

Factors Leading to Brand Switching in Cellular Phones: A Case of Pakistan

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze those factors which influence brand switching in cellular phones in Karachi city. Now Pakistan has emerged as the fastest growing market in the world. Mobile phones are now becoming the necessity of life. Day-by-day competition is now becoming more complex among the well-known mobile phone companies. This study focuses on the dependent variable and independent variables as well. The dependent variable is brand switching while independent variables are BRAND IMAGE, PRODUCT PRICING AND PRODUCT FEATURES (camera resolution, RAM/ROM, touch screen and android version etc.). Consumer's attitude and behavior towards any mobile brand and its feature is also examined through the questionnaires. The study reveals that by providing advanced features, reasonable pricing strategies and best brand image to customers, the mobile companies can control over brand switching and can retain their customers also.

Keywords: Brand switching, cellular phones, technological impact, price, brand name, brand image.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cellular phones are the mobile phone devices which are portable and use to communicate with each other. In Karachi, brand switching is more common in the cellular phones industry. Brand switching defines consumer switches from one brand to another brand to achieve the satisfaction level. In this research, those factors are analyzed which directly affect the consumer to switch between brands. The reason behind to choose this particular topic is that companies are now launching more and more cellular products which are highly update by the different features and applications. This research basically shows those factors which lead to brand switching in mobile phones.

Competition is becoming tougher day-by-day throughout the world. But this study specifically focuses in the Karachi city, Pakistan. Somehow latest cell phones are still not introduce in the Karachi, Pakistan like MACROMAX but they have launched in foreign countries.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT:

The primary objective of this research is to examine how factors put influence on the consumers to switch over another brand. We are taking different brands like NOKIA, SAMSUNG, iPhone HTC MOTOROLA HUAWEI, BLACKBERRY etc. to check-out which different factors like product features, product pricing, brand name & brand image influence customers and how companies attract or cater customer through these factors.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION:

This research paper is an effort to examine:

- 1) How factors leading to brand switching in cellular phones?
- 2) What are major factors which contribute in brand switching in mobile phones?
- 3) How consumers attract towards any cellular brand?

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The importance of this study is to determine which factors are becoming more influencing factors on the consumers which can cause brand switching. From the last 15 years, these types of researches have more focused by the researchers. But in Karachi, there are least researches done. That's why this research provides critical analysis on this topic because technology is now updating in Karachi also.

Due to latest mobile features and affordable product price; this research also identifies the sales of mobile phones which increases day-by-day and many sectors like education, manufacturing, industrial, banking etc. are getting more benefits from the cellular phones. It is now easy for the consumers to place online orders, do online jobs, pay their bills online and do banking transactions too; because of this sophisticated handsets or gadgets.

It will also oblige as a reference material and future guideline for further research.

1.4 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The objective of this study is to analyze:

- a) To identify which type of cell phones consumers want to use.
- b) To find out how many mobile features put impacts on the consumer's minded and are attractive one when consumers buy cell phones.
- c) To determine how other factors like product price, brand name, brand image etc. set the consumer's mind to switch towards another brand.

- d) To examine why consumers switch towards another brand.
- e) To realize which mobile brand is most preferable and purchase by the consumers.

1.5 LIMITATIONS:

The research is based on these variables like product price, brand image and product features. But we can discuss further factors like product applications, product design, social factor, demographic factor, durability and credibility of product which also put impact on the consumers to switch over another brand.

The research will be conducted on the wide area of Pakistan. But this is conducted from Karachi city because it is our initial step towards the research work.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

Different articles exist on the brand switching in cellular phones. But somehow companies are not matching the standard which will satisfy the customers. Through this research paper, companies would be analyzing the current needs and demands of the customers especially in Karachi. This research also helps the companies to become up-to-date with the environment which lead to the customer satisfaction and maximize the company's revenue.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

(Zeeshan Ahmed, 2015), conducted the research in which they found that there are certain factors like technological impact, demographic factors, advertising, innovation, perception & attitude, brand name & image and some other mobile features which directly affect the consumer behavior to remain stay with the brands or switch towards another brands. The empirical study shows that these factors put a strong impact on the consumers. These are the factors which also cause to customers either they retain with their existing brand or to switch towards the new mobile phones. The recommendation is that company should follow certain factors which demotivate the customers and provide best quality and newest features to customers which results in less inspiration occurs towards another brands.

India is now known to be the fastest growing mobile phone market in the world. According to (Khushboo Makwana N. S., 2014), step by step competition has increased through latest technology like GSM, 3G technology etc. and rising quantity of service providers. The data collected from 100 respondents (50 female and 50 male students). The study mainly focuses on certain factors that influence on consumer switching behavior in Telecommunication industry. Through questionnaires oversee, the study expose that give value added services and valuable pricing strategy, telecommunication service providers have power over consumer brand switching behavior and can hold the customers.

According to the research (Agha, Haider, Kakakhel, & Murtaza, 2012), the main factor of switching behavior of students and professionals is technology. Consumers change their cell phones because of the technological advancement. Students and professionals want to become state-of-the-art with the environment. Mobile price, design and technology put the impact on the user. Advance technology like Wi-Fi, Viber, WhatsApp, messenger, e-mail, browsing etc. Hi-tech and electronically industries should mainly focus on these factors.

Various researchers have talk over and noticed some of the best use of cell phone (RAJKUMAR & CHAARLAS, 2012) research is that mobile phone is now become the necessity of life due to the increase of competition. Different factors like demographics and personal issues were testing through the various methodological instruments. The findings show that external issues mostly deals with competitions like introduce new packages, schemes, mold the brands etc. Producers may focus on the external issues which can minimize the switching behavior of the consumers.

Forefront marketing researchers have a great knowledge about the heavy price competition which basically diminish customer loyalty and push customer retention. (Shah, Gul, & Qureshi, 2013) Found that switching cost discuss the customer behavior. Independent variables likes repurchase, quality, loyalty, recommendations and satisfaction factors lead to the switching cost. The research tested through the description statistics; Cronbach's alpha and regression analysis of the sample size of 200 respondents based on mobile Telecom industry. Marketing managers have suggested by mechanism of the best adopted strategy of customer retention and customer behavior preferences which can stop the switching towards the other mobile telecommunication industry. According to (Ahmad, Hussain, & Rajput, 2015) switching cost have no relationship with the customer satisfaction, customer loyalty & trust. The study recommends that customer loyalty can be achieved through the customer satisfaction and trust.

One of the conducted research of the (Malik & Rizwan, 2014) in which they originate their views that new systems or technology like discovery of touch screen or smart phones propel the customers to switch over another mobile brand. Bahawalpur has now become the developed city of Pakistan. That's why this modern technology also put impact over there and the use of keypad mobiles decreases day-by-day. Companies should adopt latest technology and mobile versions to attract the mobile users. Companies somehow bear cost like advertisement cost because (1) switching cost directly proportional to the customer loyalty. (2) Perceived

usefulness is also directly proportional to the customer switching intentions.

Cell phone industry is now growing step-by-step. According to (Blomme, 2013) the main reason for the customer's intention to stay with the same brand is the satisfaction, brand commitment, age, perception about brand, consumer decision making process, consumer's experience etc. basically income, education and age develop the differences which were highlighted the consumer's intention to stay with the same brand. Marketers take actions and introduce or launch their products according to the age, income and education of the society. Brand satisfaction and consumers stay with the same brand were found due to the some factors like eldest respondents, highest income group level and lowest-educated group of people. Marketers should follow some marketing tactics which can remain constant their brand sales.

(KANSRA & KUMAR, 2012) Stated that there are many mobile brands available in the markets. Now Telecom industry is floating in the pool of different kinds of mobile brands. Consumers have many choices to select a particular brand. Different young age group people (15 years to 30 years) have the same gratification level or consumption design. But some factors like best features, company's offers and promotions, consumer's experiences, fluctuation of price etc. develop the relationship between consumers and brands; and dissatisfied consumers of brand do not have brand loyalty which cause brand switching towards another brands. Highly updated mobile gadgets play a vital role to make satisfy their customers. Now-a-days, SAMSUNG brand has now become the good mobile brand in the consumer's mind.

In this research (Heikki Karjaluoto, 2005) specified that marketers of cellular phone brands are now enjoying the toughest competition and change around the world. Research conducted from the graduate students and some respondents which told that technical issue is the minor factor which cause to change mobile phones but the major factors are mobile applications, properties, price and brand name influence the consumers to change or switch to the other brands. One of the universal factor is that people change their cell phones because of their particular choices.

Consumer's decision making process is influenced by many factors. (Sata, 2013) Identified that consumer is made decisions for the selected mobile phones by the factors like device price, value added services, valuable price, credibility, durability, product characteristics, functions, mobile features, post services etc. Consumers are very touchy before the purchase of any brand because companies and customers both now focus on the advancement and innovation. Consumers are now switching from the NOKIA to the SAMSUNG, APPLE and other well-known brands. Developers of mobile devices should focus on the brand quality and price which can affordable for the users.

The substantial affiliation between mobile's brands equity and customer satisfaction by (Ahmad & Sherwani, 2015). Marketers focus on their brand equity to increase the company's reputation and to maximize the revenue or profit. Brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness and brand association build the brand equity which directly hit on the customer to become satisfy with the brand. Mobile phone producers can implement many brand strategies to build brand equity like brand awareness (brand recall & brand recognition) and brand association (strength, favorability & uniqueness) to satisfy the customers.

Every individual have their own preferences. Today it is necessary for the countries to be the best aware from the latest technologies and new mobile phone brands. Now-a-days, teenagers especially students are more aware almost all mobile phone brands. The researcher (Dadzie & Francis, 2011) discussed that there are many factors evolved for the brand preference or liking but the main factors are brand price, brand promotion, product availability, product packaging & quality. These five factors play a major role for the operators of mobile phone (users). Companies mold the mobile features and applications according to the user's needs, demand and personality. Mobile phone companies should focus on their offerings either they provide according to their customer's needs or not which make the consumer highly satisfied. If customers will not satisfied with the brand so negative word of mouth will be generate. It is essential for the companies to communicate & keep in touch with their customers.

Companies want to become more profitable in the long run. So, customer loyalty is the obligatory instrument for the companies to success. That's why companies focus on the factors such as to build trust, staff loyalty, Telecom service quality and switching cost to make their customers loyal and satisfy. According to (JAHANZEB, FATIMA, & KHAN, 2011) customer loyalty of mobile phone brand is now enhancing throughout the world such as in Pakistan. (Nasir, Mushtaq, & Rizwan, 2014) Conducted the research in which they found that service quality, trust, perceived price & customer satisfaction have a positive relationship with customer loyalty. Customer trust build through customer loyalty and service quality.

Competition is increasing between the cellular companies day-by-day. Every company is trying to provide their best to the customers so that consumers will be loyal in the long run. Customers measure the product value with the price which they paid for it. Companies want to become reputable in the market so that they become modernize to make the customer loyal with the help of brand's personality and consumer preferences. Trust can be measured by consumer-brand characteristics, company characteristics and brand characteristics by the researcher (Anik & Vita puspa putri, 2015).

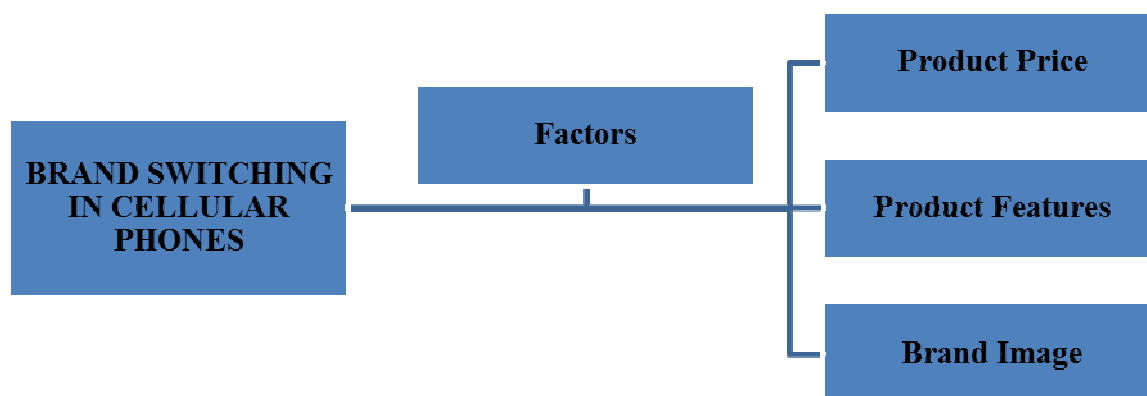
(Sarwar & Soomro, 2013) The main reason for this research is that smart phones now become very popular in the society. It put positive as well as negative impact on the society but it is playing a vital part in the education sector, health sector, industrial sector, manufacturing sector, and business sector etc. Technology made the smart phone more general in the society. Smart phones make the people's life easier. Through it we can chat easily by different ways; communicate through messages, WhatsApp, messenger, skype, tracker system etc. Moreover this is a portable device which we can easily keep in the pockets. Cultural impact also influence on people to buy latest version of smart mobile phones.

3. METHODOLOGY

The approach that will be used for this study is based on primary data collection using a questionnaire. The sample size was consisted of 250 respondents of Karachi, Pakistan. These responses were collected from teachers, students, and entrepreneurs of Karachi. For this study, it is appropriate to use a quantitative research approach and descriptive analysis of data is used.

3.1 RESEARCH MODEL:

Conceptual framework drawn on the basis of dependent and independent variables is given as under:



3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN:

3.2.1 DATA SOURCE:

Data gathered for the research is Primary and collected for the first time through questionnaire. However a little assistance was taken from the already existing journals and books on internet for determining the suitable variables, forming the questionnaire and interpreting the results of the graphs.

3.2.2 DATA TYPE:

Data type is Quantitative and all questions in the questionnaire are close ended as the main objective of the study is to determine whether the relationship between variables exist or not? And if it exist, to what extent they are related with each other and what is the graphical representation links those variables?

3.2.3 RESEARCH SAMPLE:

The study is based on primary research. Through quantitative research 250 questionnaires has been administered from the respondents or mobile users in Karachi. Therefore, out of 250, 208 responses were found valid for the research study. The study consists of self-admin set of questions. This study provides the information about customers that why consumer switches mobile brands due to price, features and brand image of different brands. Questionnaires were distributed through mail, e-mail and surveyed through manual forms.

3.2.4 TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS:

The self-designed questionnaires are collected and data was analyzed through EXCEL charts SPSS is used for the data entry and data analysis done through clustered bar charts.

4. DATA ANALYSIS:

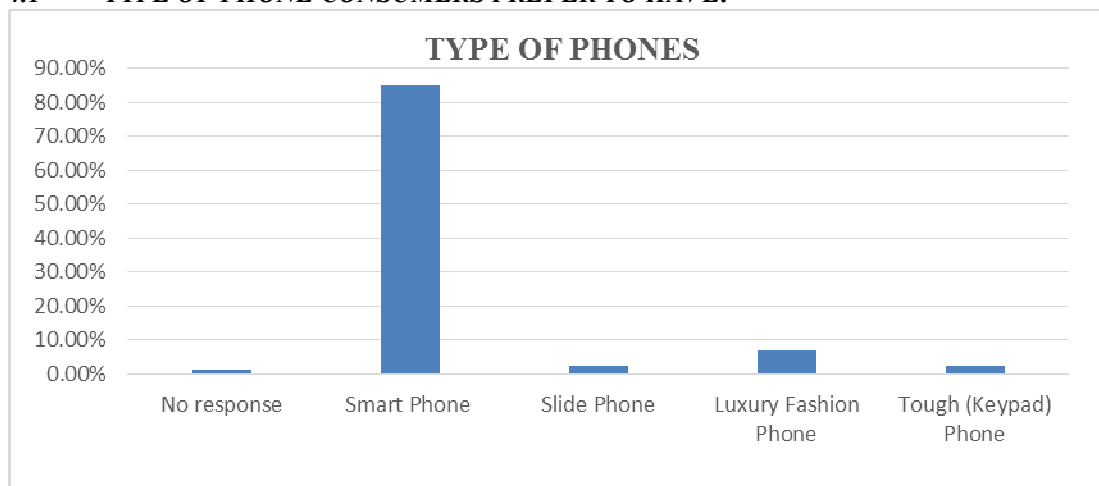
The research conducted through multiple questions like:

- ✓ Age group
- ✓ Educational level
- ✓ Income
- ✓ Willingness to pay on cell phone
- ✓ Type of cell phone

- ✓ Attractive features of mobile phone
- ✓ Factors in choosing a cell phone
- ✓ Important reasons for switching the mobile phone
- ✓ The price of existing brand
- ✓ Satisfaction level
- ✓ Which mobile brand the customers use
- ✓ Check the rating of different brands etc.

The responses were collected in the Karachi city which is based on both male and female responses of different ages and belongs to different fields and professions. Following graphs are showing the results and findings of the research.

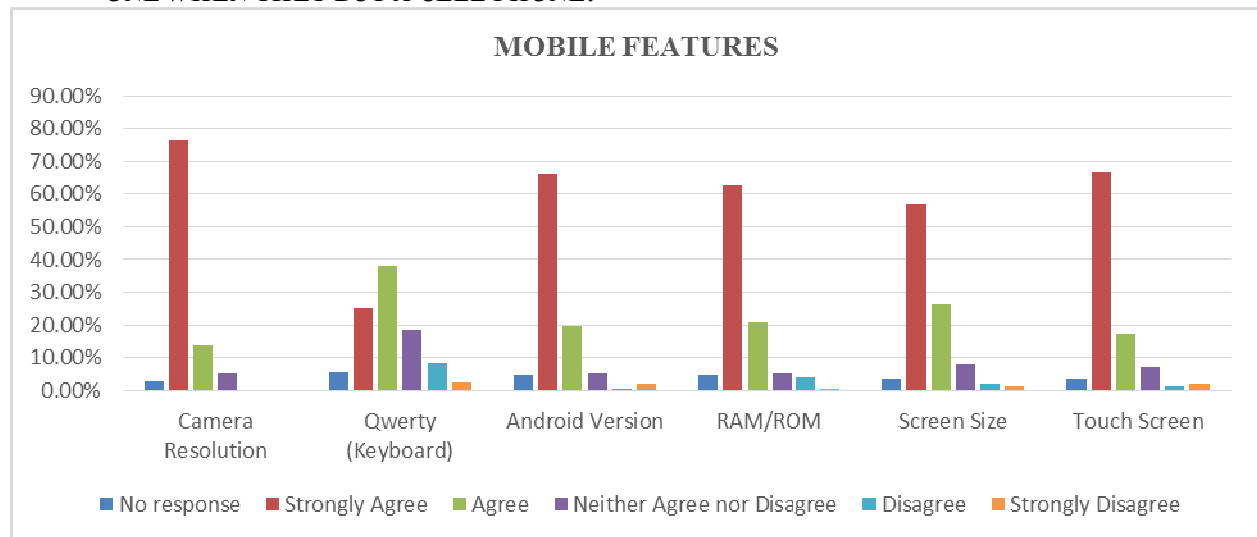
4.1 TYPE OF PHONE CONSUMERS PREFER TO HAVE:



ANALYSIS # 1:

As shown in above graph out of the 208 responses, majority of the respondents prefer to have smart phones which have frequency of 180 means that 84.9% people use smart phones and other 2.4% people prefer slide phones, 7.1% respondents stated that they use luxury fashion phones and rest of the 2.4% people prefer to use tough (keypad) phone. High rating of smart & luxury fashion phones just because of updating in the technology industry.

4.2 WHICH FEATURES DO CONSUMERS AGREE OR DISAGREE ARE THE MOST ATTRACTIVE ONE WHEN THEY BUY A CELL PHONE:



ANALYSIS # 2:

CAMERA RESOLUTION

When asked about which features do you agree or disagree are the most attractive one when you buy a cell phone. 76.4% people choose strongly agree for camera resolution out of 98.1% responses because camera resolution is one of the important feature for customers when they buy any cellular brand. Other 13.7% & 5.2% respondents choose agree and neither agree nor disagree respectively.

QWERTY

Now-a-days mostly smart phones have QWERTY (keyboard), so the respondents did not gave much consideration towards this feature. 25% said strongly agree, 38.2% choose agree, 18.4% choose neither agree nor disagree, 8.5% said disagree and 2.4% choose strongly disagree.

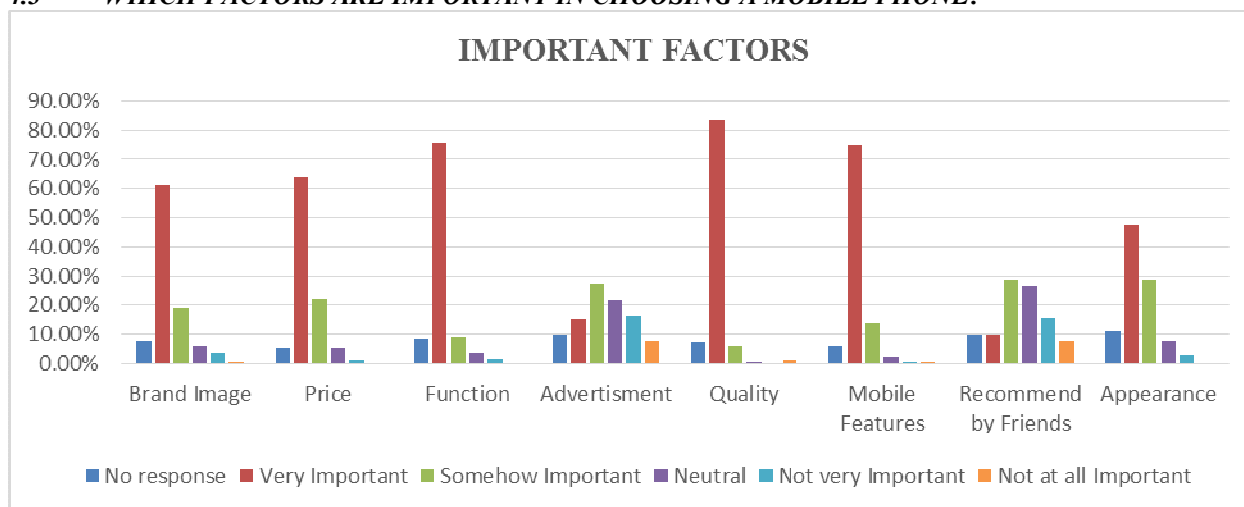
ANDROID VERSION & RAM/ROM

As shown in above graph, android version and RAM/ROM features are also important for respondents during the purchase of cell phones. 66% & 62.7% people strongly agree with android version and RAM/ROM respectively. 19.8% & 20.8% respondents choose agree for android version and RAM/ROM respectively. 5.2% people choose neither agree nor disagree for both features. 0.5% people choose disagree for android version and strongly disagree for RAM/ROM.

SCREEN SIZE & TOUCH SCREEN

Major responses were collected for screen size and touch screen as compare to QWERTY. Around 83% respondents agreed for screen size (56.6% strongly agree & 26.4% agree). Around 84% respondents agreed for touch screen (66.5% strongly agree & 17.5% agree). 1.9% people disagree for screen size & strongly disagree for touch screen. Whereas 8% and 7.1% people choose neither agree nor disagree for screen size and touch screen respectively. 1.4% people strongly disagree for screen size and disagree for touch screen.

4.3 WHICH FACTORS ARE IMPORTANT IN CHOOSING A MOBILE PHONE?



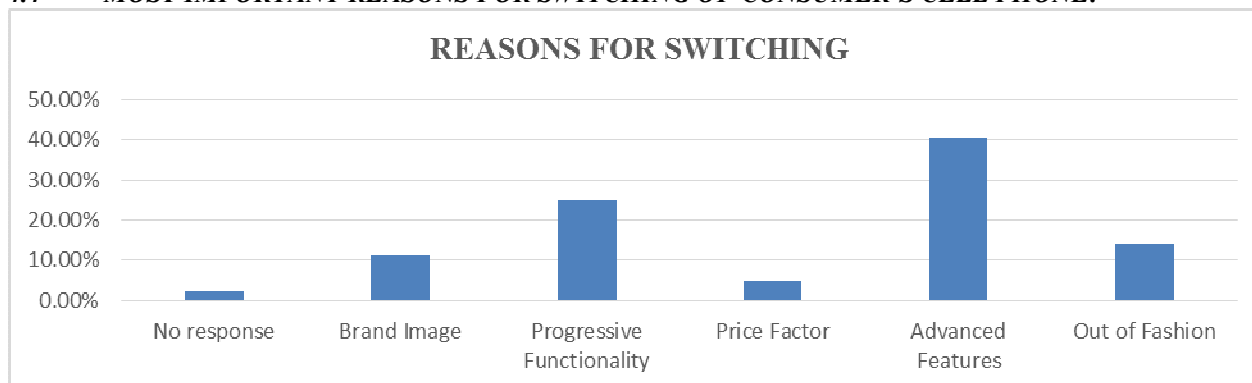
ANALYSIS # 3:

When asked about important factors of mobile phones, the respondent’s major responses are showing towards brand image, product price, product features, quality and functions. For brand image statement, 61.3%, 8.9%, 6.1%, 3.8% and 0.5% respondents selected very important, somehow important, neutral, not very important and not at all important respectively.

Another factor price, 63.7% respondents choose very important and 22.2% said somehow important. Other factor which is mobile features, majority of 75% people selected very important and 13.7% selected somehow important. Because these three factors take major contribution for customers towards buying decision

Product quality and functions also put impact on consumer’s buying decision. Like 83.5% respondents showed interest for quality and 75.5% respondents showed interest for functions that they both are very important. Some other factors like advertisement, friend’s recommendations, and product appearance take very little contribution towards buying decision as compared to brand image, price and features.

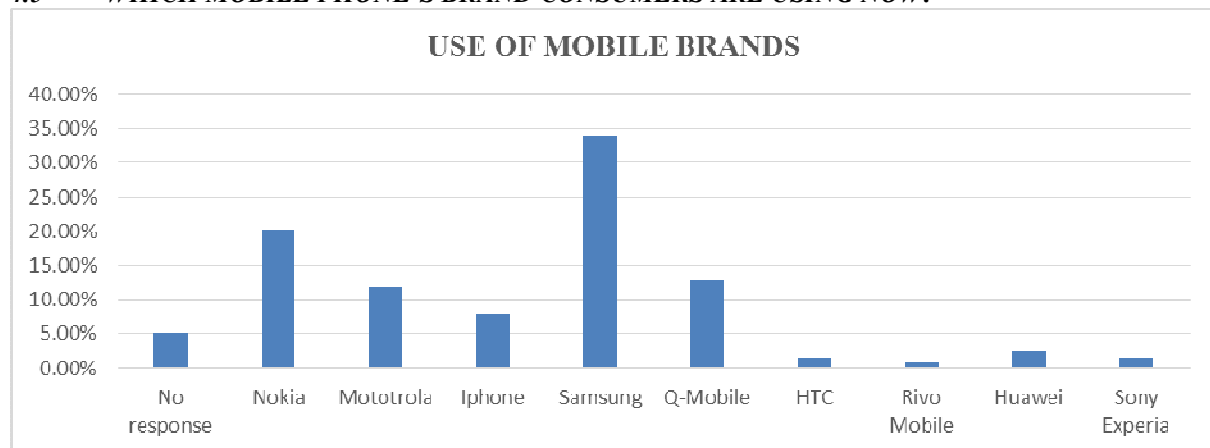
4.4 MOST IMPORTANT REASONS FOR SWITCHING OF CONSUMER'S CELL PHONE:



ANALYSIS # 4:

The statement reasons for switching cell phones showed the responses clearly in graph that 40.6% people switch their cell phones because of the advanced features. Some of the people switch their cell phones because of brand image, progressive functionality and out of fashion which the bars show 11.3%, 2.5% and 14.2% respectively.

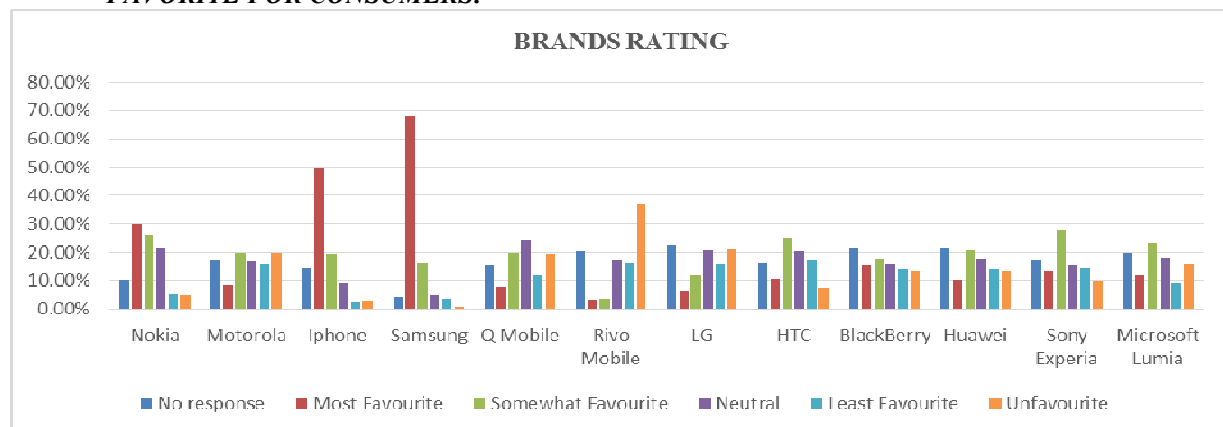
4.5 WHICH MOBILE PHONE'S BRAND CONSUMERS ARE USING NOW:



ANALYSIS # 5:

When asked about which mobile phones brand are you using now. Majority of the Karachites (34%) using Samsung mobile and other then 20.3% respondents use Nokia phone. Out of 208 responses, 11.8% and 12.7% people use Motorola and Q-Mobile respectively and tells that the usage of these two brands lie on the similar direction. Other brands like HTC, Rivo Mobile, Huawei and Sony Experia are not much common in the city. IPhone which is very expensive mobile brand, only 8% people uses it in the Karachi. Samsung brand have more customers because this give reasonable price, best functions & best features to customers which cause attraction towards it.

4.6 RATING AMONG DIFFERENT BRANDS THAT WHICH ARE MOST FAVORIT AND UNFAVORITE FOR CONSUMERS:



ANALYSIS # 6:

SAMSUNG, IPHONE & NOKIA:

From 209 responses out of 98% respondents, more than half of respondents (67.9%) choose most favorite option for Samsung. 49.5% people said IPhone mobile is the most favorite one. 29.7% people choose Nokia as most favorite. 16.5%, 19.3% and 25.9% respondents said somewhat favorite. 4.7%, 9.4% and 21.7% respondents selected neutral. 3.8%, 2.4% and 5.2% people choose least favorite. 0.9%, 2.8% and 4.7% users said un-favorite for Samsung, IPhone and Nokia respectively. Samsung brand shows highest favoritism among IPhone and Nokia Brands.

BLACKBERRY, SONY EXPERIA & MICROSOFT LUMIA:

From 209 responses out of 80.6% respondents, 27.8% respondents choose somewhat favorite option for Sony Experia. 23.1% people said Microsoft Lumia mobile is somewhat favorite one. 17.9% people choose BlackBerry as somewhat favorite. 13.2%, 11.8% and 15.1% respondents said most favorite. 15.1%, 18.4% and 16% respondents selected neutral. 14.6%, 9.4% and 14.2% people choose least favorite. 9.9%, 15.6% and 13.2% users said un-favorite for Sony Experia, Microsoft Lumia and BlackBerry respectively. Sony Experia brand shows highest favoritism among Microsoft Lumia and BlackBerry Brands.

HTC & HUAWEI:

From 209 responses out of 81.6% respondents, 25.5% respondents choose somewhat favorite option for HTC.

20.8% people said Huawei mobile is somewhat favorite one. 10.8%, and 10.4% respondents said most favorite. 20.3%, and 17.9% respondents selected neutral. 17.5%, and 14.2% people choose least favorite. 7.5%, and 13.2% users said un-favorite for HTC & Huawei respectively. HTC brand shows highest favoritism as compared to the Huawei mobile Brand.

MOTOROLA AND Q-MOBILE:

From 209 responses, 19.8% respondents choose somewhat favorite option for both Motorola and Q-Mobile. 8.5%, and 8% respondents said most favorite. 17%, and 24.1% respondents selected neutral. 15.6%, and 11.8% people choose least favorite. 19.8%, and 19.3% users said un-favorite for Motorola and Q-Mobile respectively. Motorola brand shows highest favoritism as compared to the Q-Mobile Brand.

RIVO MOBILE & LG:

From 209 responses, 3.8% respondents choose somewhat favorite option for Rivo Mobila. 11.8% people said LG mobile is somewhat favorite one. 3.3%, and 6.1% respondents said most favorite. 17.5%, and 20.8% respondents selected neutral. 16.5%, and 15.6% people choose least favorite. 36.8%, and 21.2% users said un-favorite for Rivo Mobile & LG respectively. LG brand shows highest favoritism as compared to the Rivo Mobile Brand.

5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion has been drawn after analyzing the primary data, which was collected through this research work. The aim of this research is to examine the main factors such as brand image, product price and product features that how they influence consumers to switch towards another cellular phones.

As 208 responses collected through online procedures and manual form in which most of them belongs to the teen agers and adult age group. It means that Youngers are more passionate about mobile brands. After analysis of findings, it became clear that majority of the respondents prefer to have smart phones because technology is now updating gradually which put impact on individual demands. Different applications like WhatsApp, skype, messenger and android version make the students and professional life very easy because these types of applications have become necessary for everyone. During the analysis, it was observed that consumers focus on different mobile features like camera resolution, RAM/ROM, screen size, touch screen and android version too when they buy a cell phone.

It was also observed that mostly consumers switch towards another brand because of the brand image and advanced features. Many mobile companies are investing the heavy amount of money to make their reputable image in the market. So that companies offer affordable price and advanced features to their customers.

The result also showed that Samsung brand have a highest rating among all mobile brands because the company is continuously focusing on the customer's demand that how much they are willing to pay for cellular phones. According to customer's demand companies make cellular phones with different ranges, colors, sizes and designs.

At last, different factors like brand like brand image, pricing and features also observed by different mobile brands that which company is focusing on all these factors and which brand is the most favorite one for the consumers. According to the findings, it was showed that Samsung, iPhone, Nokia, Sony Experia and Microsoft Lumia are the favorite mobile brands of the consumers. Because they all provide the best features & reasonable price to the users and they have also a perfect brand image on the consumer's mind; specially Samsung, iPhone and Nokia brands.

Consumers are more touchy about their cellular brands that's why the existence of these type of factors (brand image, product price and product features) have found in the Karachi city. Mobile companies keep launch different mobile sets in different prices to attract the mobile users. Because the results and findings showed that consumers frequently changes their cell phones within two years. So, companies are continuously focusing on their reputation which have made in the market.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Many factors outlined in switching cellular brands. But the main focus was on product price, product features and brand image. More mobile technologies and features are springing up, enabling businesses and customers to stay connected. However, Samsung Company is most likely to be focusing on their brand image. It provide customers a variety of smart phones in different prices with best features. Other companies like Nokia, HTC, LG, Q-Mobile etc. should be focused on product prices, advanced features, quality, brand image, and functionality.

Because People love their smartphones. Whether you're walking down the street or inside a shopping mall, sitting in a coffee shop or at the airport, half the people around you are looking down at their cellphones. Moreover businesses are also running through the smart phones via internet, email, messages, WhatsApp, Skype etc. Companies should focus on what basically their customers want to be. They should focus on the customer's preferences, demands and needs.

The cellular phone companies are good in their businesses and customer's connection but they have a need to provide new schemes to their customers to keep them always in connection. They try to provide better

features and price to the customers. This would help them to have a good relationship between the clients. However the company could make the brand according to the expectation of the customers. Always consumer's satisfaction would make the brand successful and to protect the switching percentage of the brand.

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