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## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

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# The Impact of Word of Mouth on Consumers Smartphone Buying Decisions

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**ABSTRACT:** In the highly competitive smartphone market, consumers are increasingly exposed to numerous advertising and promotional messages. However, the growing availability of consumer-generated information has shifted attention toward word of mouth (WOM) and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) as influential sources in the purchase decision process. This study examines the impact of customer word of mouth on smartphone purchase decisions and compares its credibility with traditional advertising. A descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed via an online survey. A total of 107 smartphone users participated in the study using convenience sampling. The collected data were analysed using percentage analysis, chi-square testing, and rank analysis to identify the relationship between information sources and consumer purchase behaviour. The findings indicate that young consumers, particularly those aged 18–25, represent the dominant segment of smartphone buyers. Personal recommendations, especially from friends, were found to have the strongest influence on purchase decisions. Electronic word of mouth, particularly YouTube reviews and online feedback, also plays a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and reducing purchase risk. In contrast, advertising mainly creates product awareness but has limited impact on the final purchase decision. The study concludes that consumer-generated information sources are more credible and influential than traditional advertising in shaping smartphone buying behaviour. The findings suggest that companies should focus on improving customer satisfaction and encouraging positive word of mouth to strengthen brand trust and influence future purchase decisions.

**KEYWORDS:** Word of Mouth (WOM), Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), Smartphone Purchase Decision, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Online Reviews.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive market, companies invest heavily in advertising to create product awareness. However, the increasing exposure to advertisements has reduced their persuasive impact, leading consumers to rely more on information shared by other users. Word of Mouth (WOM) refers to the exchange of opinions and experiences among consumers and is considered highly credible because it is based on real usage. With technological advancement, WOM has expanded into electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) through platforms such as social media, online reviews, and YouTube. In the smartphone market, consumers often seek both online and offline recommendations before making purchase decisions. Therefore, this study examines the influence of customer word of mouth on smartphone purchase decisions and compares its credibility with traditional advertising.

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The smartphone market has become highly competitive, with companies investing heavily in advertising to attract consumers. However, many consumers increasingly rely on word of mouth (WOM), both offline and online, as it is often considered more credible than advertisements. While advertising mainly creates awareness, recommendations and experiences shared by other users strongly influence purchase decisions. Despite its growing importance, the extent to which WOM influences smartphone buying behaviour compared to advertising remains unclear. Therefore, this study examines the role and credibility of WOM in influencing smartphone purchase decisions.



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### III. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the influence of customer word of mouth on smartphone purchase decisions.
2. To analyse the role of electronic word of mouth, including online and YouTube reviews, in influencing consumers.
3. To compare the credibility of customer word of mouth and advertising in the smartphone buying process.

### IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study relies on self-reported data from respondents, which may be influenced by personal bias or memory errors.
2. The influence of word of mouth is subjective and can vary across individuals, so the results reflect general trends rather than universal behaviour.
3. The research is conducted at a specific point in time, and consumer preferences or market trends may change in the future.
4. The study examines major influencing factors such as reviews, recommendations, and online opinions, but it does not cover every possible factor affecting smartphone purchase decisions.

### V. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. **Bughin, J., Doogan, J., and Vetvik, O. J. (2010)** examined the influence of word of mouth on consumer purchasing behaviour. The study found that word of mouth plays a significant role in shaping consumer decisions and can drive a large proportion of purchases. Consumer recommendations and shared experiences often influence buying behaviour more strongly than traditional marketing communication. The researchers also highlight that digital platforms have expanded the reach of word of mouth, allowing consumer opinions to spread rapidly.
2. **Abed, A. Y. (2018)** studied the role of word of mouth communication in influencing consumer buying behaviour for mobile phones. The findings show that recommendations and experiences shared by other consumers significantly affect purchase decisions. Word of mouth is considered more trustworthy because it is based on real product experiences rather than company advertisements. The study also indicates that positive word of mouth increases consumer confidence and encourages purchase behaviour.
3. **Iqbal, A., Khan, N. A., Malik, A., and Faridi, M. R. (2022)** examined the impact of electronic word of mouth on consumer purchase intention through social media and online shopping platforms. The study found that the credibility, quantity, and format of online reviews strongly influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. The results also show that reviews on shopping websites have a stronger influence on consumers compared to social media discussions.

### VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to the overall plan that guides the collection and analysis of data. This study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the influence of word of mouth on consumers' smartphone purchase decisions. Descriptive research is useful for understanding respondents' opinions, attitudes, and behaviour based on collected data.

#### SOURCE OF DATA

Primary and secondary data were used for this study. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed using Google Forms, which included demographic and opinion-based questions related to trust, credibility, and factors influencing smartphone purchase decisions. A total of 107 responses were obtained and used for statistical analysis. Secondary data was gathered from academic journals, research articles, books, and reliable online sources related to word of mouth, electronic word of mouth, advertising credibility, and consumer buying behaviour, which helped in developing the literature review and theoretical framework of the study.

#### SAMPLING SIZE

Sampling refers to selecting a subset of individuals from a population to draw meaningful conclusions. In this study, a sample of 107 respondents was selected using the convenience sampling method. This method was chosen due to its



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simplicity and suitability for academic research within limited time. The respondents were smartphone users from different demographic backgrounds such as age, gender, occupation, and income level, providing diversity for analysing the influence of word of mouth, electronic word of mouth, and advertising credibility on purchase decisions.

### VII. TOOLS USED ANALYSIS

1. **Percentage Analysis:** Percentage analysis is used to present data in a simple and understandable form. It helps in analysing demographic characteristics and respondents' opinions.
2. **Chi-Square Test:** The chi-square test is used to determine whether there is a significant relationship between two categorical variables.
3. **Rank Analysis:** Rank analysis is used to determine the order of preference among different factors based on their importance. It helps identify which factors most strongly influence smartphone purchase decisions.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Which factor finally convinces you to buy a smartphone?

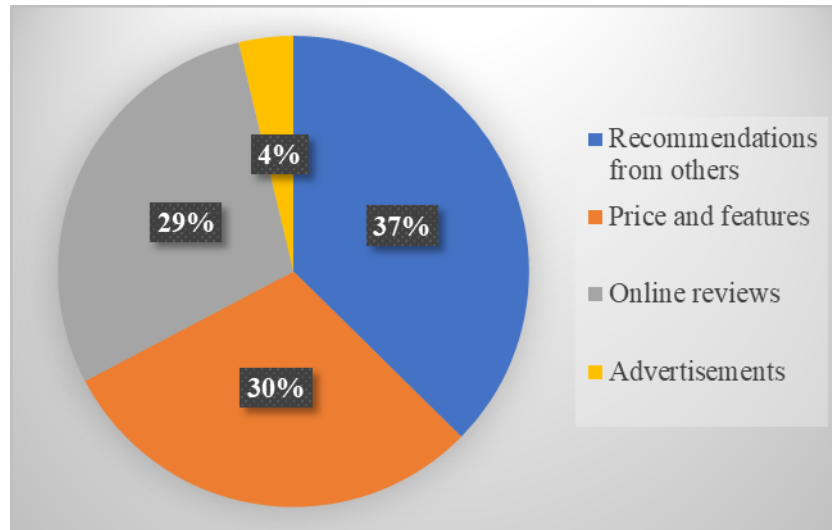
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Recommendations from others	40	37.38
Price and features	32	29.91
Online reviews	31	28.97
Advertisements	4	3.74
Grand total	107	100



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The following pie chart represents the percentage distribution of factors influencing smartphone purchase decisions



**INTERPRETATION:** The above table shows which factor finally convinces respondents to buy a smartphone. Most respondents (37.38%) are convinced by recommendations from others. This is followed by price and features at 29.91% and online reviews at 28.97%. Only a small percentage (3.74%) are influenced by advertisements in their final purchase decision.

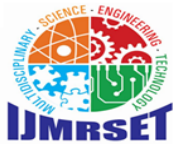
Overall, interpersonal recommendations play the most decisive role in the final buying decision, while advertisements have minimal direct impact.

### CHI-SQUARE

Association between the source trusted while buying a smartphone and the factor that finally convinces consumers to buy a smartphone

**OBSERVED FREQUENCY TABLE**

Row labels	Advertisements	Online reviews	Price and features	Recommendations from others	Row total
Advertisements	2	1		1	4
Brand reputation	2	3	7	5	17
Customer word of mouth		8	21	23	52
Online reviews		20	4	10	34
<b>Column total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>107</b>



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### EXPECTED FREQUENCY TABLE

E= grand total (row total × column total)

Row labels	Advertisements	Online reviews	Price features and	Recommendations from others	row total
Advertisements	0.14953271	1.196261682	1.196261682	1.457943925	4
Brand reputation	0.635514019	5.08411215	5.08411215	6.196261682	17
Customer word of mouth	1.943925234	15.55140187	15.55140187	18.95327103	52
Online reviews	1.271028037	10.1682243	10.1682243	12.39252336	34
<b>Column total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>107</b>

### CHI-SQUARE CALCULATION

$$X^2 = \sum (O-E)^2/E$$

Row labels	Advertisements	Online reviews	Price features and	Recommendations from others
Advertisements	22.89953271	0.032199182	1.196261682	0.143841361
Brand reputation	2.929631666	0.854332738	0.721979797	0.230952482
Customer word of mouth	1.943925234	3.666786485	1.908973985	0.864020535
Online reviews	1.271028037	9.506459593	3.741753711	0.461904963

$$X^2 = 52.37358416$$

#### Degree of freedom (df)

$$\begin{aligned} Df &= (r-1)(c-1) \\ &= (4-1)(4-1) \\ &= 3 \times 3 = 9 \end{aligned}$$

X <sup>2</sup>	52.37358416
Df	9
P-value	3.84139e-08 (0.000000038)

**INTERPRETATION :** The Chi-square test was conducted to examine the relationship between Which source do you trust more? And Which factor finally convinces you? The calculated Chi-square value is **52.37** with 9 degrees of freedom, and the p-value is 3.84139e-08, which is much lower than the 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between the source consumers trust and the factor that ultimately convinces them to purchase a smartphone. The findings clearly show that the level of trust in a particular source directly influences the final purchase decision.

Hence, trusted information sources which is customer word of mouth significantly influence the final smartphone purchase decision.

### VIII. FINDINGS

The study reveals that young consumer, particularly those aged 18–25, form the dominant group in smartphone purchase decisions, with many respondents being students who prefer mid-range smartphones priced between ₹20,001–₹40,000. Smartphones are mainly used for work, study, and communication, and many users retain their devices for more than three years. The analysis indicates that word of mouth significantly influences smartphone buying decisions, with consumers frequently seeking opinions from friends and trusted sources before purchasing. Electronic word of mouth also plays an important role, especially through YouTube reviews and online customer feedback. While advertisements mainly create awareness about smartphone brands, personal recommendations are considered more credible and often influence the final purchase decision.



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### IX. SUGGESTION

Based on the findings, smartphone companies should focus on improving customer satisfaction to generate positive word of mouth. Encouraging customers to share online reviews and testimonials can increase credibility and influence potential buyers. Companies should also invest in video-based marketing strategies, particularly YouTube reviews and product demonstrations, as consumers prefer visual explanations of smartphone features. Additionally, organisations should actively monitor and manage online reviews and introduce referral or peer recommendation programs to leverage the strong influence of personal networks.

### X. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that word of mouth and electronic word of mouth play a significant role in influencing smartphone purchase decisions. Personal recommendations, especially from friends and trusted sources, have a stronger impact on consumer behaviour than traditional advertising. Electronic word of mouth, particularly YouTube reviews and online feedback, further supports the decision-making process by providing detailed product information. Overall, consumer-generated information is perceived as more credible than advertising, making word of mouth an important factor shaping smartphone buying behaviour.

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