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A Study on Factors Influencing Gen Z Purchase Decision on Iphone in Coimbatore

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the multidimensional determinants influencing Generation Z's purchase decision toward the iPhone in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Primary data were collected from 182 respondents via a structured questionnaire and analysed using percentage analysis, One-Way ANOVA, Chi-Square tests, and Ranking Analysis. Findings reveal that the iPhone's status symbol value is the foremost purchase driver, followed by peer recommendations and price affordability, with camera quality ranking fourth. Income levels significantly influence reliance on online reviews, brand prestige, and ecosystem compatibility, while employment status yields no significant difference. A striking 92.31% of respondents have switched to iPhone from other brands, and over 53% rely on BNPL or EMI to finance their purchase, underscoring FinTech's role in enabling aspirational consumption among this demographic.

KEYWORDS: Generation Z, iPhone, Purchase Decision, Social Influence, Brand Prestige, Status Symbol, BNPL, Consumer Behaviour, Coimbatore

I. INTRODUCTION

Generation Z (born 1997–2012) represents a unique consumer segment that has grown up entirely in the digital era. Their purchasing patterns, lifestyle preferences, and brand perceptions are strongly influenced by technology and online ecosystems. Among smartphone brands, Apple's iPhone has emerged as a premium and aspirational product for Gen Z, with many buyers continuing to prefer it despite high prices and budget-friendly alternatives — due to a combination of emotional, social, and functional factors.

This study investigates the multidimensional factors affecting Gen Z purchase decisions toward the iPhone in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu — a major educational hub providing a relevant microcosm of broader Gen Z consumption trends. The study identifies key determinants, analyses product attribute roles, and explores the impact of social influence mechanisms on purchase intention, with the aim of providing actionable insights for marketers, brands, and researchers.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A substantial body of scholarship between 2018 and 2025 has examined iPhone purchase behaviour among Generation Z. Fitrayassa et al. (2024), studying 200 Gen Z respondents, confirmed that product quality, brand image, and lifestyle simultaneously influence iPhone purchase decisions. Kuswibowo et al. (2023) established that both product quality and brand image exert a significant positive effect on eWOM and purchase decisions. Najiah et al. (2023) found product quality to be the most dominant determinant among brand image, lifestyle, and quality variables.

Amron (2018) found that price exerts the strongest influence on iPhone purchase decisions, while product features have the weakest individual effect — resonating strongly in the Indian market context. Cvrtak et al. (2025) established that while Gen Y prioritises functional value, Gen Z places significantly higher importance on emotional and social value dimensions. Benita et al. (2023) confirmed that subjective norms — peer expectations — are the primary determinant and moderator of purchase intention, while Szabó and Dani (2021) documented the smartphone's central role as a status marker with social media usage averaging three to six hours daily among Gen Z.



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Arif and Indarwati (2025) demonstrated that both product quality and eWOM significantly influence purchasing decisions individually and jointly. Lutian et al. (2024) established that brand image mediates the relationship between price fairness, hedonic lifestyle, and purchase decisions. Collectively, the literature identifies a significant gap in India-specific Gen Z studies and in the integration of digital payment behaviour (UPI, BNPL) into purchase decision frameworks.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the key determinants that influence Generation Z's purchase decision toward the iPhone.
2. To analyze the role of product attributes (camera quality, performance, battery life, ecosystem compatibility) in shaping Gen Z's purchasing preference.
3. To examine the impact of social influence (peer recommendations, influencer marketing, online reviews) on Gen Z's purchase intention.
4. To evaluate the effect of spending patterns, budgeting behaviour, and perceived affordability on Gen Z's willingness to invest in a premium smartphone.
5. To assess how brand perception, brand loyalty, and perceived status value contribute to Gen Z's overall purchasing behaviour toward the iPhone.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design with a quantitative approach. The target population comprised Gen Z consumers (aged 18–27) in Coimbatore who own or intend to purchase an iPhone. A total of 182 valid responses were collected through non-probability convenience sampling via Google Forms, WhatsApp, and Instagram. The structured questionnaire covered demographics (4 questions), 5-point Likert scale attitude measures (5 questions), factor-ranking tasks (5 questions), and categorical behavioural questions (6 questions). Data were analysed using Percentage Analysis, One-Way ANOVA, Pearson Chi-Square Test, and Ranking Analysis via Mean Scores, using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS.

V. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Demographic Profile (N = 182)

| Age Group | N | % |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Below 18 | 105 | 57.69% |
| 18–20 Years | 48 | 26.37% |
| 21–23 Years | 25 | 13.74% |
| 24–27 Years | 4 | 2.20% |
| Total | 182 | 100% |

Table 1: Age Distribution

| Employment Status | N | % |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|
| Student | 94 | 51.65% |
| Employed | 70 | 38.46% |
| Unemployed | 16 | 8.79% |
| Business/Part-Timer | 2 | 1.10% |
| Total | 182 | 100% |

Table 3: Employment Status

| Gender | N | % |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Male | 172 | 94.51% |
| Female | 10 | 5.49% |
| Total | 182 | 100% |

Table 2: Gender Distribution

| Monthly Income (INR) | N | % |
|----------------------|------------|-------------|
| Below 25,000 | 35 | 19.23% |
| 25,000 – 50,000 | 70 | 38.46% |
| 50,001 – 1,00,000 | 57 | 31.32% |
| Above 1,00,000 | 20 | 10.99% |
| Total | 182 | 100% |

Table 4: Monthly Income



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The sample is heavily male-dominated (94.51%). Students constitute 51.65% of respondents. The majority (57.69%) are below 18, and the largest income bracket is ₹25,000–₹50,000 (38.46%), validating the study's relevance to aspirational mid-income Gen Z consumers.

5.2 Primary Motivation and Payment Behaviour

| Primary Motivation | N | % | Payment Method | N | % |
|----------------------|----|--------|----------------------|----|--------|
| Functional Features | 80 | 43.96% | Full Payment | 65 | 35.71% |
| Social Influence | 48 | 26.37% | BNPL | 58 | 31.87% |
| Brand Image / Status | 47 | 25.82% | EMI / Installments | 40 | 21.98% |
| Price / Value | 7 | 3.85% | UPI / Digital Wallet | 19 | 10.44% |

Table 5: Primary Motivation

Table 6: Payment Preference

While 43.96% cite functional features as their primary motivation, Social Influence (26.37%) and Brand Image/Status (25.82%) together account for 52.19% — confirming that social prestige dominates overall. Over 53% of respondents rely on BNPL or EMI to afford the iPhone, with 92.31% having switched from another brand, demonstrating Apple's aggressive Gen Z market penetration.

5.3 One-Way ANOVA Analysis

| Variable | SS (Empl.) | p | SS (Inc.) | F | p | Result (Income) |
|------------------------------|------------|------|-----------|-------|--------|--------------------|
| Camera Quality | 0.448 | .570 | 0.700 | 0.586 | .625 | Not Significant |
| Brand Prestige / Spend More | 1.355 | .190 | 3.328 | 2.808 | .041* | Significant |
| Social Influence | 0.976 | .426 | 4.328 | 2.603 | .054 | Not Significant |
| Online Reviews & Influencers | 0.022 | .982 | 8.482 | 5.061 | .002** | Highly Significant |
| Ecosystem Compatibility | 0.003 | .998 | 5.433 | 3.031 | .031* | Significant |

Table 7: ANOVA – Employment Status & Monthly Income vs. Purchase Factors (* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$)

Employment status shows no significant effect on any variable (all $p > 0.05$) — iPhone aspiration is universal across Gen Z regardless of occupation. In contrast, monthly income significantly differentiates reliance on online reviews/influencers ($p = 0.002$), ecosystem compatibility importance ($p = 0.031$), and brand prestige willingness to spend ($p = 0.041$). Camera quality remains universally valued regardless of income.

5.4 Chi-Square Test: Monthly Income vs. Payment Method

| Income (INR) | Full Payment | EMI | BNPL | UPI/Digital | Total |
|------------------|--------------|-----|------|-------------|-------|
| Below ₹25,000 | 14 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 35 |
| ₹25,000–50,000 | 10 | 18 | 36 | 6 | 70 |
| ₹50,001–1,00,000 | 31 | 9 | 13 | 4 | 57 |
| Above ₹1,00,000 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 20 |

Pearson $\chi^2 = 34.620$, $df = 9$, $p = .000$ — Null hypothesis rejected

Table 8: Chi-Square – Monthly Income × Preferred Payment Method



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The highly significant result ($p = .000$) confirms a strong association between income and payment preference. The middle-income segment (₹25,000–₹50,000) is most credit-dependent — 51.4% prefer BNPL — making the iPhone an aspirational purchase enabled by FinTech. Upper-middle earners (₹50,001–₹1,00,000) overwhelmingly prefer full payment (54.3%), while high-income consumers treat the iPhone as routine utility.

5.5 Ranking Analysis

| Rank | Attribute | Mean Score | Category |
|------|----------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Status Symbol | 1.46 | Lifestyle / Psychological |
| 2 | Friends / Family Recommendations | 1.56 | Social Influence |
| 3 | Price Affordability | 1.61 | Economic |
| 4 | Camera Quality | 1.70 | Product Attribute |
| 5 | Long-Term Durability | 1.86 | Economic / Product |

Table 9: Ranking Analysis – Key Purchase Decision Factors (Lower Mean = Higher Priority)

Status Symbol leads decisively (mean: 1.46), confirming the iPhone is primarily a social identity marker. Peer recommendations (1.56) rank above price affordability (1.61), which itself ranks above camera quality (1.70) — indicating financial feasibility is a more immediate concern during purchase than hardware specifications. Long-term durability ranks last (1.86), consistent with Gen Z's trend-driven, aesthetics-first consumption pattern.

VI. DISCUSSION

The findings reveal a purchase decision framework for Gen Z's iPhone preference that fundamentally prioritises social identity over functional utility, while constrained by economic reality. The supremacy of 'Status Symbol' (mean: 1.46) is consistent with Cvrtak et al. (2025) and Szabó and Dani (2021), who established the smartphone as a central Gen Z status marker. The second-place ranking of peer recommendations over influencer marketing suggests that close-network social proof remains the dominant influence mechanism — a finding aligned with Benita et al. (2023) — implying that community-level seeding strategies may outperform mass influencer campaigns.

The income ANOVA results introduce important nuance: while brand aspiration is universal across employment statuses, income significantly differentiates how Gen Z processes information. The high significance of online reviews and influencer impact ($p = 0.002$) suggests lower-income consumers are more susceptible to digital persuasion — a finding with targeted advertising implications. The Chi-Square results ($p = .000$) empirically confirm that BNPL and EMI are not merely payment preferences but essential accessibility infrastructure for aspirational Gen Z consumers in the Indian market, addressing a critical gap in existing literature.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive empirical analysis of factors influencing Gen Z's iPhone purchase decisions in Coimbatore. The findings converge on one clear conclusion: for Gen Z, the iPhone is a social identity investment. Status symbol value ranks above functional attributes, peer validation outweighs formal advertising, and price affordability supersedes camera quality in the final decision process. Apple's brand aspiration is democratically distributed across employment strata, but economic stratification significantly shapes how consumers process brand information and structure their purchase.

The striking prevalence of BNPL and EMI adoption (over 53%) reveals that modern FinTech has become a critical enabler of Apple's market penetration among income-constrained Gen Z consumers. For marketers, the primary strategic imperative is to sustain lifestyle and status positioning while expanding financial accessibility through zero-cost EMI, BNPL partnerships, and trade-in programs. Peer-seeding strategies and community-level social proof should complement traditional influencer campaigns for maximum effectiveness.



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