

# A Study of Purchase Intention on Smartphones of Post 90s in Hong Kong

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## Abstract

Nowadays, people are willing to purchase their own smartphone and they heavily rely on their smartphone. In this case, smartphones have become the daily necessity among Hong Kong people. Also, nowadays Hong Kong people always look for the new model of smartphones, the trend of changing smartphones is still very strong. The purpose of this research is to study the factors affecting the purchase intention of smartphones of post 90s in Hong Kong. After reviewing the literature, this study chose three variables to study the relationship between brand name, price and social influence and purchase intention. An online questionnaire was adopted to carry out a quantitative study of post 90s in Hong Kong. The content of the survey included demographic factors and questions based on each variable. The result of the survey shows that there are two hypotheses are support in the study. One is the relationship between brand name and purchase intention and the other is relationship between social influence and purchase intention whilst price is not a significant factor influencing purchase intention. Therefore, it is strongly believe that management of smartphone producers and traders need to pay more attention to brand name and social influence in enhancing the purchase intention among post 90s in Hong Kong.

**Keywords:** brand, price, social influence, purchase intention, Hong Kong

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, smartphones are under rapid growth and it has become a necessity in our daily life. Compare with the old days, the fundamental use of mobile phones may be only for making phone calls or sending messages. However, nowadays smartphones have been treated as a new medium for communication and information sharing (May & Hearn, 2005). Since many people browse the web or have instant messages with others and the smartphones were treated as a small personal computer, therefore smartphones have been repositioned as a new information medium. Smartphones provide users a wide variety of functions such as instant communication, online purchase and social media.

According to the report from the Centre for the Advancement of Social Sciences Research of Hong Kong Baptist University, the age group of the smartphone users between 15 and 30 accounts for 43.4%. When considering whether to buy a smartphone, people may consider different factors before they have the purchase intention. Therefore, it is interesting to study how some significant factors, such as brand name, price and social influence affecting purchase intention of smartphone among the young generations. Therefore, post 90s in Hong Kong have been the target participants in this research. As post 90s which describes teenagers born after the year 1990 (Chan & Lee, 2014) and they are the major customers of smartphones and their consumption attributes are self-value and interests more than factors that related to money (China Internet Watch, 2019). The objective of this study is to explore the effects of those factors that might affect the intention of purchase of smartphone of post 90s in Hong Kong.

## 2. Literature Review

The dependent variables and independent variables in this research were studied based on different literatures.

### 2.1 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is a dependent variable in this research that may be affected by different independent variables. Chang and Wildt (1994) commented that purchase intention can be defined as an advance plan to purchase certain good or service in future, this plan may not always lead to implementation, because it is affected by ability to perform. Purchase intention can identify the possibility to purchase through the intensity of intention.

Chang and Wildt (1994) further elaborated that if consumers think that the product value is low, then their purchase intention will be weak, and the possibility to purchase will also be lower. The study by Ayodele and Ifeanyichukwu (2016) found that different consumers will have different requirements for smartphone based on the characteristics such as price, brand name, functions, quality. Consumers will search the relevant information of the different products, compare and evaluate them before making purchase decision. The product is valuable if it satisfies the consumers' needs and wants. The purchase intention will be stronger, and the possibility to purchase will also be higher.

### *2.2 Social Influence*

Consumer behavior is influenced by social factors, such as the consumer's small groups, family, and social roles and status (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). It will be affected by variety of people or media, such as relatives, family member or friend etc. and also it will affect by the media. When there is a new product launch, the company will put many advertisements through the TV or social media, when people watch the advertisement, it will affect them to buy the product. Social influence related to an individual it may affect another person to change their feelings, attitudes, and behavior. So when everyone owns a smartphone and become popular, it will affect people who don't have smartphone and they will go to buy one or base on their experience to switch to other smartphone brands.

A study also found that social influence has a significant relationship of student's dependency on a smartphone (Ting et al., 2011). Because it will have influence on a person or a group of people by his friends, social media, TV advertisement etc. If smartphones make a good impression or the experience from the consumer or their friends, consumers will base on them and it will lead to positive word-of-mouth communication to others. Therefore, consumers who are more likely to share their experience of using smartphone to the others through the positive word-of-mouth opinions and it will increase their purchase intention. Those actions will affect people to purchase a smartphone by the information in the social media.

Finally friends and family members are seen as social influence perceived to be important to consumers in promoting and encouraging greater dependence on smartphones (Suki, 2013a). Consumers may be susceptible to social influence by observation, perception or anticipation of decisions made by others in relation to smartphones (Suki, 2013a). The intention to buy a branded smartphone is based on a consumer's attitude towards the brand as well as the influence of social norms and other people's expectations (Wong, 2017).

### *2.3 Price*

According to the literature (Sata, 2013), every product should be priced as a certain level of acceptance from consumers. When products are priced at a lower price range, the consumers will not have enough confidence to buy it because consumers believe that lower price means lower quality. They worry about that whether the quality can be guaranteed. Buyers will evaluate the products based on price and brand. Therefore, why smartphones are priced at a high range because all the smartphone producers claim that their products have good quality, so they give a high price to it. However, some researchers commented that consumers will not only look for high price products. Many companies price their products lower and the consumers will look for this type of products. Although the price is lower, they strongly believe that they will find the best value of the product they purchased (Suki, 2013b).

Especially the smartphones nowadays, smartphones are seem to be a mini-computer that can let the users handle lots of daily tasks through a handy electronic device. A smartphone can create time value for them. Just take a model of an example, Samsung Galaxy J1, although it is a smartphone, not to consider how long it has been launched, it only sells at \$898, but it also can provide the same quality of experience for the consumers when comparing with the expensive one. But still, price is a critical factor for people for purchasing smartphones.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2010), they mentioned that price is the sum of value that consumers used to exchange the benefit from buying the product they want. Therefore, no matter how much the smartphone retailers price for a particular smartphone, it is still subjective that the consumers will basically consider is it worth for them to buy.

Besides the literatures mentioned above, there are still some researcher's conduct research on the relationship between smartphone purchase intention and price. According to Suki (2013b), he mentioned that the price is a tool of exchange to obtain a product or service. Every time people go to the store or online store to purchase smartphone, they will take the price into consideration. In this research, it states that brand image and product price influencing the purchase decision and it still true in the current market. When people browse the catalog of the smartphone, they can be aware that there may be a difference on price between an I-Phone and a Nokia

Phone. Since both of the phones are from different brands and those brands may represent to different social status and scale. Therefore, brand image and product price will influence the purchase intention.

Also, the potential customers will consider whether the quality of the smartphone can exceed their expectation. When people perceived that the quality of smartphone has exceeded their expectation, they will find it is good value for their money. When the new model is launched, their purchase intention will be stronger than before and they think the listed price is favorable to them. Otherwise, they will no longer arouse their purchase intention no matter how cheap the smartphone retailers priced.

In order to determine whether price determines the effects on purchase intention, it really depends on whether the smartphones can bring more benefits for them to exchange or they found that is worth for it.

2.4 Brand Name

Brand name is the most valuable asset of a company and is an exclusive name which indicates product to the market. Brand name is more than just names and symbols. It is also the element of relationship between company and consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Brand name is useful in corresponding and signifying quality to the consumers and suggests precise knowledge structure associated with the brand. Researchers have concluded that brand name and brand image act as the critical factors for adding value to the product (Yeh, Wang, & Yieh, 2016).

Brand names are veritable assets that help correspond product quality and suggest exact knowledge structures which relate to the brand (Filiari & Lin, 2017). They assert that brand does not only provides a unique identity and distinguishing mark but also corresponds the firm to its products or services. At the consumer level, Liu, C.J. and Liang (2013) posit that brand positively affects behavioral outcomes, including purchase intention.

Consumers prefer a widely accepted brand of smartphone as it reflects a unique status symbol that display information quickly with aggravation and clean graphical interface for touch screen interactions. For instance, brand of smartphone available in the market includes Samsung, BlackBerry, Apple, HTC, Nokia and LG. Therefore, there are many choices for the consumers.

To enhance consumers’ response, companies strive to build brand equity in order to capture consumers’ preference and loyalty. The effect of brand name towards smartphone shows that people trust the well-known brand for its quality, performance and believe that brand shows a person lifestyle and social status.

Brand name has a moderate impact on consumer behavior and could influence purchase decisions. The product’s brand name influenced consumers’ evaluation and subsequently affected their buying decision (Malviya, Singh Saluja, & Singh Thakur, 2013). The product’s brand name which has been built up a loyalty with consumers and affects their buying decision which is important to the purchase intention of consumers.

Also, Bojei, J. and Hoo (2012), opines that consumers prefer to buy branded products and services as brands offer quality assurance and generate choices as well as simplifying purchase decision. Thus, smartphone’s brand name is positively related to purchase behavior among undergraduate students.

Based on the literatures reviewed, there is a relationship between brand name and price. Through this study, the researchers would like to investigate the relationship of brand name and price.

2.5 Research Model

According to the review, they show that consumer’s value on five constructs including product features, brand name, price, social influence and purchase intention as the main variables that influences consumers to go for a new smartphone purchase decision and to be worth to study. Therefore, a model is proposed based on the above mentioned.

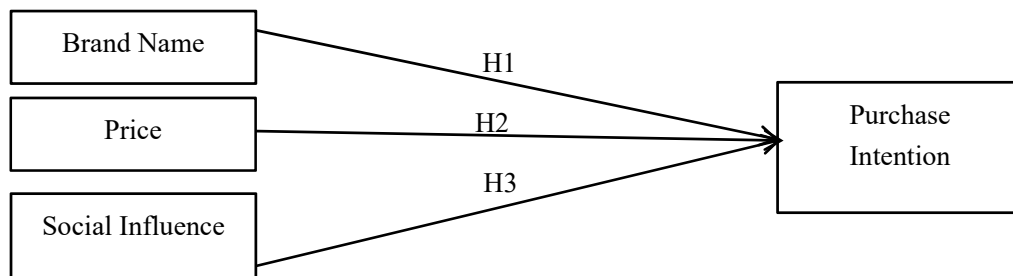


Figure 1. Research Model

Based on the literature review and the propose research model, five hypotheses are proposed. They are:

Hypotheses H1: There is a significant relationship between brand name and purchase intention of smartphones

Hypotheses H2: There is a significant relationship between price and purchase intention of smartphones

Hypotheses H3: There is a significant relationship between social influence and purchase intention of smartphones

### **3. Methodology**

Research methodologies are discussed in this section which include the approach of this study, the design of the research, methods in collecting data as well as sampling and questionnaires design and data analysis.

#### *3.1 Sample*

A sample size of 150 to 200 respondents to participate in this survey was determined in this research. Total 161 responses were collected.

#### *3.2 Sampling Approach*

Convenience sampling approach was used in this study. Because of the limitation in the duration of data collection, convenience sampling is an easier approach in reaching the target samples because the questionnaires were distributed in an online questionnaire platform. Response rate could be higher by using convenience sampling approach.

#### *3.3 Questionnaire Design*

A quantitative method was applied in this study to determine the significance of relationship between the independent constructs and the dependent constructs and their strength. The questionnaires are a set of questions for respondents to record their responses to individual questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). In this research, questionnaire was distributed in an online platform to collect the responses from the participants concerning the factors affecting purchase intention of smartphone of post 90s Hong Kong.

Since the design of questions affects the effectiveness of the results found, the questions used in the questionnaires are in 5-point scale style in which questions were posed and the respondents were asked to give their preferences from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Likert scale is used which consists of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). The reason in using Likert scale questions is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness in completing the questionnaires by the respondents. The questions in the questionnaire were adopted from different literatures because those questions adopted could be used to support the research model of this study. The questionnaire included 20 questions for the three factors proposed in the research model and the purchase intention of smartphone in Hong Kong. There are four sections which are purchase intention, price, brand name and social influence.

#### *3.4 Respondents' Profile*

The questionnaire of this study also consisted of questions about respondent's basic profile. This section has five questions about the demographic profile of the respondent, they are the respondent's gender, age, marital status, educational level and salary status.

#### *3.5 Data Collection Method*

The questions were posted on an online platform by using Google form and the link of the questions generated by Google form was sent through different online channels such as WhatsApp, Facebook and e-mail. Those channels were used because they are popular social media platforms and the response rate would be higher as it is convenience to contact the friends of the researchers as they are the target respondents of this study.

#### *3.6 Data Analysis*

Reliability and validity tests were conducted to prepare the appropriateness of the data collected for further statistical analysis. The three hypotheses were tested by using multiple linear regression and correlation.

## **4. Results and Analysis**

Total 161 responses have been collected for statistical analysis. This section consists of two parts, the descriptive analysis and the hypotheses testing. Descriptive analysis focused on the respondents' demographic profile whilst reliability and validity tests are conducted and followed by hypotheses testing.

### *4.1 Descriptive Analysis*

Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the data collected by presenting the results in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Data

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	77	47.8
Female	84	52.2
Age		
<18	16	9.9
18-21	66	41.0
22-25	64	39.8
26-29	15	9.3
Marital Status		
Single	86	53.40
Married	75	46.60
Educational Level		
Secondary	37	23.0
Higher Diploma/Associate	56	34.8
Bachelor	65	40.4
Master or above	3	1.9
Salary Status		
Below \$10,000	110	68.3
\$10,000 - \$19,999	36	22.4
\$20,000 - \$29,999	12	7.5
\$30,000 or above	3	1.9
Total:	161	100

Among the 161 respondents, the distribution between male and female is balanced, most of the respondents are with age between 18 and 25 (80.8%) who have the higher and various requirements in considering making purchase of smartphones.

#### 4.2 Validity Test

The validity of the collected data was tested by applying exploratory factor analysis and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Factor Loadings

Measurement Items	Component			
	PI	P	BN	SI
Purchase Intention (PI1)	0.18			
Purchase Intention (PI2)	0.24			
Purchase Intention (PI3)	0.89			
Purchase Intention (PI4)	0.94			
Price (P1)		0.07		
Price (P2)		0.80		
Price (P3)		0.72		
Price (P4)		0.00		
Brand Name (BN1)			0.30	
Brand Name (BN2)			0.80	
Brand Name (BN3)			0.80	
Brand Name (BN4)			0.29	
Social Influence (SI1)				0.18
Social Influence (SI2)				0.87
Social Influence (SI3)				0.24
Social Influence (SI4)				0.83

For purchase intention, the loading of PI1 and PI2 are 0.18 and 0.24 respectively which are lower than 0.70. Therefore, items PI1 and PI2 are removed from the construct purchase intention whilst only the responses of PI3 and PI4 were used for further statistics analysis. For the construct price, the loading of P1 and P4 are 0.07 and 0.00 respectively so they were removed and only P2 and P3 were used for measuring price. The same argument was applied to BN1 (0.30) and BN4 (0.29) in brand name and SI1 (0.18) and SI3 (0.24) in social influence which were removed from their corresponding constructs.

4.3 Reliability Test

Measurement of reliability is by examining the stability and consistency of the collected data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Consistency of the questions is to determine how well the items are together as a group in measuring a construct. Cronbach’s alpha will be used to determine the coefficient alpha values which less than 0.70 means that the correlation is not strong and unsatisfactory reliability (Hair et al., 2007).

As for the result of reliability test, the Cronbach alpha score is more than 0.70 that shows a high level of internal consistency. As there have two missing data and were found in data and based on the result of factor analysis, some variables were well above the commonly accepted thresholds (0.70). As shown in the result in Table 6, the value of purchase intention and social influence are well above the 0.70 commonly accepted thresholds. While other variables were fallen behind 0.70.

Table 3. Cronbach’s Alpha for reliability test

Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of Items
Purchase intention (PI3, PI4)	0.89	2
Price (P2, P3)	0.29	2
Brand name (BN2, BN3)	0.67	2
Social influence (SI2, SI4)	0.77	2

As shown in Table 3, the value of Cronbach’s alpha of purchase intention is 0.89 and social influence is 0.77. The Cronbach’s alpha value of brand name is 0.67 which is very near to 0.70 so it is still treated as acceptable for further statistical analysis with satisfactory level of reliability. The Cronbach’s alpha of price is quite low, however, this construct was still used for hypotheses testing with further discussion below.

4.4 Hypotheses Testing

Multiple linear regression was used to measure the relationship of the research model by measuring the effects of brand name, price and social influence to purchase intention simultaneously.

Table 4. Results of ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	151.02	4	50.34		
Residual	331.24	157	2.11	23.86	0.000
Total	482.26	160			

\*dependent variable: purchase intention

From Table 4, the significant value of the model is 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. Therefore, the model is significant. In addition, the relationship of purchase intention each constructs will also be tested.

Table 5. Results of multiple linear regression

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Coefficient)	1.70	0.91	0.00	1.88	0.062
Brand Name	0.54	0.09	0.44	6.10	0.000
Price	0.12	0.07	0.11	1.62	0.108
Social Influence	0.22	0.08	0.19	2.58	0.011

\*dependent variable: purchase intention

From Table 5, the significant values of brand name and social influence are 0.000 and 0.011 which are lower

than 0.05. They show that both brand name and social influence significantly affect purchase intention at the same time. The significant value of price is 0.108, which is greater than 0.05 and shows that that price does not significantly affect purchase intention when it is together with brand name and social influence together. It also gives further insight about the low value of Cronbach’s alpha.

In order to compare the strength of effect of each independent variable to purchase intention individually and all independent variables affecting purchase intention at the same time, correlation was conducted and the results are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Correlation value

	Purchase Intention
Brand Name	0.51*
Price	0.15
Social Influence	0.38*

\*p-value less than 0.05

From Table 5 above, the beta value of brand name is 0.44 whilst the correlation value is 0.51 in Table 6. The beta value of social influence is 0.19 in Table 5 and the correlation value is 0.38 in Table 6. The beta values of brand name and social influence are lower than their corresponding correlation value. However, the correlation between price and purchase intention is not significant both measuring them individually and in the research model in this study, it further shows that price is not a significant factor to purchase intention and explains the lower Cronbach’s alpha value.

The research model of this research model is partially supported as the coefficients of the two factors, brand name and social influence are lower than their correlation value with purchase intention individually whilst as price is not a significant factor as proposed in the research model.

The results of testing the individual hypothesis are summarized in the Table 7 below.

Table 7. Summary of hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	Results
H1 There is a significant relationship between brand name and purchase intention of smartphones	Supported
H2 There is a significant relationship between price and purchase intention of smartphones	Not supported
H3 There is a significant relationship between social influence and purchase intention of smartphones	Supported

### 5. Discussion

Chang and Wildt (2012) have mentioned that product value affected the purchase intention, and purchase intention affected the possibility to purchase. Consumers measure value through collecting and compare the relevant data of the product. By focusing on brand name of smartphone, Qun, et al. (2012) have mentioned that consumers think that the quality of famous brand is more guaranteed, and they believe that famous brand name can shows the lifestyle and social status. The smartphones with famous brand can show the lifestyle and social status of the customer and this can increase the purchase intention. For example, when a customer owned an iPhone X, since Apple is a famous brand and that particular smartphone is selling several thousand dollars, when the customer brings along the smartphone and meet with their friends, the customer can be a kind of show off in front of their friends. This also can be interpreted with the Maslow’s hierarchy of five levels of needs so famous brand name of smartphones can fulfill the esteem needs. From Maslow’s theory in which level 4 is divided into two categories: esteem for oneself (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence) and the desire for reputation or respect from others (e.g., status, prestige). Once consumers owned the famous smartphones, they feel that they are prestige and they can gain reputation or respect from others. Therefore, brand name can increase purchase intention. Qun, et al. (2012) also commented that famous brand has a greater impact on low-income consumers. As the spending power of those consumers is low, they will use a smartphone for a long time. This kind of consumers think that famous brand will offer high quality of products and higher durability of smartphone. Also, famous brand can provide well after-sales services. Brand awareness is directly proportional to product value. It shows that brand awareness, brand equity and brand association can also influence the purchase intention (Qun, et al., 2012).

This study shows that social influence is significant and positively related to purchase intention of smartphone. It

is consistent with the results of other studies (Harun, Sulong and Bin; 2015; Lim, Han and Chan; 2013). As most of the respondents' age is around 18-25 (80%) as proposed in this research. This range of age of consumers will use the smartphone to communicate with their friends in social media, so they might decide to purchase a smartphone because of the social influence. When there is a new model launched into the market and they see their friends also having this new model of smartphone or their friends comment on the new smartphone in the social media, they will also want to buy that model of smartphone according to the comments read from the social media.

Lim et al. (2013) commented that social influence was found to be positively related to purchase intention of smartphone. Their study was conducted among Generation Y in Malaysia. Arif, Aslam and Ali (2016) also found that students' dependency on smartphones was influenced by social influence and dependency is positively related with purchase behavior. Their findings further support the results found in this research. The results recommended the smartphone manufacturers and traders to actively promote their products through the popular social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc., which might have a stronger influence to the generation than traditional advertising medium.

However, there is no significant relationship between price and purchase intention found in this study. Some researchers found that price is the significant factor which affects decision in purchasing smartphone purchase. But they also claimed that price is not the main factor influencing purchase intention (Yu and Lee, 2014). This finding might possibly be due to the responses measuring price (P1, P4) were removed because of low factor loading values which lead to a doubt of validity of price. In addition, based on the consumer decision process model, when consumers consider buying a smartphone, they will compare different smartphones by evaluating the factors, such as aesthetic and functions more than the price of smartphones. Therefore, price will not affect purchase intention especially for generation in purchasing smartphones as studied in this research.

## 6. Limitations

There are several limitations in this study, first the result found might not be generalized for implications to management as the sample was collected in one area of Hong Kong, it could not represent the whole population in Hong Kong. Secondly, this research only proposed three independent variables and there might be other factors which affect the purchase intention of the respondents. Those factors that were not included in this research might be the influential predictors of purchase intention of smartphones of the respondents in Hong Kong. Next, some of the questions are from studies in overseas which might not be applicable in Hong Kong. In this research, the literatures from Malaysia and South Korea have been used. Although both of them are within the region, however, the living standard may be different from Hong Kong. Therefore, some studies may not exactly applicable for this research. The research used self-administrated questionnaire, some respondents might not understand the meaning of the questions and therefore they might choose an answer randomly without detailed consideration. Since without the present of research, interpretation of the questions might be very judgmental and different people would have different understanding of the questions. All those issues might reduce the accuracy and preciseness of the collected data and the found results. Finally, since the factor analysis has been done in this research and there are some items from questions counted as not valid. Therefore, the accuracy of the results would be affected.

## 7. Conclusion

This research studies about the factors that affecting the purchase intention of post 90s on smartphones. The demand of smartphone is rapidly increasing in recent years because of the advanced technology trend and innovation of functions of mobile phone so smartphones become a common commodity to most people especially the post 90s generation. This research tried to study three common factors which might affect the purchase decision of smartphones. The research had found that for post 90s teenagers who concerns about their self-value and interests more than monetary value, brand name and social influence are the significant factors they consider in purchase intention of smartphones whilst price is not. The results can give implications to management that as post 90s are their target customers, they need to focus on building up good brand name of their products, for example by advertisement, or by participating more in activities in corporate social responsibilities. In addition, besides traditional marketing and advertising channels, social media is a very popular channel to promote their products to these generations.

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