

Factors Affecting Purchase Intention towards Smartphone Brand: A Study on Bangladeshi Private University Students

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ABSTRACT

In today's technology based world, people are depending more and more on various technology devices. Smartphone is one of the most important devices people use mainly for communicating with others and some specific purposes. It is not an easy task to choose the right Smartphone for an individual's needs when there are so many Smartphone brand available in the market. There are some critical factors affecting the individuals Smartphone purchase intention. This study aims to explore the factors that affect the purchase intention towards Smartphone brand. A structured questionnaire on 5-points Likert scale was developed to collect data from 302 respondents who are studying in different private universities of Dhaka city in Bangladesh using convenient sampling method. Structural equation modeling was used to identify the significant factors affecting purchase intention towards Smartphone brand. Data was analyzed by using SmartPLS software. This study found that Price, Peer Influence and Product features are the factors highly significantly affect the purchase intention towards Smartphone Brand but not Brand Image. The findings of this research may help not only the private university students but also other consumers who intend to purchase Smartphone. Smartphone manufacturer also consider these factors for Bangladeshi market.

Key Words: Smartphone, Brand Image, Purchase Intention, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Private University

INTRODUCTION

Telecommunication device help us to communicate at a distance. The first telecommunication device, Pager, a small telecommunications device that was only able to receive or transmit alert signals and send short messages. Martin Cooper the Motorola

researcher invented hand phone in 1973. The traditional hand phone was design in large and bulky in size and only had some basic functions such as call and short messaging system (SMS). Hand phone is now further redesigned to smaller and compact version. From the hand phone that consists of numerous buttons, phone is now evolving becomes Smartphone as it can be control by touch screen. In general, a Smartphone is an extension of the traditional handheld hand phones. However, it performs a wider range of functions. Nowadays, Smartphone has been deeply accepted by most people around the world and have become an integral part of everyone around the globe.

In addition, due to vast improvements in technology, more advanced and sophisticated Smartphone are introduced and launched almost every year. Smartphone has been deeply accepted by most people around the world especially among young adult consumers. The number of Smartphone users in Bangladesh has increased by 3.1 million to 8.2 millions in 2015, according to a recent report published by Counterpoint Technology Market Research. Counterpoint is a fast-growing, innovative and independent market research and consulting firm.

With almost one-fourth of population connected to internet, there is a huge opportunity for the handset players to tap first time users by offering affordable, yet quality smart devices. Industry insiders estimate that more players will enter the handset market this year. This research studies and analyses the factors that trigger the purchase intention of private university students of Bangladesh in Smartphone brand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purchase intention

Future possibility and willingness of individuals for purchasing a good or service is said to be the purchase intention (Richard, Loury & David, 2013). According to Ibrahim, Kassim, & Mohamood (2013) social influence has high impact in attracting young consumers for buying Smartphone and the buyers collect brand information from different sources like colleagues, friends and family and so on and then they will decide about their brand choice. It is identified by the previous research that there are positive relationships between brand image, peer influence, product feature and price, with purchase intention (Lin & Lin, 2007; Ibrahim, Kassim, & Mohamood, 2013). (Dodds et al., 1998; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000; Yang, 2009) according to Dodds (1998) and Schiffman & Kanuk (2000) if consumers have higher willingness to purchase a product they will have a higher purchase intention. Furthermore, marketers use purchase intention as a common tool to predict the sales of existing goods and services (Armstrong, Morwitz & Kumer, 2000). Higher the brands image higher the purchase intentions (Wang, 2006). Purchase intention is defined as the individual's intention to purchase a particular brand after certain evaluation. Few researchers found out consumer's purchase intention is based on their past experience, their preference toward the product and the external environment to acquire information, compare alternative, and make purchase decision (Laroche et al. (1996). Product price and features are used as the main variable to influence their consumers' product evaluations and purchase intentions by the marketers (Chang and Albert, 1994).

Brand image

Brand image referees to a person's beliefs, ideas, and impression regarding to an object. (Kotler, P., & Gertner, D. (2002)). Brand image refers to the image of any product that is visualized in the mind of a consumers or anything related to the memory to a brand (Aaker, 1991). The impression toward a brand is implied by the brand associations held in consumer

memory. In this association depends three aspects including strength, favorability and uniqueness of the brand? (Keller, 1993). Consumers perceive that products with good brand image provide better quality and that's why consumers prefer brand that has better image (Eze, Tan and Yeo, 2012). When consumers find brand uniqueness compared to other brand then they are willing to pay premium price for the brand(Hyun & Kim ,2011).consumers decide which brand gives them more value on the basis of band image(Lee, Lee and Wu, 2011). According to (Salciuviene, Ghauri and De Mattos, 2009) in consumers mind Apple has higher brand image and they associate the brand with higher symbolic association. Consumers evaluate the brand in terms of the quality, fissionability, prestige, trustworthiness and stylishness. Consumers purchase intention increases if there is successful brand image. Successful brand image also help consumers to identify their needs and satisfaction (Hsieh, Pan, and Setiono, 2004). Higher level of satisfaction and consumer confidence to purchase a particular product is increased by a strong brand image (Laroche, Kim and Zhou, 1996). Intrinsic advantages received by consumers while using the product or services is referred to functional benefits which is corroborating product related attributes quenching consumers basic needs (Keller, 1993).

Pricing

Determining the relative price of a product or service pricing is an essential factor. Price is the amount of money needed to own a product or service. Price can be said as the total amount needed to obtain a benefit of the product or service owning (Philip Kotler, 2011).

According to Stanton price an element of marketing mix solely affects the income at a certain period of time. Higher prices are imposed on products and consumers are interested to buy the product. Many consumers preferred high quality products paying high price (Suri, R., & Monroe, K. B. (2003). The research concludes that high price of the product directly influences and stimulates a purchase intention. (Tellis and Gaeth, 1990) and (Bloch & Black, 1988) journal article further enhances this statement. Depending on the type of products and what type it is pricing a product has dual effect both advantageous and disadvantageous. Higher pricing has positive effect on purchase decision (Erickson and Johansson 1985). Shoppers are very heterogeneous regarding their attention and reaction to price and promotions. Product having same functionality without differentiation effects negatively when it is high priced (Dickson and Sawyer, 1990).

Product features

According to (Kotler, Philip, Armstrong, and Gary, 2010) Product is anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. Meeting the level of satisfaction of consumers' needs and wants, owning the product, usage and utility feature is an important attribute of a product product (Kotler, Philip, Armstrong, and Gary, 2007). Feature are like camera functionality, touch screen feature, High- resolution display, Wi-Fi, waterproof and shockproof, new design, LTE or 4G speed internet connection, Smartphone application installation, high gigabytes of storage, large-screen and powerful processor (Oulasvirta, 2011). The young female consumers choice towards smartphone brands is influenced by the new feature of Smartphone and based on the features consumes will differentiate which smartphone brands will be the origin they made the choice (Meirovich & Bahnan ,2008). According to Dziwornu (2013), Special feature and design is one of the main elements that influence the purchase decision. According to (Isiklar and Buyukozkan, 2007) to satisfy people's variety of needs Product features have the similar meaning of the technical characteristic, physical

characteristic, function and extended attributes of product. 56% Consumer purchases Smartphone based on design and exclude the functionality of WiFi, processor power, price, and others (Osman, 2012). Based on the same research of Osman (2012), customer thinks design is the most important factors for making the choices. Consumers purchase Smartphone considering software functionality as the main influencing factor unlike hardware functionality (Osman, 2012). According to (International Data Corporation, 2014) Google Android own the global market share of 78% in mobile operating system, while Microsoft Windows phone 8 owns only 2.5% , Apple iOS owned only 18% of market share, Blackberry owned 0.5% and others is only 0.6% this research found that consumer purchase a Smartphone or brands based on the software much higher than hardware. According to (Vida, Cosmos, & Samuel, 2013) student's purchase of mobile phones behavior is influenced by the ranking of durability, performance and features which shows features is 85.8%. Smartphone users are concerned about the new function and new innovative of functionality for hardware and operating system (Karen Lim Lay-Yee, 2013).

Peer Influence

Social group influences consumers in decision making process and consumers seek the advice from those who are experienced in the area especially when purchase a high-involvement products (Farzana, 2012). This research reveals that social influence might come from peers regarding the Smartphone purchasing process for generation Y (Farzana, 2012). A research conducted by Osman (2012), shows that 35.6% of 1814 Malaysian respondents think that the trend in society is the criteria that will influence on the smartphone purchase decision (Osman, 2012). The study of Bearden and Etzel (1982) reveals that purchase decision is concerned with the degree of influence on luxury versus a necessity and the degree of influence on publicly or privately used product. These kinds of products are exclusive and tend to be more easily influence by peer group but privately necessity products are not exclusive and unable to be observing by public when it is used. This study also found three types of social influence informational, utilitarian and value expressive (Bearden and Etzel, 1982). Additionally, Manglegurg (2004) includes observing how others perform or actively searching information from an expertise is explained as informational influence. Peers have higher degree of influence on teenager in choosing a clothes brand (Lachance et al., 2006). According to Yoh (2005) peers exert higher level of influence than parent in teenagers' athletic shoe purchasing (Yoh, 2005). A research conducted by Subramanian (1995) identified that peers have stronger influence on young adult in choosing fashion cloth (Subaramanian and Subramanian 1995). Reference group is considered by the values and attitudes of a group that an individual treat as a benchmark to his or her current behavior (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007). If anyone has direct interaction with an individual including attitude, values and norms rendered such as co-workers, parents and peers then he or she can be in a reference group (Bristol and Manglegurg, 2004). According to (Mourali, Laroche and Pons, 2005) psychological and consumer behavior literature suggests that there is a negative correlation to the relationship between self-esteem and affection to interpersonal influence.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The objective of this study was to investigate the purchase intention of the private university students of Bangladesh, on the basis of different factors like brand image, price, product feature, and peer influence. In the literature, the related studies suggest that the types of factors in path model applications in different private university are brand image, price, product feature, and peer influence. The theoretical model is presented in figure 1.

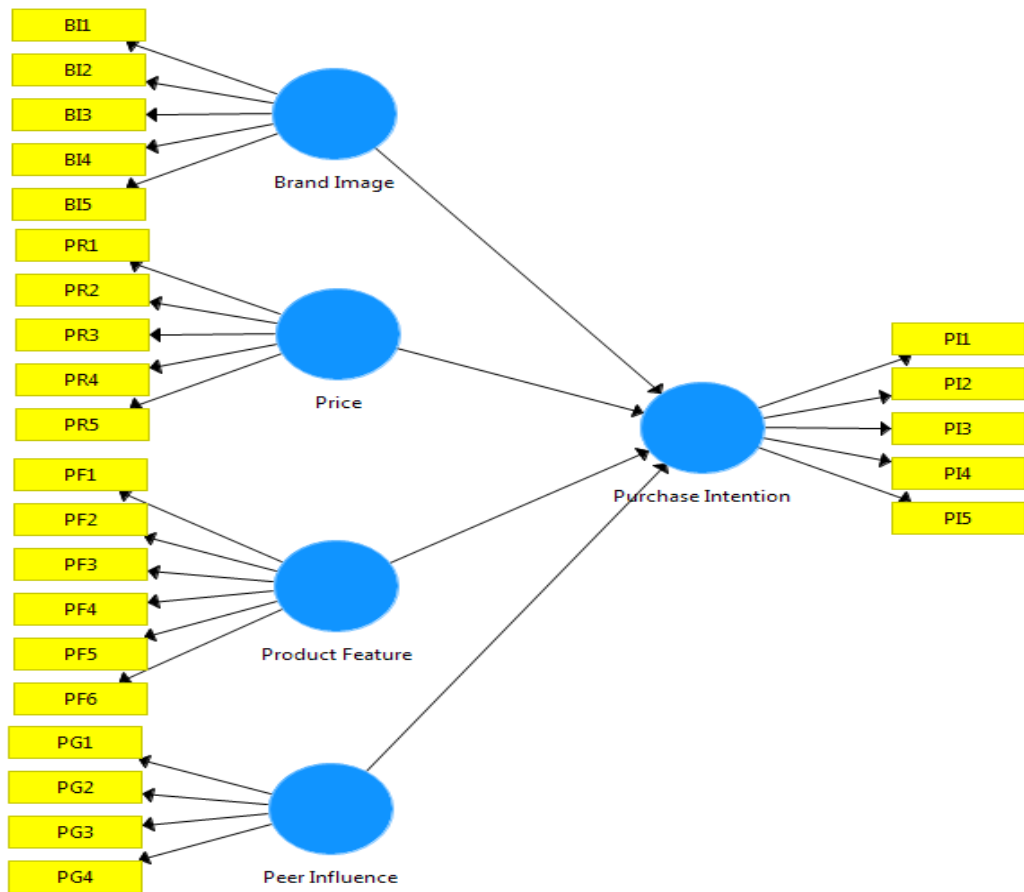


Figure 01: The conceptual frame work of Smartphone purchase intention of the private university students of Bangladesh.

Research objectives

- The problem in this study was to determine the opinion of the selected students engaged in private university of Dhaka division regarding their Smartphone purchase intention.
- The investigation particularly included determining the student's perception about purchase intention of Smartphone, their opinion regarding the brand image, price, peer influence and product feature.
- To determine the influential factors that defines the purchase intention of the private university students about Smartphone.

HYPOTHESES

The mentioned problems urged the researcher to set-up the following research hypotheses. For examining the impact on purchase intention of the Smartphone for the students, the following null hypotheses were formed.

H₀₁: There is no relationship between Brand Image and Smartphone Purchase Intention factors.

- H₀₂: There is no relationship between Peer Influence and Smartphone Purchase Intention factors.
- H₀₃: There is no relationship between Price and Smartphone Purchase Intention factors.
- H₀₄: There is no relationship between Product Feature and Smartphone Purchase Intention factors.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Methodology includes data sources, sample design, sample selection, questionnaire design, data collection, analysis of data and report writing. The methodology described by Cochran (2007) has been used in writing research methods. The details are explained below:

Data Sources

Though there are two sources of data, only primary data were used in this research. Primary data were collected from the students who are studying in different private universities of Dhaka division in Bangladesh.

Determination of Sample Size

In Bangladesh there are 80 private universities that are University Grants Commission (UGC) approved and fully operational right now in five out of seven divisions. Another 16 universities has been approved by UGC recently but yet to start operation. So total number of UGC approved private university is now 96. Most of the private universities (51) are in Dhaka Division. Each and every have their campuses in Dhaka city, concentrated mostly in the Gulshan, Panthapath, Dhanmondi, and Uttara. Since majority of the private universities are in Dhaka division running with huge number of students, so sample were chosen from the private universities located Dhaka division only. Getting complete list of all the private university students were so tough, after that sample size become very large if sample size determination formula were used. That's why convenience sampling method was used to collect a sample of 302 students who are studying at different private universities located at Dhaka in Bangladesh.

Questionnaire Design

A structured questionnaire on 5-points Likert scale was used to collect information from the respondents. Questionnaire was made considering the context of Bangladesh so that real scenario regarding purchase intention of the private university students towards Smartphone brand can be understood.

Data Collection

Data were collected from the students of different private universities situated at Dhaka in Bangladesh. At different convenient time, different private university students were surveyed. Vagueness of any question was clear at the time of survey to get accurate responses from the respondents.

Data Analysis

To perform analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Descriptive statistics such as, frequency and simple percentage were used to describe the situation. Inferential statistics like structural equation modeling, correlations, ANOVA and multiple regressions were used to identify the factors and their relationships among them. Structural equation modeling was used to identify the factors that have direct and indirect effect on purchase intention.

Discriminant Validity

	Brand Image	Peer Influence	Price	Product Feature	Purchase Intention
Brand Image	0.769				
Peer Influence	0.219	0.729			
Price	0.209	0.318	0.770		
Product Feature	0.355	0.322	0.243	0.730	
Purchase Intention	0.249	0.368	0.340	0.306	0.745

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS DISCUSSION

Table 01: Demographic Information of Smartphone user of Bangladeshi private university students

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	188	62.3
Female	114	37.7
Have you purchase Smartphone before		
Yes	278	92
No	24	8
What is your current Smartphone brand		
Apple	17	5.6
Sony	13	4.3
HTC	21	7.0
Samsung	131	43.4
Nokia	13	4.3
Symphony	41	13.6
Oppo	15	5.0
HuaWei	10	3.3
Others	41	12.3
Which Smartphone brand do you preferred		
Apple	58	19.2
Sony	16	5.3
HTC	27	8.9
Samsung	128	42.4
Nokia	14	4.6
Symphony	18	6.0
Oppo	19	6.3
HuaWei	8	2.6
Others	14	4.3
How much money do you spent on your Smartphone		
Tk 3000-7000	19	6.3
Tk 7000-15000	92	30.5
Tk 15000-25000	135	44.7
Tk 25000 and Above	56	18.5

Table-1 provides the frequency distribution of the gender comprised of male and female. A total of 302 respondents in private Universities of Bangladesh were included in this study, out of which 188 respondents were male representing 62.3 % of the total population and

remaining 144 respondents were female representing 37.7 % of the total population. This table shows that 92% of the respondents purchase Smartphone before, 43.4% are currently using Samsung Smartphone brand, 42.4% respondents' preferred Brand is Samsung and 44.7% respondents spends Tk. 15000-25000 on their Smartphone.

FACTOR ANALYSIS

A total of 302 usable survey responses were analyzed in this section. The factor analysis technique has been applied to examine the relationship between different factors of service quality and purchase intention towards Smartphone brand of Bangladeshi private university students. The four factors like Brand Image, Peer Influence, Price, Product Feature (Independent) and one dependent factor (Retention) that are found from the rotated factor matrix (Table: 2) are given below:

Factor-1 (Brand Image): This includes five variables of which Brand image increase my status in the society, I will make my purchase according to my favorite's Smartphone brand, regardless of the price are found important when purchasing Smartphone. So, it provides a basis for conceptualization of a dimension which may be identified as Brand Image factor.

Factor-2 (Peer Influence): This includes four variables of which I like to know what Smartphone makes good impressions on my friends, and I will ask the opinion from my friends when buying a Smartphone is found important when purchasing Smartphone. So, it provides a basis for conceptualization of a dimension which may be identified as Peer Influence factor.

Factor-3 (Price): This includes five variables of which I buy Smartphone because they are worth to use regarding between with their price and usages and I am willing to buy Smartphone even though the price is higher are found important when purchasing Smartphone. So, it provides a basis for conceptualization of a dimension which may be identified as Price factor.

Table 02: Factor Analysis of purchase intention towards Smartphone brand of Bangladeshi private university students

Factors	Variables	Factor Loading	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	IR	Alpha	CR	AVE	VIF
Brand Image	BI1	0.82	0.80	0.11	7.59	0.67	0.63	0.74	0.59	1.04
	BI3	0.71	0.71	0.12	5.93	0.51				1.04
Product Feature	PF2	0.66	0.65	0.15	4.37	0.43	0.60	0.69	0.53	1.00
	PF3	0.79	0.78	0.12	6.63	0.63				1.00
Peer Influence	PG1	0.73	0.73	0.11	6.49	0.54	0.77	0.69	0.53	1.04
	PG4	0.72	0.71	0.12	6.14	0.52				1.04
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.72	0.72	0.05	15.19	0.52	0.62	0.79	0.55	1.00
	PI3	0.77	0.78	0.04	19.22	0.60				1.00
	PI4	0.73	0.73	0.05	15.08	0.54				1.19
Price	PR3	0.72	0.71	0.11	6.44	0.52	0.61	0.74	0.59	1.22
	PR4	0.81	0.81	0.09	9.47	0.66				1.19

IR=Indicator Reliability, CR=Composite Reliability, Alpha=Cronbach's Alpha, AVE=Average Variance Extracted, VIF=Multicollinearity. Collinearity Statistic (VIF) the rules of thumb for the VIF are as follows: VIF < 3; no problem, VIF > 3; potential problem, VIF > 5; very likely problem, VIF > 10; definitely problem. Note: AVE>0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981); Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009), Composite Reliability>0.70 (Hair et al. 1998), Cronbach's alpha>= 0.60, (Nunnally and Berstein (1994))

Factor-4 (Product Feature): This includes six variables of which two Smartphone's had the same features I would choose the Smartphone that is the current craze from the Brand point of view, and the quality, reliability of the product doesn't matter to me, what matters are that the Brand is the current craze. (Everyone wants one) are found important when purchasing Smartphone. So, it provides a basis for conceptualization of a dimension which may be identified as Product Feature factor.

Factor-5 (Purchase Intention): This includes five variables of which I intend to buy a Smartphone in near future, I will recommend my friend to buy Smartphone, and I search for information about Smartphone from time to time are found important when purchasing Smartphone So, it provides a basis for conceptualization of a dimension which may be identified as Purchase Intention factor.

Table-2 shows that all of the T-Statistic is larger than 2.58 at 1% level of significance, we can say that the outer model loadings are highly significant. So, our SEM model is accepted for above evidence in this study. Generally, A global fit measure (GOF) was conducted for path modeling; it is defined as the geometric mean of average communality and average R-Square (especially endogenous variables) (Chin, 2010) (see the formula). In this study, GOF value was 0.75 (R-Square=0.227, average AVE = 0.56 for purchase intention of Smartphone of private university students. So, the value of GOF exceeded the largest cut-off value (0.36), and it is indicated that the proposed model of this study had better explaining power that based on the recommended value of $GOF_{small} = 0.1$, $GOF_{medium} = 0.25$, and $GOF_{large} = 0.36$ (Akter et al., 2011).

PATH DIAGRAM

A multivariate analysis technique like 'Partial Least Square Method' was used to identify the significant purchase intention factors identified through factor analysis. Path Diagram of purchase intention of private university students of Bangladesh suggested that the price, product feature and peer influence have the strongest effect on purchase intention of private university students. The hypothesized path relationship among independent variables like price, product feature & peer influence and purchase intention of private university students are highly significant at 1% level of significance except brand image. The every values of VIF show that there is no multicollinearity effect among those variables. (Table 03)

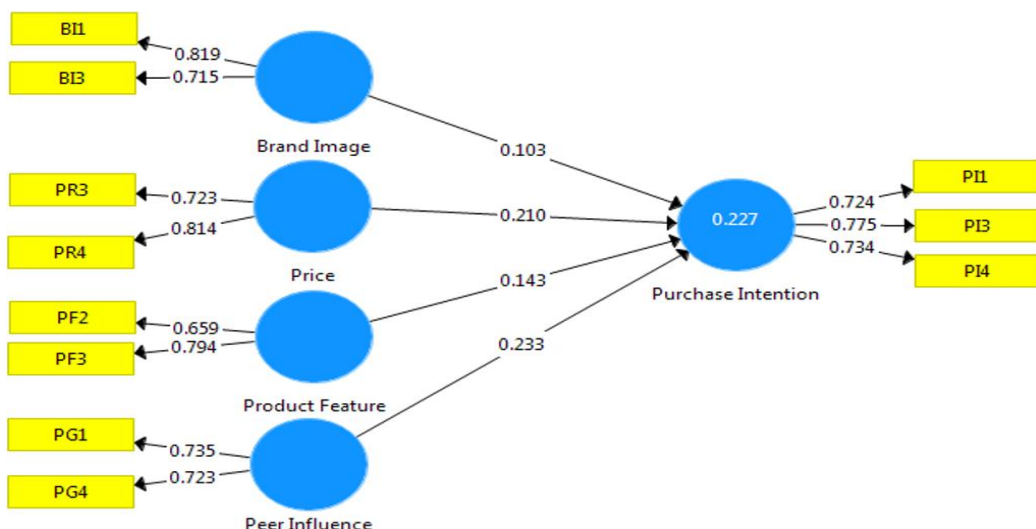


Table 03: Results of Multivariate Analysis - Partial Least Square (PLS)

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	VIF
Brand Image -> Purchase Intention	0.103	0.106	0.054	1.892	0.059	1.17
Peer Influence -> Purchase Intention	0.233	0.242	0.062	3.753	0.000	1.21
Price -> Purchase Intention	0.210	0.208	0.068	3.095	0.002	1.15
Product Feature -> Purchase Intention	0.143	0.149	0.055	2.620	0.009	1.25
R Square	0.227					
R Square Adjusted	0.216					

Collinearity Statistic (VIF): The rules of thumb for the VIF are as follows: VIF < 3; no problem, VIF > 3; potential problem, VIF > 5; very likely problem, VIF > 10; definitely problem.

The path coefficients of the factors concerned with purchase intention of the private university students show that price, product feature and peer influence are the most important factor of purchase intention. (Table 03). By using SEM analysis it is found that, only three factors such as price, product feature and peer influence are the significant factors of purchase intention of the private university students in Bangladesh. This study suggests that in mobile sector of Bangladesh the policy makers and concerned authorities should focus more on the factors like price, product feature and peer influence.

	Null Hypotheses	Accepted/ Rejected
H ₀₁	There is no relationship between Brand Image and Smartphone Purchase Intention factors.	Accepted
H ₀₂	There is no relationship between Peer Influence and Smartphone Purchase Intention factors.	Rejected
H ₀₃	There is no relationship between Price and Smartphone Purchase Intention factors.	Rejected
H ₀₄	There is no relationship between Product Feature and Smartphone Purchase Intention factors.	Rejected

From above study the conclusion is that three factors like Peer Influence, Price, and Product Feature are influential factors for the purchase intention of Smartphone in Bangladeshi private university students because we can reject the null hypotheses by using p-value those are shown in table 3.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Nothing is 100% accurate in the physical world. This research is not exceptional one. There are still few shortcomings though the objective of the research is achieved. These are discussed below:

- Limited Geographical Coverage: Since most of the private universities are located in the Dhaka city of Bangladesh, that's why this research focused on Dhaka city only. This helped the researchers to minimize the cost involved in conducting the research.
- Involvement of certain group only: This research targeted only private university students. The research result in Smartphone purchase intention may be affected for this reason. Besides, the research shows only Smartphone purchase intention of private university students as the researcher does not include Smartphone purchase intention of public university students. Thus, the result can only reflect certain groups purchase intention about Smartphone brand.

- **Small Sampling Size:** In this research, 300 copies of structured questionnaire were distributed among the respondents to collect data. But the valid questionnaires that were usable in data processing are only 250 copies. The whole target group's of Smartphone purchase intention of the study which is private university students of Dhaka city may not be represented by only 250 valid questionnaires.
- **Consideration of other Variables:** Based on the Model Summary table 3, R square is 0.227 which indicates that Smartphone purchase intention is influenced only 22.7% by four factors namely brand image, price, product features and peer influence. The others factors are responsible for 75.3% to influence the Smartphone purchase intention.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our research had attained the main objective which is to study the factors that influence purchase intention of Smartphone brand of private university students of Bangladesh. Four determinants of purchase intention are identified and examined in this study, which is brand image, price, product features and peer influence. On the other hand, all of the hypotheses except one supported and it showed that without brand image, all other factors are the most influential in case of purchase intention of Smartphone brand for private university students of Bangladesh. Besides that, limitations and recommendations for prospect research have been included in this study to help the Smartphone marketers to understand the pulse of private university students towards Smartphone brand. This will formulate effective strategies to retain customer and thus increase profitability. This research will also contribute to academics who wish to conduct study in related field to gain deeper insights.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study only concentrates on purchase intention of private university students of Bangladesh. So, the factors identified are based on only private university students purchase intention, not the public university or others education sectors concern with purchase intention. Therefore, there is an ample scope to conduct further study by taking any diversified area into account for more justified results of purchase intention of Smartphone of Bangladeshi students.

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