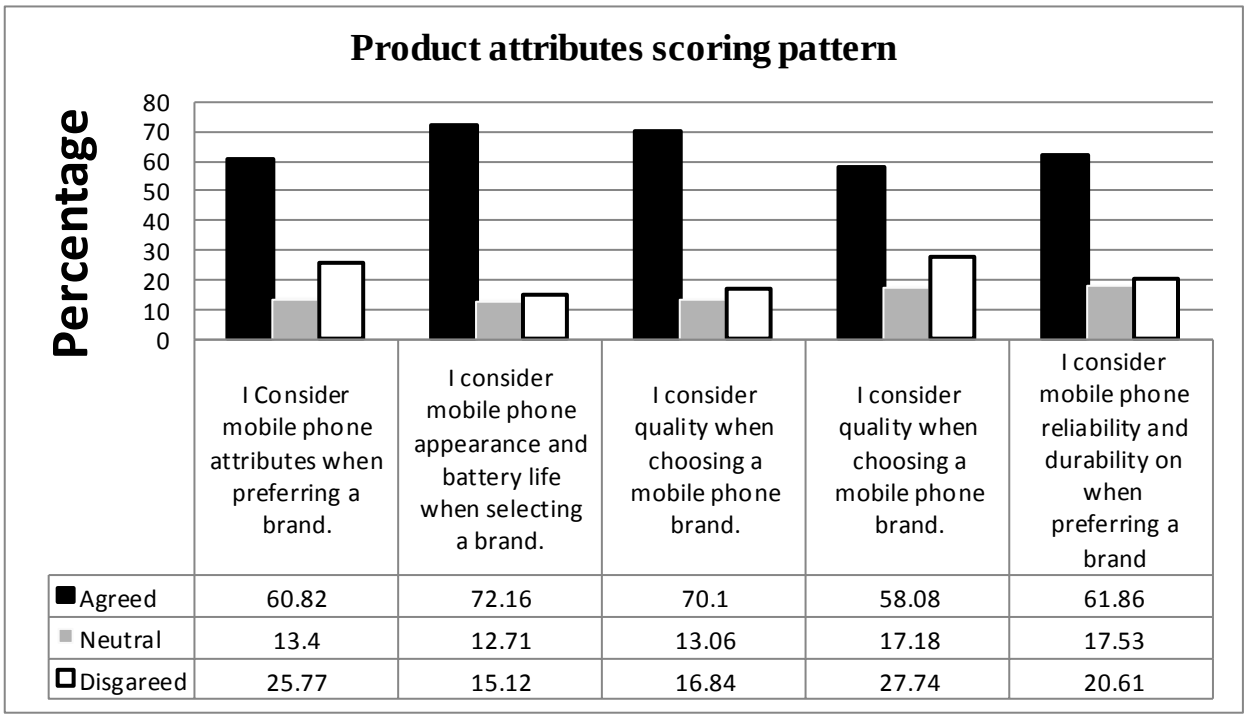
As indicated (Table 13), over half of respondents (50.5 %) agreed, and 27.8 % disagreed, that their mobile phones were good value for the monies paid. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2010), consumers usually perceive prices as indicative of the value brands offer. The ways in which consumers perceive prices are therefore very important, and affect the choices they make. Consumers want to pay prices they feel are equivalent to the value offered by mobile phone brands. For example, IPhones are perceived to be highly priced, because consumers believe if they pay high prices, they will be receiving good value for their money.

I associate mobile phone price with quality of the phone

The study results (Table 13) show that 37.5% of respondents associate mobile phone prices with the quality of products, and 46.7% did not. Prices are the first things that consumers notice, and these can create initial impressions of the quality of brands or products. Consumers therefore deduce perceptions of quality from prices. Khan and Rohi (2013) assert that prices affect the perceptions consumers have of brands, and that these are used to indicate the quality of brands, which influences the decisions that consumers make. Teng (2009), however, states that some consumers prefer lower priced products, whilst others are more concerned about brand types and quality and are prepared to pay prices that are higher. The prices of products therefore impact on consumer perceptions of the quality of the technology mobile phones use.

4.9.3. Product attributes

This section discusses the influence of product attributes on consumer choices. The 4th objective of this study was to investigate the extent to which product attributes influenced student choices of mobile phone brands. According to Gwin and Gwin (2003), product attributes are features that products either have or do not have, and which are either intrinsic or extrinsic. Attributes can have either lesser or greater impacts on mobile phone brand preferences. The scoring patterns for the influences of product attributes on student consumer choices are also illustrated (Figure 5).



(Survey data, 2019)

Figure 4: Product attributes scoring pattern

I consider mobile phone attributes when preferring a brand

As illustrated (Figure 5), the majority of respondents (60.82%) agreed that they considered mobile phone attributes when preferring brands and 25.77% disagreed. According to Zhu *et al.* 2010, consumers make choices according to the functionality or performance of product attributes, and the importance that each these has to them. Product attributes are, moreover, important in understanding the preferences that consumers form for mobile phones, since they influence their product and brand perceptions.

I consider mobile phone appearance and battery life when selecting a brand

The findings (Figure 5) indicate that 72.16% of respondents agreed that they considered mobile phone appearances and battery life when selecting brands, whilst 15.12 % disagreed. These results corresponded with those of Zhou and Shanturkovska (2011), which indicate that over three -quarters of respondents consider the durability of mobile phone batteries to be their most important characteristics. Physical appearances impact consumer brand preferences, since they are the first aspect seen, and also influence consumer perceptions of the other features of brand designs, such as colors, shapes and sizes. Physical appearances influence the overall impressions that consumers have of brands, and also provide consumers with information that manufacturers try to communicate, which influences their brand preference decisions Blijlevens et al. (2009).

I consider quality when choosing a mobile phone brand.

Respondents were asked whether they considered quality when choosing mobile phone brands. The results (Figure 5) show that 70.1% agreed, and 16.84%, disagreed with this statement. The higher the quality of brands, the greater their chances of being preferred from amongst those available on the market (Dziwornu 2013) .This is supported by Liu (2002:43), who states that consumers prefer the quality they perceive in mobile phone brands they have used before, or which have been recommended by families and friends.

I consider the user-friendliness of mobile phone brands

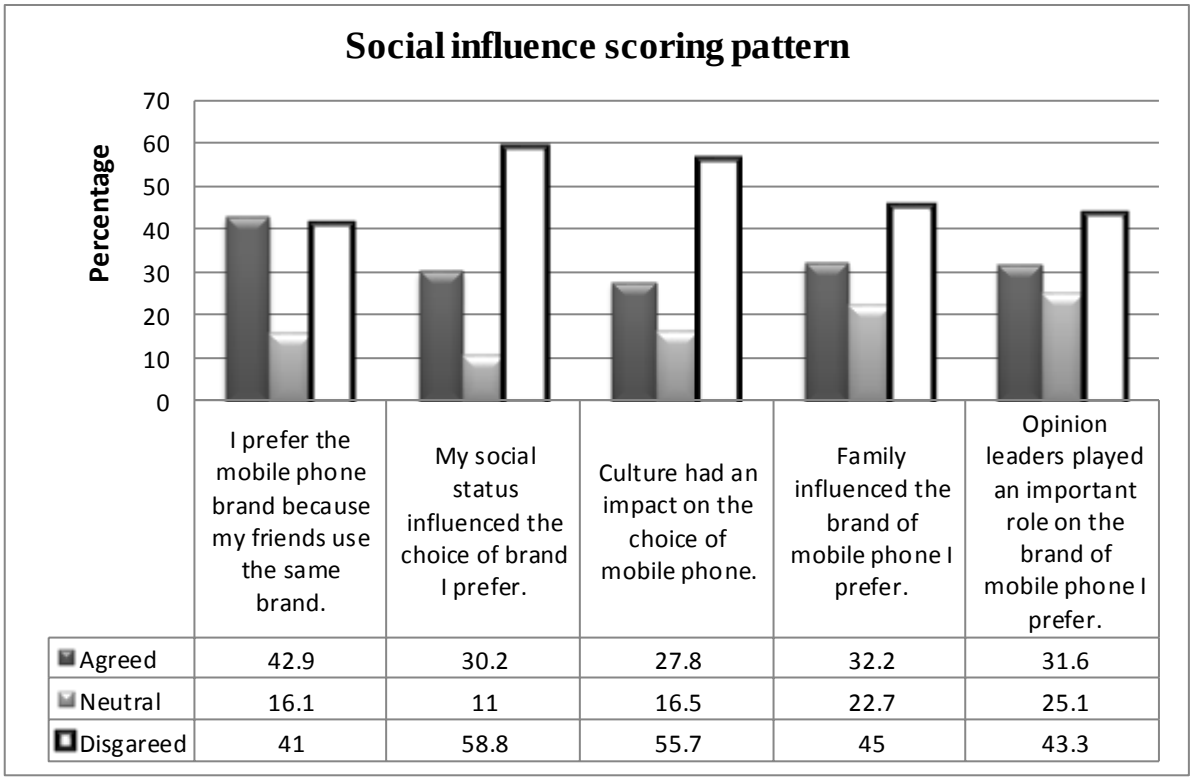
A large number of respondents (58.08%), agree that they preferred the user-friendliness of mobile phone brands, whilst 24.74% disagreed (Figure 5).Owusu-Prempeh et al. (2013) conclude that ease of use is one of the factors that consumers consider when selecting mobile phone brands. Aidoo and Nyamedor (2008), in a study conducted on the factors that determine consumer choices of mobile phone brands in Kumasi metropolis, moreover conclude that user-friendliness affects consumer brand preferences.

I consider the mobile phone reliability and durability on when preferring a brand

As shown (Figure 5), the study results illustrate that 61.86% of respondents agreed, and 20.62% disagreed, that they considered durability and reliability when choosing mobile phones. These results are in accord with the reviewed literature from Aidoo and Nyamedor (2008), who state that the reliability of mobile phones impacts on the brands consumers prefer. Ala‟‟a and Yaser (2015), in their study results, furthermore show that most respondents consider durability as their first priority when choosing mobile phone brands. This finding is not surprising, because other factors are also found to be common between brands, which makes durability one of the most important of these affecting mobile phone choices.

4.9.4. Social influences for mobile phone brand preference

This section examines the impacts of social influences on mobile phone brand preferences. The fourth objective of the study was to assess the extent to which brand preferences were affected by social influences. Figure 6 provides the scoring patterns for these study results. As indicated by the results (Figure 6), the average level of agreement for statements in this section was 26.4%, whilst on average 50.1% of respondents disagreed with them. All statements that social influences affected their mobile phone brand preferences therefore showed higher levels of disagreement than agreement from respondents.



	I prefer the mobile phone brand because my friends use the same brand.	My social status influenced the choice of brand I prefer.	Culture had an impact on the choice of mobile phone.	Family influenced the brand of mobile phone I prefer.	Opinion leaders played an important role on the brand of mobile phone I prefer.
Agreed	42.9	30.2	27.8	32.2	31.6
Neutral	16.1	11	16.5	22.7	25.1
Disgareed	41	58.8	55.7	45	43.3

(Survey data, 2019)

Figure 5: Social influences scoring patterns

I prefer the mobile phone brand because my friends use the same brand.

The study results (Figure 6) illustrate that 41% of respondents were in disagreement with the statement that friends played important roles in deciding the brands of mobile phones they preferred, whilst 42.9% were in agreement. This agrees with the literature, according to Hoyer et al, (2013) consumers obtain information from friends or reference groups, they can use this to make their own decisions .Individuals therefore use reference groups to obtain and compare information on products and brands. Consumers seek information on brands from their reference group members, and marketers use the influences of these groups in an advertisement, which makes people prefer their brands of mobile phones Hult et al. (2012).

Opinion leaders play an important role in the brand of mobile phone I prefer

The study results (Figure 6) illustrate that 43.3% of respondents were in disagreement with the statement that opinion-leaders played important roles in deciding the brands of mobile phones they preferred, whilst 31.6% were in agreement. This differs from the reviewed literature, which

states that opinion-leaders informally influence the attitudes, behaviors, preferences and values of those consumers who are opinion-seekers Schiffman and Kanuk (2010).

Families influence the brand of mobile phone I prefer

As indicated by the study findings (Figure 6), the majority of respondents, with 45 % disagreed that families influenced the brands of mobile phones they preferred, whilst 31.6 % agreed. Families influence brand preference depending on the roles that their members play as consumers Nagarkoti (2009). Some of the reviewed literature argues, however, that families are perhaps the most important factors influencing the behaviors of consumers, because family members have close relationships and long-term interactions, and most decisions are therefore made within family life cycles Yusuf and Shafri (2013).

Culture has an impact on the choice of mobile phone

Most of respondents (55.7%) disagreed with the statement that their cultures impacted on their choices of mobile phones, whilst 27.8% agreed (Figure 6). This finding differs from reviewed literature, which states that cultures impact on consumer mobile phone brand choices (Salmi and Sharafutdinova (2008). Cultures therefore determine the priorities consumers place on different products and brands, with brands that provide benefits similar to those required by the members of cultures at any point having better chances of being preferred from amongst all other brands available Mohan (2013).

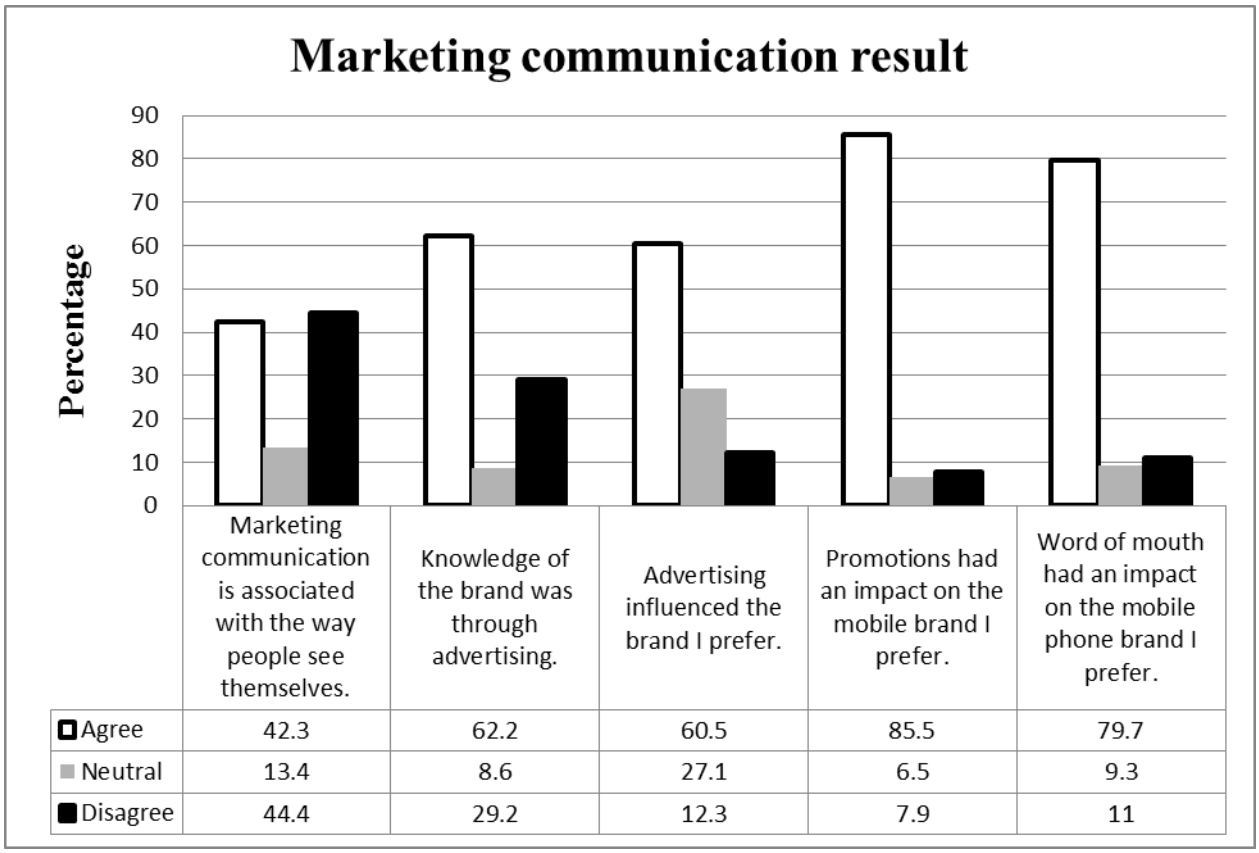
My social status influences the choice of brand I prefer

As indicated by the study findings (Figure 6), 58.8% of respondents Disagreed, whilst 29.9% agreed, that their social statuses influenced the choices of brands they preferred.

4.9.5. Marketing communications

This section investigates how marketing communications influence brand preferences. The final objective of this study was to determine the influences that marketing communications had on student mobile phone brand preferences. The findings (Figure 6) present a summary of these scoring patterns.

It is illustrated (Figure 6) that the average level of respondents agreeing with the influences of marketing communications was 66.05 %, whereas 20.96%, on average, disagreed with the statements in this section. Most of the statements showed higher levels of agreement, whilst only one showed a higher level of disagreement.



	Marketing communication is associated with the way people see themselves.	Knowledge of the brand was through advertising.	Advertising influenced the brand I prefer.	Promotions had an impact on the mobile brand I prefer.	Word of mouth had an impact on the mobile phone brand I prefer.
Agree	42.3	62.2	60.5	85.5	79.7
Neutral	13.4	8.6	27.1	6.5	9.3
Disagree	44.4	29.2	12.3	7.9	11

(Survey data, 2019)

Figure 6: Marketing communications scoring patterns

Marketing communication is associated with the way people see themselves.

As indicated by the study findings (Figure 6), 44.4% of respondents disagreed with the statement that they preferred mobile phone brands because of how they wanted others to see them, whilst 42.3% agreed. This result partially agree with the literature reviewed, which states that respondents prefer brands that have personalities closely related to how they would like to be seen by others, or to the self-concepts of others, which are how they think others perceive them Kotler and Keller (2012).

Knowledge of the brand was through advertising

The study results (Figure 6) show that 62.2 % of respondents agreed, and 29.2 % disagreed, that knowledge of brands was obtained through advertising. Solomon (2013) similarly states that advertising provides consumers with information that assists in reducing product or brand search times, and which also communicates brand availability. In addition, advertising plays an important role in forming brand preferences by creating brand awareness,

which thus conditions the perceptions of brands in the minds of consumers. Advertising is very informative, and provides consumers with information on brands and their important attributes, which can then influence brand preferences.

Advertising influences the brand I prefer

The study findings (Figure 7) illustrate that 60.5 % of respondents agreed, and 12.3 % disagreed, that advertising influenced the brands they preferred. These results concur with Share and Salaimeh (2010) who agree that advertising plays an important role in influencing the purchasing decisions consumers make. The authors agree that television advertising assists consumers in making brand choices from amongst the many available.

Advertising therefore encourages brand preferences, since it creates brand awareness and stimulates brand choices. Kotwal *et al.* (2008) support the idea that television advertisements are the most effective in reaching the target markets of companies, with their study results showing that a large number of respondents make brand choices based on advertising. Advertising alone does not cause consumers to prefer brands, however, but only draws their attention to them Arshad *et al. (*2015).

Promotions have an impact on the mobile brand I prefer

Respondents were asked whether promotions had an impact on the mobile phone brands they preferred. These findings illustrate (Figure 7) that 85.5% of the respondents agreed, and 7.9% disagreed with this statement. These results are similar to the findings in the literature reviewed from Omotayo (2011), who finds that sales promotions influence consumer decisions, such as brand preferences, in the types of mobile phones they choose.

Chandranath (2015) agrees that sales promotions taking the forms of price reductions have disadvantages, because they can damage brands in the long term. The value of brands is thereby reduced, and their images damaged. Some consumers only purchase brands when promoted, and change preferences when promotions are finished. Achumba (2002) considers sales promotions as marketing tools other than personal selling, advertising and publicity, used to stimulate consumer preferences in purchasing brands.

Mondal and Samantaray (2014), however, argue that sales promotions do not influence brand preferences, but only brand switching amongst consumers, especially those most affected by prices.

Word-of-mouth has an impact on the mobile phone brand I prefer

As indicated by the study findings (Figure 7), 79.73 % of respondents agreed, and 11% disagreed, that WOM had an impact on the mobile phone brands they preferred. This is in

keeping with the literature from Solomon (2013), who postulates that WOM is powerful, and influences most of the decisions consumers make. WOM is most influential when products or brands are technological in nature, and is therefore an important factor affecting the choices consumers make regarding mobile phone brands. In addition, Pham (2013) suggests WOM is also considered a significant and effective marketing communications tool, and it has been cited that the influence from WOM is greater than from other forms of communication, such as radio, television and newspapers. WOM is also seen as an unbiased form of communication, which therefore exerts a significant influence on brand preferences.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Major findings

The following are the findings of the study, which were obtained while answering the research questions:

- The overall result showed that the majority (51.76 %) of respondents agreed that brand popularity influenced their choices of mobile phones. According to Negi and Pandey (2013), consumers ignore unknown brands, and generally prefer those they know
- From three considered factors majority (60 %) of respondents are agreed that they associate brand popularity with phone quality.
- The study finds that above half of the respondents (60 %) disagreed that price effect on their mobile phone brand preferring, but again 54 % agreed price is important when choosing
- The result also shows 50.5 % of respondents agreed that money paid for mobile phone is good according to its value.
- Also association between mobile phone price and quality of the phone was disagreed by 46.7 % of respondents.
- The findings shows almost equal number (42.9 % - agreed & 41 % - Disagreed) of respondents prefer mobile phone brand because their friends use same.
- Regarding social status influence on choosing brand it has high (58.8 %) disagreement response rate, also culture impact on choice of mobile phone nearly the same (55.7 %) percentage.
- Family influences on preferring mobile phone brand have scored 45 % of disagreement which shows almost half of respondents are not influenced, also opinion leaders scored 43.3 % of disagreement.
- The study also shows (60.82 %) of the respondents agreed that they consider phone attributes when preferring a brand also 72.16 % of respondents agreed that they considered mobile phone appearance and battery life when they are selecting the brand.
- Factor which asks respondent that if they consider quality when choosing mobile phone brand have a high (70.1%) agreement. Considering mobile user friendliness when preferring brands also have 58.08 % agreement.
- Also considering of reliability and durability have 61.86 % of agreement
- The study result found that 44.4 % of respondents disagreed with marketing communication association with the way they see themselves have in two questions with in preferring.

- Above half (62.2 %) of Respondents of agreed that they have knowledge about the brand because of the advertising also 60.5 % of respondents influenced by advertising when preferring the brand.
- In addition, 85.5 % of the respondents agreed with promotions impact on preferring a mobile phone.
- At last it was noticed that word of mouth has impact on 79.1 % of the respondents.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study for the consumers like respondents of this study the following recommendations are made:

- If Marketers and retailers should use celebrities and well-known people to endorse their brands, thereby creating brand popularity, resulting in consumers'" preference for such popular brands as Samsung, iPhone and techno.
- Manufacturers should consider the quality, user-friendliness, durability and reliability of the mobile phones they produce, since these product attributes are shown by the results of this study to exert the greatest influences on brand preferences, although other mobile phone attributes, such as appearances also be seen as important;
- Mobile phone companies should produce phones that are easy to use, since the market is saturated with similar competing brands, and ease of use was shown to be considered an important influence by study respondents;
- Manufacturers should produce mobile phones with attractive brand images by coordinating with quality, features or their own best performing quality, because most of the student respondents for this study wished to display their social status by the brands of mobile phone they chose.

5.3. Suggestions for further studies

The following are suggestions for further studies to be conducted, based on the findings:

- This study concentrated on only five factors that influence mobile phone brand preferences, and studies focusing on the influence of personal and psychological factors on these preferences should also be conducted, since these would assist mobile phone companies in better understanding their markets;
- The current study only focused on students at Saint marry university on Postgraduate students, and could be replicated using students at other Ethiopian universities, or target groups not exclusively made up of students; and

- This study was specifically aimed at the mobile phone industry, whereas additional studies could focus on other industries that also face high levels of competition.

5.6. Limitations of the study

The following were found to be the limitations of this study:

- The study had more middle level economical respondents than those from other ethnic groups, which are not a true reflection of all Saint Marry Postgraduate students.
- The Due to cost and time constraints, this study was limited to only students studying at Saint marry Postgraduate students and its results may not reflect or describe a true reflection of all Ethiopian students mobile phone mobile phone users.
- The targeted student population for the study cannot be considered a true reflection of consumer brand preferences with regarding to pricing, because selected student respondents are not depend on income or decision making to purchase mobile phones they can afford with they want to use.

Future researchers can investigate university students brand preference by including other factors that might influence brand preference. In addition, researchers could find out more about university students brand preference by applying additional statistical techniques.

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APPENDIX A

A Questionnaire on Brand preference of mobile phones among at St. Marry Postgraduate students

Dear respondents:

I am conducting a study on Brand preference for mobile phones among students at Saint marry university. As part of the requirements, I would like you to complete a questionnaire. Please take a few minutes of your time to answer this questionnaire about your personal experience with your mobile phone preference. Your willingness and cooperation in giving reliable information is well appreciated and the information you provide will be used for academic purpose and will be kept in strict confidentiality.

If you would like further information about this study, or have problem in completing this questionnaire please contact me via +251920557634 or yohanted@gmail.com

Thank you for your cooperation!

Instruction: Please use tick (✔) mark in the answer boxes that reflect your rating.

Section A: General information of students'

1. Gender Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Age below & 25 ☐ 26-32 ☐ 33-39 ☐ above 40 ☐
3. Your Specialization in St. Marry University

MBA General Management ☐ marketing management ☐
Project management ☐ MBA Human resource management ☐
Computer science ☐ Quality and production management ☐
Agricultural economics ☐ MBA in accounting & finance ☐
MBA in impact ☐ Social work ☐

4. Which mobile phone brand do you have?

SAMSUNG	
APPLE	
HTC	
LG	
ALCATEL	
TECHNO	
HUAWEI	
Others	

5. Price range of mobile phone you purchased.

2000 & less ☐ 2001 – 3500 ☐ 3501 – 5500 ☐

5501 – 6500 ☐ above & 6501 ☐

6. What motivated you to prefer the above mobile phone brand?

Advertisement ☐ referrals ☐ own choice ☐ other ☐

7. Using numbers 1-7 rank the following mobile phone brands in terms of preference.

SAMSUNG	
APPLE	
HTC	
LG	
ALCATEL	
TECHNO	
HUAWEI	
Other	

Section B: Please use tick (✔) mark in the answer boxes that reflect your rating.

Brand popularity	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
7. I consider brand popularity when choosing a mobile phone.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8. I associate brand popularity with mobile phone quality.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9. I associate brand popularity with the choice I make.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Product attributes	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
10. Consider mobile phone attributes when preferring a brand.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
11. I consider mobile phone appearance and battery life when selecting a brand.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
12. I consider quality when choosing a mobile phone brand.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
13. I consider the user friendliness of the mobile phone.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
14. I consider mobile phone reliability and durability on when preferring a brand	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Price	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
15. Price affects the mobile phone brand I prefer.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
16. Price is important when I choose a mobile phone.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
17. The mobile phone is good value for the money paid.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
18. I associate mobile phone price with quality of the phone.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Social influence	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
19. I prefer the mobile phone brand because my friends use the same brand.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
20. My social status influenced the choice of brand I prefer.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
21. Culture had an impact on the choice of mobile phone.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
22. Family influenced the brand of mobile phone I prefer.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
23. Opinion leaders played an important role on the brand of mobile phone I prefer.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Marketing Communication	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
24. Marketing communication is associated with the way people see themselves.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
25. Knowledge of the brand was through advertising.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
26. Advertising influenced the brand I prefer.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
27. Promotions had an impact on the mobile brand I prefer.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
28. Word of mouth had an impact on the mobile phone brand I prefer.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
28. Word of mouth had an impact on the mobile phone brand I prefer.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Thank you for your time and participation!!

APPENDEX B

TABLE FOR APPROPRIATE SAMPLE SIZE FOR KNOWN POULATION

N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	220	140	1 200	291
15	14	230	144	1 300	297
25	24	250	152	1 500	306
30	28	260	155	1 600	310
35	32	270	159	1 700	313
40	36	280	162	1 800	317
45	40	290	165	1 900	320
50	44	300	169	2 000	322
55	48	320	175	2 200	327
60	52	340	181	2 400	331
65	56	360	186	2 600	335
70	59	380	191	2 800	338
75	63	400	196	3 000	341
80	66	420	201	3 500	346
85	70	440	205	4 000	351
90	73	460	210	4 500	354
95	76	480	214	5 000	357
100	80	500	217	6 000	361
110	86	550	226	7 000	364
120	92	600	234	8 000	367
130	97	650	242	9 000	368
140	103	700	248	10 000	370
150	108	750	254	15 000	375
160	113	800	260	20 000	377
170	118	850	265	30 000	379
180	123	900	269	40 000	380
190	127	950	274	50 000	381
200	132	1000	278	75 000	382
210	136	1100	285	1 000 000	384

Source: Krejcie and Morgan (1970); N = Population size S = Recommended sample size