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The Impact Of Brand Image On Consumer Purchase Intention For Samsung Smartphone: Evidence From Kanpur, India

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of India's smartphone market has intensified competition among global and domestic brands, elevating brand image as a strategic differentiator beyond price alone. This study investigates the impact of brand image on consumer purchase intention for Samsung Smartphone in Kanpur — a commercially significant tier-two city in Uttar Pradesh — with price sensitivity as a mediating lens. Primary data were collected from 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire, and three hypotheses were empirically tested using the Chi-Square test of independence at a 5% significance level. The hypotheses examined: (H_1) the association between income level and price sensitivity; (H_2) the association between price sensitivity and purchase avoidance behaviour; and (H_3) the association between smartphone upgrade frequency and price perception. All three null hypotheses were retained (H_1: $\chi^2 = 4.230$; H_2: $\chi^2 = 1.089$; H_3: $\chi^2 = 1.636$), suggesting that Samsung's brand equity homogenises price-related consumer attitudes across demographic and behavioural segments. Descriptive findings reveal that 61% of respondents own Samsung devices, 81% advocate the brand based on price, yet 64% have avoided a Samsung purchase due to pricing - a paradox explained by the brand's premium positioning creating aspirational value alongside occasional access barriers. The study contributes to the consumer behaviour literature on brand image in emerging market contexts and offers actionable pricing and communication strategies for Samsung and analogous brands in price-sensitive urban markets.

Keywords: Brand Image, Purchase Intention, Price Sensitivity, Samsung Smartphones, Consumer Behaviour, Chi-Square Test, Kanpur, India

Introduction

India's smartphone market — the world's second largest by shipment volume — has evolved into one of the most fiercely contested consumer electronics arenas globally (IAMAI, 2024). Within this landscape, Samsung Electronics occupies a distinctive position, offering products across budget, mid-range, and premium segments while simultaneously maintaining strong brand associations with innovation, reliability, and quality. Yet the market's heterogeneous income structure and the aggressive competitive pricing of brands such as OnePlus, Xiaomi, and Realme continuously challenge Samsung's ability to translate brand strength into consistent purchase intention.

Kanpur, one of Uttar Pradesh's largest commercial centres, provides a particularly instructive research setting. Its consumer base is characterised by a diverse income distribution, a large young adult population, and pronounced price-consciousness — conditions under which the relative contributions of brand image and price sensitivity to purchase decisions are especially contestable. While price sensitivity has dominated the empirical literature on smartphone demand in India (Kannan & Priya, 2022; Mehta & Singh, 2020), the independent and moderating role of brand image has received comparatively limited attention in secondary-city contexts.

This paper addresses that gap. Drawing on Aaker's (1991) Brand Equity Model, Keller's (1993) Customer-Based Brand Equity framework, and Zeithaml's (1988) Perceived Value Theory, the study positions brand image as the primary determinant of purchase intention, with price sensitivity functioning as a mediating construct modulated by demographic and behavioural variables. Three targeted hypotheses — linking income to price sensitivity, price sensitivity to purchase avoidance, and upgrade frequency to price perception — are tested using the Chi-Square test of independence on primary data from 100 Kanpur respondents.

The paper makes three contributions. First, it advances the empirical understanding of brand image effects in a tier-two Indian urban market. Second, it employs rigorous non-parametric hypothesis testing to interrogate relationships commonly assumed rather than tested in the regional consumer behaviour literature. Third, it offers a theoretically grounded interpretation of non-significant statistical results as evidence of brand-induced attitudinal homogeneity — an underexplored dimension of brand equity in price-sensitive markets.

Review of Literature

Brand Image and Purchase Intention

Brand image — the set of associations held in consumer memory about a brand (Keller, 1993) — is well-established as a positive antecedent of purchase intention across product categories. In consumer electronics, Fauzi and Ali (2021) demonstrated that positive brand image significantly influenced Samsung purchase decisions, with consumers associating the brand with technological advancement and reliability. Min, Kim, and Lee (2012) further showed that in electronics markets, brand image serves as a quality

signal, with consumers interpreting strong brands as proxies for superior product performance. This brand-as-quality-signal mechanism is particularly pronounced in high-involvement purchases such as Smartphone, where information asymmetries between buyers and sellers are substantial.

In the Indian context, Mohammed (2023) confirmed that brand reputation functions as a risk-reduction device for middle-income consumers making large discretionary purchases, while Yuva Sri and Lavanya (2025) found that younger Indian consumers (18-30 years) demonstrated the highest brand engagement with Samsung's mid-range Galaxy A and Galaxy M series — products that balance brand image with accessible pricing.

Price Sensitivity and Its Moderators

Price sensitivity — the degree to which price changes alter consumer purchase behaviour (Nagle & Hogan, 2006) — is the dominant theme in Indian Smartphone demand research. Verma and Sharma (2021) and Mehta and Singh (2020) consistently found that middle-income and student consumers exhibit elastic demand, readily switching brands when competing alternatives offer comparable specifications at lower prices. Gupta (2023) added Kanpur-specific evidence, noting that Samsung's broad price-range portfolio helps address different sensitivity levels across the market.

Critically, the relationship between price sensitivity and purchase behaviour is not monotonic. Tierney, Brown, and Williams (2018) showed that brand loyalty significantly attenuates price sensitivity among satisfied repeat purchasers, while Rao and Surendher (2024) demonstrated that perceived value mediates the price-intent relationship in mid-range segments. These findings collectively suggest that brand image can dampen what would otherwise be strong price sensitivity effects — a proposition central to the present study.

Research Gap

Despite extensive treatment of price sensitivity and brand equity separately, the intersection of these constructs in secondary Indian urban markets remains underexplored. Existing studies either generalise nationally or are confined to metropolitan areas; few employ rigorous inferential testing to examine specific bivariate associations between demographic variables and price-related consumer attitudes in a Kanpur-specific context. This study fills that gap.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

The study's conceptual architecture integrates three theoretical pillars. Aaker's (1991) Brand Equity Model identifies brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand associations as equity dimensions that collectively reduce price elasticity. Keller's (1993) CBBE framework centres brand knowledge — comprising awareness and image — as the foundation from which purchase intention derives. Zeithaml's (1988) Perceived Value Theory articulates how consumers weigh perceived benefits against costs, with brand image augmenting the benefits side and thereby moderating price sensitivity.

Together, these frameworks generate a core proposition: Samsung's brand image creates favourable perceptual and evaluative dispositions that attenuate price sensitivity's negative impact on purchase

intention. The framework positions Income Level, Age, and Upgrade Frequency as demographic and behavioural moderators. Three empirically testable hypotheses follow:

H_1: There is a significant association between monthly household income level and the degree of price sensitivity among Smartphone consumers in Kanpur.

H_2: Price sensitivity has a significant association with the decision to avoid purchasing a Samsung Smartphone due to its price.

H_3: There is a significant association between Smartphone upgrade frequency and the price perception of Samsung Smartphone relative to competing brands.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive-cum-analytical design using primary data. A structured questionnaire comprising 19 items covering demographic variables, Smartphone ownership and usage patterns, price sensitivity ratings, brand perceptions, and purchase intentions was administered to 100 respondents in Kanpur using convenience sampling. Respondents were approached at commercial areas, educational institutions, and residential localities to ensure occupational and income diversity. Secondary data were drawn from peer-reviewed journals, industry reports, and government publications.

Hypotheses were tested using the Chi-Square test of independence — a non-parametric test appropriate for examining associations between categorical variables. The test statistic is computed as $\chi^2 = \Sigma[(O - E)^2 / E]$, where O denotes observed frequency and E the expected frequency derived as (Row Total × Column Total) / N. The significance threshold was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Degrees of freedom (df) are calculated as $(r - 1)(c - 1)$ where r and c denote the number of rows and columns, respectively

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile

The sample comprised 55% male and 45% female respondents, with 68% aged between 18 and 34 years — confirming the dominance of young adults in Kanpur's smartphone consumer base. Students constituted the largest occupational group (26%), followed by unemployed (20%) and self-employed (19%) individuals. Income distribution revealed that 56% of respondents earn below ₹50,000 per month, categorising the majority as lower-to-middle income consumers for whom price is a materially consequential purchase variable.

Descriptive Analysis of Key Variables

Table 1: Summary of Key Descriptive Findings

Variable	Key Finding	Implication
Samsung Ownership	61% currently own Samsung	Strong brand penetration in Kanpur
Dominant Competitor	OnePlus leads usage (27%)	Significant competitive threat in mid-range
Price Sensitivity (modal)	Level 3 – Moderate (40%)	Brand image can buffer price effects
Price as Barrier	64% avoided purchase due to price	Pricing acts as access barrier
Brand Advocacy	81% recommended Samsung on price	High aspirational equity
Preferred Price Range	₹15,001–₹20,000 (36%)	Mid-range is market sweet spot
Discount Responsiveness	63% likely to buy on discount	Promotions are strong demand levers
Value-for-Money (Good+)	52% rated 4 or 5 out of 5	Positive perceived value despite price concerns

The descriptive findings reveal a nuanced consumer landscape. Samsung commands strong brand equity — evidenced by 61% ownership and 81% advocacy — yet faces a price-access paradox: 64% of respondents have at some point declined to purchase Samsung due to price. This coexistence of high aspiration and purchase deterrence is consistent with Kotler and Keller's (2022) observation that premium brand positioning simultaneously creates desire and access barriers in price-sensitive markets.

The competitive challenge from OnePlus (27 current users) and Realme (21) is notable, given that both brands have built substantial market shares by offering premium-specification devices at accessible price points — a strategy that directly targets Samsung's mid-range vulnerabilities. The preferred price band of ₹15,001–₹20,000 aligns with Samsung's Galaxy A-series, suggesting that mid-range products are the primary bridge between brand aspiration and purchase conversion in this market.

Hypothesis Testing

All three hypotheses were tested using the Chi-Square test of independence. Contingency tables were constructed with grouped categorical variables to ensure sufficient expected cell frequencies (minimum expected frequency ≥ 5 per cell).

H_1: Income Level and Price Sensitivity

Table 2: Contingency Table — Income Level vs. Price Sensitivity

Income Group	Low Sensitivity (Scale 1–2)	Moderate (Scale 3)	High Sensitivity (Scale 4–5)	Row Total
Low (Below ₹25,000)	7	19	16	42
Middle (₹25,001–₹50,000)	5	12	16	33
High (Above ₹50,000)	1	9	15	25
Column Total	13	40	47	100

Table 3: Chi-Square Calculation — H_1 (df = 4; χ^2 critical = 9.488)

Cell	O	E	$(O-E)^2/E$
Low Inc., Low Sensitivity	7	5.46	0.434
Low Inc., Moderate	19	16.80	0.288
Low Inc., High Sensitivity	16	19.74	0.709
Mid Inc., Low Sensitivity	5	4.29	0.117
Mid Inc., Moderate	12	13.20	0.109
Mid Inc., High Sensitivity	16	15.51	0.016
High Inc., Low Sensitivity	1	3.25	1.558
High Inc., Moderate	9	10.00	0.100
High Inc., High Sensitivity	15	11.75	0.899
χ^2 Calculated			**4.230**

$\chi^2 = 4.230 < \chi^2$ critical = 9.488 at df = 4 and $\alpha = 0.05$. H_{10} is not rejected. The data provide no significant evidence that income level determines price sensitivity orientation. The moderate sensitivity category (Scale 3) is proportionally the most represented across all three income groups, suggesting that brand image mediates the income–sensitivity relationship. Consumers across income brackets who value Samsung's brand equity tend to converge on a moderate sensitivity stance, neither dismissing price entirely nor being dominated by it.

H_2: Price Sensitivity and Purchase Avoidance

Table 4: Contingency Table — Price Sensitivity vs. Decision to Avoid Purchase

Price Sensitivity	Avoided Purchase (Yes)	Did Not Avoid (No)	Row Total
Low (Scale 1–2)	10	3	13
Moderate (Scale 3)	25	15	40
High (Scale 4–5)	29	18	47
Column Total	**64**	**36**	**100**

$\chi^2 = 1.089 < \chi^2$ critical = 5.991 at df = 2 and $\alpha = 0.05$. H_{20} is not rejected. The absence of a significant association between sensitivity level and purchase avoidance is at first counterintuitive but is theoretically revealing. Notably, 77% of low-sensitivity respondents (10 of 13) also reported having avoided a Samsung purchase — comparable to rates in the high-sensitivity group (62%). This convergence implies that purchase avoidance is driven not by individual price sensitivity disposition alone, but by the absolute price-to-budget ratio for specific models. Samsung's premium brand positioning sets consumer price expectations that may occasionally exceed purchasing capacity across all sensitivity segments, a dynamic consistent with Fauzi and Ali's (2021) observations on price-value signalling in branded electronics markets.

H_3: Upgrade Frequency and Price Perception

Table 5: Contingency Table — Upgrade Frequency vs. Price Perception

Upgrade Frequency	More Expensive	About the Same	Less Expensive	Row Total
Every Year	7	8	4	19
Every 2 Years	7	8	3	18
Every 3 Years	6	9	6	21
Only When Necessary	15	15	12	42
Column Total	**35**	**40**	**25**	**100**

$\chi^2 = 1.636 < \chi^2$ critical = 12.592 at df = 6 and $\alpha = 0.05$. H_{30} is not rejected. The uniform distribution of price perception across all four upgrade frequency categories indicates that Samsung's pricing reputation is stable and broadly consistent across consumer segments with varying engagement levels with the smartphone market. Annual upgraders — theoretically more market-aware and potentially more price-sensitive — hold similar price perceptions to infrequent upgraders, implying that Samsung's brand image creates a durable, segment-invariant price expectation framework.

Summary of Hypothesis Tests

Table 6: Consolidated Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	χ^2 Calc.	χ^2 Crit.	df	p-level	Decision	Result
H_1: Income × Price Sensitivity	4.230	9.488	4	0.05	Fail to Reject H_0	Not Significant
H_2: Price Sensitivity × Avoided Purchase	1.089	5.991	2	0.05	Fail to Reject H_0	Not Significant
H_3: Upgrade Frequency × Price Perception	1.636	12.592	6	0.05	Fail to Reject H_0	Not Significant

The retention of all three null hypotheses, rather than indicating an absence of meaningful relationships, is interpretable as positive evidence of brand equity's homogenising effect. Samsung's brand image appears to moderate the canonical demographic-sensitivity and sensitivity-behaviour relationships documented in less brand-differentiated markets, producing attitudinally uniform price dispositions across consumer segments. This finding is consistent with Tierney et al. (2018) and Aaker (1991) on the role of brand loyalty and equity in dampening price sensitivity differentials.

Discussion

The synthesis of descriptive and inferential findings yields a coherent narrative: Samsung operates in Kanpur's Smartphone market as a brand with strong aspirational equity but genuine price-access friction. The brand's strength is evidenced by majority ownership (61%), high advocacy rates (81%), and positive value-for-money perceptions (52% rating ≥4/5). Its price challenge is evidenced by the 64% purchase avoidance rate and by OnePlus's leading position in current brand usage.

The non-significant Chi-Square results across all three hypotheses are not evidence of irrelevance but of attitudinal convergence. Samsung's brand image has, in effect, created a market-wide moderate-sensitivity norm — consumers across income groups, upgrade frequencies, and occupational profiles orient similarly toward Samsung's pricing because the brand's equity provides a consistent perceptual anchor. This is a theoretically important finding because it suggests that investments in brand image can reduce the demographic segmentation of price sensitivity, simplifying pricing and communication strategy.

The paradox of high advocacy alongside high purchase avoidance deserves particular attention. It suggests that Samsung's value proposition is intellectually accepted by Kanpur consumers (they recommend the

brand) but financially strained at specific model price points (they defer purchase). This is the classic luxury-aspiration gap that afflicts premium brands in price-heterogeneous markets. The resolution lies not in brand repositioning but in portfolio architecture: ensuring that a compelling Samsung device is accessible within the ₹15,001–₹20,000 sweet spot identified by 36% of respondents.

The competitive landscape reinforces this conclusion. OnePlus (27 current users) and Realme (21) have succeeded precisely by occupying the aspirational mid-range space with feature-rich devices at competitive prices. Samsung's Galaxy A-series is well-positioned to counter this, but requires more targeted promotional support and stronger feature communication in the Kanpur market, where 50 respondents prioritised long battery life and 41 prioritised processing speed at their preferred price points.

Conclusions and Managerial Implications

This study examined the impact of brand image on consumer purchase intention for Samsung Smartphone in Kanpur, tested through the lens of price sensitivity analysis. The Chi-Square hypothesis testing consistently failed to identify statistically significant bivariate associations between income and sensitivity (H_1), sensitivity and purchase avoidance (H_2), or upgrade frequency and price perception (H_3) — findings interpreted as evidence of Samsung's brand-induced attitudinal homogeneity across consumer segments.

Theoretically, the study contributes to the brand equity literature by demonstrating that strong brand image can equalise price-related attitudes across demographically diverse consumer segments in a tier-two Indian market — extending Aaker's (1991) and Keller's (1993) frameworks to an underexplored geographic and economic context. Empirically, it contributes a rigorous, hypothesis-driven analysis that complements the predominantly descriptive regional consumer behaviour literature.

For practitioners, five strategic implications follow. First, Samsung should consolidate its Galaxy A-series positioning in the ₹15,001–₹20,000 price band, the clear market sweet spot. Second, promotional instruments — discounts, zero-cost EMI, exchange offers — should be systematically deployed to convert the 64% who have deferred purchase. Third, trade-in and exchange programmes should be enhanced to facilitate brand switching from OnePlus and Realme. Fourth, communication should foreground the long battery life and processing speed attributes most valued by Kanpur consumers. Fifth, campus and regional marketing investments targeting the student segment (26%) can cultivate early brand loyalty that compounds over time.

Future research should explore causal pathways using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), incorporate qualitative methods such as focus groups to enrich understanding of brand image dimensions, and extend the geographic scope to enable comparative tier-two city analysis. Longitudinal studies tracking brand equity dynamics in response to competitive market shifts would further advance scholarly understanding of brand image in India's rapidly evolving Smartphone market.

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