

The MSSU Consumer: Apple vs. Samsung

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Abstract

When choosing a smartphone, what smartphone do Missouri Southern State University students rate with a higher brand equity? In my literature review I have discussed: consumer behavior and focusing on the five building blocks of brand equity, brand identity, as well as looking at software ecosystems. I have studied brand equity and how businesses are developing a consumer's value for their product. I have manipulated a survey from a study performed in Sweden and distributed it to ten MSSU classes, and gathered a better picture of which smartphone brand, Apple or Samsung, is preferred by MSSU students. I was expecting to find that a majority of students have an Apple smartphone because of the ecosystem and brand equity that Apple has created.

Acknowledgements

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Literature Review

In the field of consumer behavior there are many different areas of marketing that can be studied. It is one of the most heavily researched areas of marketing (Babin, p126). As defined by the textbook *CB*, consumer behavior is the activities that consumers go through to find the value of different products and services once they have discovered that they have a need (Babin, 2011 p362). Businesses spend thousands of dollars to study this behavior and then use that information to help them better define their target market. A target market is a defined segment of consumers that a company is serving or selling to (Babin, p367). The market segment, for this study, will consist of traditional and non-traditional college aged students. In my research Joplin, Missouri will be the micro-culture for Midwest college age students. A micro-culture is a group of individuals who have a common set of values or beliefs who are within a larger culture. A business needs to periodically check back with these smaller sub-groups of users to ensure that their product or service is still appropriate for that micro-culture, Sewell (2002) and Babin (2011).

The different university classes at MSSU, who took my surveys, are the target market that has been focused on for this study. One of the important pieces of information that came from my selected demographic group aided in determining the “why.” As stated in Bill Stinnett’s book *Think like a Customer*, “for more crucial than what is valuable and important to your customer is why it is valuable and important to them (p.65).” Once developers and researchers know the “why” then even as time changes and they need to manipulate the product, then all that they need to do is go back to the question of “why” and make sure that they are still answering it. And most of the time if you know why your consumers are purchasing your product

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in particular, you can then make that a significant focus of your company and potentially turn it into a competitive advantage. Of course we must not forget to be checking back with our target market just to make sure we are still marketing to college level students and not to just those who would then be in their upper twenties (those who were originally in our target market).

Apple seems to be doing a really good job at figuring out that “why,” when it comes to consumer behavior and determining what consumers are looking for in a brand. A recent study, discussed how Apple become the “World’s Most Valuable Brand” (Heine, 2013). This sent companies like Google and Coca-Cola to second and third place respectively, when comparing the values of brands. Coca-Cola had been holding onto the first place spot for the past fourteen years. As stated by Heine, over the past year Apple has increased their brand name worth by 30 percent, with a dollar amount of \$98.3 billion (Heine, 2013). This article also gave a list of the other seven “World’s Most Valuable Brands” and Samsung, another cellular device company, had made a jump from ninth to eighth place. This shows that other cell phone companies are also increasing in the value of their brand name. As technology is becoming an even bigger part of our society at an increasing rate, I see the brand value’s for smartphone developers to only increase in the years to come. So, what does it take to create that brand equity? As discussed by the American Marketing Association, brand equity is the value that a consumer gives to a particular brand based on the attitudes and brand attributes that have favorable consequences during brand use. This lends itself to brand power when compared to other brands. In other words, brand power is, how much more will a consumer pay for a particular brand (Apple) over another brand (Samsung).

To get brand equity however, you need to build a high demand for your product that gives it that high prestige. Building up those brands comes down to different techniques and

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strategies. “Customers don’t choose one vender over another accidentally; they choose for specific reasons that they value (Stinnett, 2005 p 62).” With the iPhone buyers, do not only the iPhone because it is one of the “hottest” products on the market right now, but also because they already have one and like the familiarity that they have with Apple products. Consumers are willing to pay more for products that they do not have to relearn how to use; unless their dissatisfaction is too high.

What this is focusing on is the five elements that build brand equity. Brand equity is the value a consumer associates with a particular brand. This is created through five different dimensions; which I will cover later in the paper. To really build a high brand equity, companies need to make their products superior or so differentiated from the other similar products offered in your company’s market, that users feel the need to try your product and then because of your product’s quality they stay with your company and become brand loyal over time.

People want to deal with a company that is successful, as discussed in *The Ultimate Marketing Plan* by Dan Kennedy. The term that he used is “Image Congruency” (p. 76). Kennedy gave an example from when he was called in to help a new chiropractor who had enormous amounts of “no shows”. The chiropractor would receive calls in response to his advertisements and book the appointments, but then the client was a “no show.” The problem turned out that he was having his staff park out behind the building to leave open spaces for the clients; this behavior was what was killing his business. Therefore Mr. Kennedy asked the staff to park up front and rented a few rent-for-a-week Cadillacs and his “no show” rate decreased dramatically. Most consumers are like elementary students; they want what everyone else has. If they see that there are lots of cars going to this particular chiropractor’s business, then it must be one of the best, especially if someone who has a Cadillac is going there. When there were no

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cars parked, it was subconsciously telling the potential client that the business must not be good if no one else is going there.

Another “weapon” that Kennedy points out, is that a business should make a “champion” for your product. This is what is referred to as brand loyalty, a term that is more deeply discussed on page 6. This is referencing the idea of, creating someone who is going to go out and support your cause (product) to other potential customers. When you create that “champion” they are going to just instinctively tell everyone about your product. “A handful of cultivated, appreciated champions can make you rich (Kennedy 2006 p. 148).” In marketing we refer to this as WOM (Word of Mouth). WOM is the best form of marketing that a brand can receive. However, if the customer is not satisfied, it can also be the driving force of what causes a brand to crumble. I believe that Apple has created “champions” for their brand. Those who have any type of Apple product, whether it is an iPhone, Mac, iPad, etc., are out there “talking up” their products and how they aid in their life and how their product is so much better than the other products that are offered. Even if the price is more and the actual features for what they need in day-to-day life are the same for other competing products; the Apple consumer will always go for the Apple product because that is what they prefer.

In marketing there are three basic areas that can be determinate in company success and they are: namely (how is the product branded), correct market definition, and market segmentation (McDonald, p14). However there are five different areas that are used to measure and determine brand equity and those five areas are: brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and other brand assets (Azzaw, 2012). For the purpose of this study I will be focusing on satisfaction as the variable to measure brand assets.

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Another part of building brand equity is brand loyalty defined by Aaker (1991) as an essential element when it comes to evaluating brand(s) because when thinking of value, loyalty generates profits. Severi (2002) talks about how brand loyalty has the power to aid in customer buying behaviors and in return determines the movements in competitors segmentation compared to other companies. This can also lead to receiving preferred shelf space in stores and different outlets because if the brand has a strong following, then store managers are going to want to put the products where they know the customers will find it easily because they know that the product will sell compared to the brands that have not built up that kind of loyalty. In marketing, there is a rule that is called the 80/20 rule. What it is in reference to, is that 80 percent of your sales are going to come from 20 percent of your customer base. That is why when companies are discussing brand loyal customers they associate it with profit.

An element that is really reliable in the development of brand equity is the building of brand association. Brand association can be used as a way to collect information as to better differentiate and extent a brand (Van Osselaer, 2001). When a company expands their brand they want to make sure that the consumers who are already loyal to their brand will then buy the new products that their company is extending or differentiating to. For example Apple; consumers associate the iPhone as an Apple product, so when Apple extended into the tablet industry by introducing the iPad, the consumers who already had developed positive attitudes towards the Apple brand were more inclined to be some of the first buyers for the new Apple products.

Brand assets are what lead to having a competitive advantage over the other competitors. A competitive advantage is developed by communicating to your consumers that the product or service that your brand is offering has a higher quality value than that of your other competitors.

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Once you have instilled that value in your consumers and they have bought your product then you need to start measuring their satisfaction or in most cases dissatisfaction. According to Aaker (1991 p45) as long as the dissatisfaction is minimal enough to keep the consumer from contemplating switching then you can still consider the consumer to be on the second and third level of the brand loyalty pyramid.

Another factor to discuss is perceived quality. David A. Aaker discusses perceived quality as what a customer feels to be the overall quality of the product or service in regards to how the product compares to the other products or services available (Aaker 1991 p85). When measuring perceived quality, you cannot measure it objectively because, not only is it not tangible but also the opinions of the subjects that you, the products, or the services are attached to the service (Aaker 1991 p86). According to Severi (2013) perceived quality is a huge factor when making choices. Generally when consumers are given options or choices they will most often go with the choice that they believe has the higher quality. This perceived quality could be coming from previous experiences, from other people, or through advertisements; all of this in which falls into the dimension of brand awareness.

Brand awareness it is defined as the durability of a brand that is embedded in the customer memory (Aakar 1996). Taking it one step deeper it would be a customer's ability to know what industry the brand belongs to. To create brand awareness a company needs to spend time creating familiarity, visibility of the brand, and association of the brand with other products or offerings on the market (Severi, 2002). Brands can do this through many different options such as community involvement, sponsorships, partnerships, advertising, and many other options.

Ecosystems and Switching Costs

By getting consumers to buy the other products or services that are linked to our brand is having them buy into the ecosystem. When a user who already owns a product made by a specific brand and then makes the decision to buy another item from that brand that links with the primary product purchased and the product only works with products made by that brand; the user has just increased their switching costs. A switching cost is a cost or barrier that is used to keep customers from switching brands (Aaker, 1991). There are many different approaches that businesses can use to creating switching costs. One discussed by Aaker in his book *Managing Brand Equity* on page 51, is when a brand creates brand loyalty through customer rewards. A current example of this is Discover. They have created a Cash Back Rewards program where for every dollar that you spend for whichever promotion they are running, then you get five percent of that back. The key is that for you to get the Rewards money you have to reach a certain dollar amount. But once you reach that goal you can apply it towards your bill or receive gift cards for the amount.

Another approach to creating a brand loyal customer involving switching costs, is creating an ecosystem for your brand. The switching costs are created once your buyer has bought your product and you then fill another need with a different product. Making the products work together is an even better because once they have that extra product it is harder for users to switch maybe for money costs or even just a mindset because they bought from you not just once but twice. For a business an ecosystem, as defined by the American Marketing Association is “The complex of interactions of all the organisms with their environments and with each other. Technically, it is a subunit of the biosphere or a unit of a landscape. The interactions of members of a distribution channel or the interaction of a company and its products with consumer

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environments are examples of marketing applications” (Dictionary 2014). Another way to think about this is that these products are made up of “complementary components” (Burkard, 2012). What this is meaning is that the different products that a company is creating are all able to work together effortlessly. Apple has worked very hard at created their ecosystem, by making it very difficult for customers to switch brands once the already have two or more of their products. What makes Software Ecosystems (SECO) recognizable is that they are able to be sold by separate venders (Burkhard, 2012), For example, once a person owns a Mac computer and they have all of their files, music, ect saved on the iCloud and then they purchase the iPhone, and the iPad, it would be hard to get someone to switch to a Samsung phone or any other brand for that matter. The reason being is that the two brands are not compatible between each other to retrieve files or any kind of stored information.

Samsung is trying to do the same thing with the Galaxy S4 and other Samsung technologies. However Samsung is creating an ecosystem that works with other products except Apple Products. What Samsung is trying to do is create an ecosystem with their products, but also try and make it more appealing to customers who are not yet brand loyal for ALL of their electronic products. This way, when a customer already has an Emerson television, they are still attracted to the Samsung smartphone because they can still use the features with their already purchased electronics. However, Samsung is working to build their own software ecosystem by making it easier for individuals to interchange between the Samsung: tablet, computer, and Smartphone with being able to immediately access files stored on any of these products.

Brand Identity

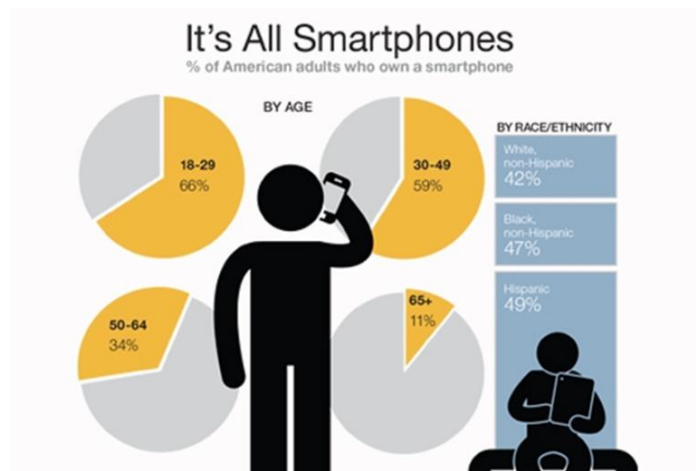
When trying to determine brand preference, looking at only brand equity is not enough. To get a accurate measure for brand preference, a researcher needs to also look at the concept of

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brand identity. Brand identity is a way for a company to place a spotlight on their key attributes and qualities. Creating brand identity creates an identity that shows who you are as a company (Heggin 1994). This brings into account your Brand Personality, which is referred to as the Big Five dimensions. These traits are: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness (Aaker, J. 1997). Different studies have been done and for each of the five brand personality traits there have been terms that are best associated with each term. These brand dimensions were developed in a study done by Jennifer Aaker in 1997 where she had consumers use a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being least descriptive and 5 being most descriptive) to see to what extent 144 different personality traits described a specific brand. Ms. Aaker then had the respondents use the same scale and personality traits on nine other brands. After the first test, Ms. Aaker then performed a follow-up test with the same individuals to make sure that the five brand dimensions were truly reliable. And after the second round of questionnaires the dimensions proved valid and reliable.

Brands spend much of their time studying the different consumer behaviors and how different segments or target markets react and use their product or service. As mentioned in other sections of my thesis, I focused my

study on traditional college age students (ages 18-25 years) who either own or have owned an Apple or Samsung smartphone. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a smartphone is “a cell phone that includes additional software functions (as e-mail or an internet browser (Smartphone, 2013).” A recent study found (pictured right) that 66% of American adults, aged



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18-29, own a smartphone a larger percentage than any other age group studied. What this data shows is that the young generations are the consumers that smartphone companies need to be directing their focus on. The second largest group ages 30-49 is not very far behind. I believe the reasoning for such a large percentage for this age group is because this is the age most parents are when their children are getting old enough to do things on their own, the child needs a phone to contact the parent and since parents are on the go, they need the smartphone to stay connected. Also a lot more business is being done via the internet and smartphones are an easy way to check email, do banking, or numerous other activities. The two lowest age categories of 50-54 and 65+ are the lowest because older generations generally do not have an interest in owning a cell phone, let alone spending the extra money on a smartphone.

Purpose:

Brand Equity is a value that cannot just be created over night, it is something that takes time to build and instill in your current customers as well as those who have not yet come into contact with your products or brand. The current study analyzed the different elements involved in creating brand equity by comparing two of the most popular smartphone brands: Apple and Samsung. I have provided a chart (see Table 1: Matrix on page 15) to show the breakdown of each question that was used in the survey and how the answers given were used to determine which smartphone brand has the higher brand equity for Missouri Southern Students. An added variable to the study was to test and see if ecosystems and switching costs played a role in brand loyalty. I also added in a series of questions about the Big Five brand personality traits, which aids in determining brand personality which leads to a way of measuring brand identity. When I put brand identity together with brand equity I was then able to make an educated reasoning as to

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which brand (Apple or Samsung) has a higher brand preference for the Missouri Southern student population. The theory that I had going into the study was that Apple iPhones would be the more preferred smartphone brand on the Missouri Southern campus because of the high switching costs and software ecosystem that Apple has created.

Validity:

Below in the Table 1 Matrix, I have broken down each question in my survey. In the first column I give the variable or element behind the question asked. In the second column I give the question that was asked in the survey. In the third column, I give the background as to why that question is a good measure for the variable that is placed in the first column of that particular row.

Table 1: Matrix

No.	Content	Question	Purpose of the Question
1	Brand User	Which of the following brands do you own today (or the latest you own)? Apple or Samsung	This is used to determine which smartphone brand that they are using or have used.
	Brand awareness	How did you hear about the brand originally?	This will aid in showing how best most individuals hear about the brand.
2.	Demographic	What is your age	Aid in showing the distribution of the survey
3.	Demographic	What is your gender	
4.	Ecosystem	What other types of electronics do you own?	The question help's determine how engrossed into technology the individual is.
5. Do you agree with the following statements, please consider: on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is strong disagree and 5 is strong agree) then mark the suitable box.			
	Brand Equity	"Apple is a strong brand" "Samsung is a strong brand"	The basis of these two questions determines how a consumer places each brand.
	Brand Loyalty	"I would choose my current	Keller (1998) takes about how

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	Smartphone brand even if the other brands has the same functionality as my current Smartphone" "I will switch to another brand when purchasing a new Smartphone" "I consider myself to be loyal to my Smartphone brand"	brand loyalty is when a customer selects your brand over all other competitors' options. Brand loyalty is used to describe the repeating of purchase of the same product from the same brand.
Brand Association	"Other people judge me by the kind of Smartphone I use"	This question is used because this helps show whether or not smartphone users associate smartphone brands with social class.
Perceived Quality	The quality of my Smartphone is good" "My Smartphone brand is more than just a product for me"	This question is to help determine the level of perceived quality that the users place on their particular smartphone brand.
Price	"My Smartphone is a good value for the money I paid"	The question of price is a variable that aids in determining brand equity because it gives insight into the value that a consumer puts on their brand of smartphone.
Satisfaction	"I would recommend my smartphone brand to my friends."	The variable of satisfaction directly correlates to the measure of brand equity.
6. Price vs. Perceived Quality	What price would you pay just to own your phone (without a contract)?	This is to determine if the retail value of the phone is less than, equal to, or greater than the value that the consumer puts on the phone.
7. Classify the characteristics of the brand of your smartphone, please consider on a scale of 1 to 5 (Where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest) mark the suitable box		
Brand Personality	Promotional Honesty	Using the information from this series of questions would help to answer the question of brand preference on campus, because it would aid in determining brand identity.
	Innovation	
	Durability	
	Capability of Features	
	Prestigious	
8. Switching Costs	"Do you stay with your specified smartphone brand because the cost of switching brands is too	This question is aiding in the stream of questions are targeting ecosystems in the

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	expensive?"	market.
9. Brand Loyalty	Do you own other products made by your smartphone brand?	This is to see how deep into either Samsung or Apple's ecosystem an individual is involved.
10. Leading Question	"How many smartphones have you owned?"	This question leading to question eleven to determine an individual's loyalty to a product.
11. Strength of Brand Loyalty	"How many from...apple, Samsung, other?"	To determine whether or not the individual is brand loyal.
12. Ecosystem	"Do you think that if you did not already own products that were made by your smartphone brand and the costs of switching were lower, would you be more willing to switch brands?"	The purpose of this question is to see if it is more of a switching cost or an ecosystem that drove individuals to choose their particular smartphone brand.
13. Switching cost	"If the cost of switching from one brand to another were lower, would you be more willing to switch smartphone brands?"	The purpose is to see if switching costs played into an individual's need/want to be in their smartphone's ecosystem.
14. Demographics	"Which area of study are you associated with?"	This is to aid in determining if this survey shows a representative sample of the MSSU student population.

Reliability:

The survey was initially inspired from a Swedish study completed in the spring semester of 2012 at Malardalen University as a master's thesis project. For the purpose of my research I have added in and taken out questions to give me a better indication of brand equity with the addition of looking at ecosystems. The questions that were added were the questions that were used to measure switching costs, ecosystems, and I also added in questions that measured a few more demographics. The ecosystem and switching cost questions are questions 8 through 13. Some of the questions that I took out of the survey were questions that focused more on the variables dealing with brand identity. As discussed in an article entitled "Understanding Evidence-Based Research Methods," the best way to get more reliable results is to use more than

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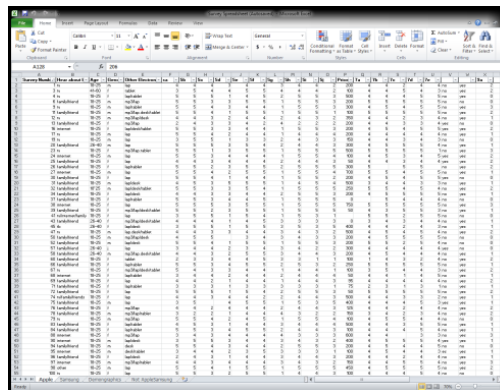
one question to measure a constraint because it helps to determine if the indicator variables are consistent. Some of the questions that I along with the advisement of Mr. Stu Dunlop, Dr. Tom Schmidt, and Dean John Grosebeck added or manipulated were in regards to looking ecosystems building on brand equity. Changes were also made to the five personality traits to make the terms easier for students to comprehend when taking the survey. However, the terms were still staying true to the original terms to stay consistent with the Big 5 model. The survey along with consent and debriefing criteria were sent through the Missouri Southern State University Institutional Research Board (IRB) for approval.

Methodology

The surveys were given to ten different Missouri Southern classes across various areas of study within a two week period. The classes were all seated morning classes. Before each survey was given, I would hand out two consent forms to the students (one for my records and one for their own personal use) informing them that this survey is completely anonymous and voluntary and that by signing the consent form they were releasing: myself, Missouri Southern State University, and any other persons associated with this research from any kind of liability that may be associated with the survey. I then provided each student with a survey. The survey was given in a classroom setting, where students were free to ask questions or for further clarification, if needed. The survey was given at the beginning of every class and took the students on average ten minutes to complete. During the two weeks of survey distribution I collected data from 208 different students, however out of the 208 surveys only 180 of the respondents had ever owned an Apple or Samsung smartphone.

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I divided the responses into four separate spreadsheets, which were; Apple, Samsung, those who Own Both, and Not Apple or Samsung. Once I had all of my data inputted into Excel, I then used the Excel function “COUNTIF” to aid me in determining how many different responses for each question I



The image shows a screenshot of an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet has multiple columns and rows of data. The columns appear to be organized into sections, possibly representing different demographic groups or survey questions. The data is presented in a grid format, with numerical values and text entries. The Excel interface, including the ribbon and window title, is visible at the top of the image.

had. I divided the number of responses for that particular number (for that specific question) by a constant sum that represented the total number of responses for that specific question. For example, on the question asking, “I would choose my current smartphone brand even if the other brands have the same functionality as my current smartphone,” I took the number of “5” responses for the Apple smartphone and divide it by the total number of Apple user responses, for that specific question, to get my percentages that way they were more easily comparable to the Samsung user. The reason for having the divisor specific for each question is because some respondents did not answer all of the questions. For the respondents that did not or ever own an Apple or Samsung smartphone, the only information that I collected from their surveys were their demographics. These were the questions that asked the respondents their: age, gender, what other electronics they owned, and their area of study.

The criterion that I used to assess brand identity is referred to as the Big 5 personality traits. I had the students on a scale of 1 to 5; rate the different traits of Promotional Honesty, Innovation, Durability, Capability of features, and Prestigious. The original terms (which can be found on page 10 of this thesis) were manipulated because the students taking the survey may not know how to answer a question about their smartphone in regards to how “rugged” it is as compared to having the word “durable” there for better understanding. The reason that I did not

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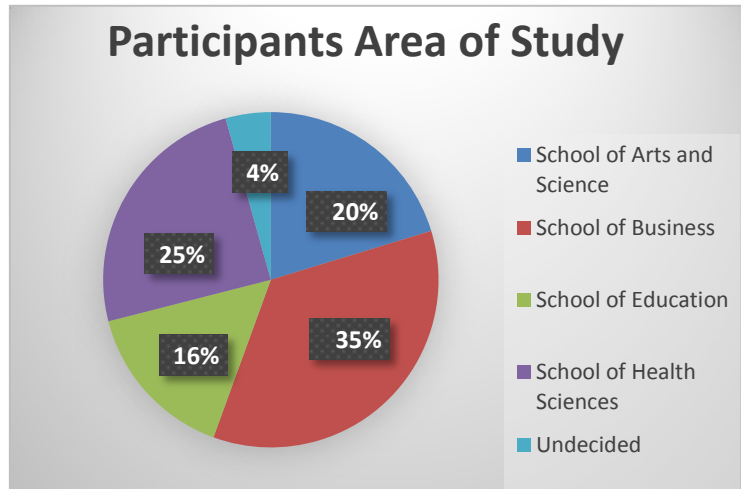
have more questions on the survey that measure brand identity is because my study was to show which brand (Apple or Samsung) had the greater brand equity over the other brand. If I had added more variables to measure brand identity, I feel that the true purpose of my study may have been over shadowed by the determination of brand identity. I did include the questions for the sole purpose of being able to use the data to make an educated conclusion as to what the brand preference is.

However it was not until after I had given out the surveys that it was brought to my attention that under the category of brand identity the term "prestigious", I had made a typo and the numbering system went 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6. After realizing the problem I decided to drop the "Prestigious" data from the study because this could in fact mess with the outcome of the results. I am still looking at brand identity as a factor of brand preference; however I will not be using it to make a conclusion as to the brand preference of the MSSU student population.

Aside from measuring brand equity I added in the element of ecosystem to see if the development of an ecosystem had any kind of impact in having a hold on the consumers. Also the element of switching costs in something to also be considered when looking at a software ecosystem. The questions that I used to measure ecosystems and switching costs were question 8 through question 13. My two main questions that I am using to measure the strength of ecosystems is questions 12 and 13. I took out the variable of switching costs to see if the price of changing from one brand to another is what is keeping the customer in the Apple or Samsung ecosystem. If the respondent answered "no" to both of the questions then that just improves upon the brand's level of brand loyalty however if responding "yes" to both question 12 and 13 then it showed, that it is the ecosystem and the height of switching costs that are holding the respondent to the Apple or Samsung brand.

Results

I am first going to begin by giving an overview of the different demographics of the respondents that were involved in taking the survey. There were 208 students that took the survey,



126 females and 82 males. Of the respondents, 184 were 18-25 years of age, 21 were 26-40, and 3 were 41-60. There were no respondents in the 61+ category. Although students from every school were part of the sample, the school of business may have been over represented in the sample. The reasoning for this is that since I am a business major I have better access to business classes; which gave me more opportunities to gather student data from those particular classes. You can see the breakdown of this in the chart displayed above right.

Now out of those 208 responses, only 180 of the respondents provided responses in regards to having owned either a Samsung or an Apple smartphone. When discussing the results from the different elements of brand equity and how they measured from the responses given, I am using Azzaw's framework that they used in their study (2012).

APPLE RESPONSES 127 responses	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
"I would choose my current smartphone brand even if the other brands have the same functionality as my current smartphone."	1% 7 response	7% 9	18% 23	34% 43	40% 51
"Apple is a strong brand"	0% 0	2% 2	6% 8	37% 47	53% 70

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“Samsung is a strong brand”	2% 5	8% 9	42% 53	36% 45	12% 15
“Other people judge me by the kind of smartphone that I have.”	28% 35	20% 26	30% 38	19% 24	3% 3
“The quality of my smartphone is good”	0% 0	0% 0	7% 9	52% 65	41% 52
“My smartphone is a good value for the money I paid”	0% 0	3% 3	9% 12	50% 64	38% 48
“I will switch to another brand when purchasing a new smartphone.”	33% 42	35% 45	24% 31	7% 8	1% 1
“I would recommend my smartphone brand to my friends.”	0% 0	2% 2	13% 16	41% 52	44% 57
“I consider myself to be a loyal buyer to my smartphone brand.”	1% 1	6% 7	39% 49	24% 30	30% 40
“My smartphone brand is more than just a product to me.”	6% 8	25% 32	41% 52	14% 18	14% 17

SAMSUNG RESPONSES 53 responses	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
“I would choose my current smartphone brand even if the other brands have the same functionality as my current smartphone.”	4% 2 responses	12% 6	17% 9	40% 22	27% 14
“Apple is a strong brand”	8% 4	9% 5	23% 12	34% 18	26% 14
“Samsung is a strong brand”	0% 0	0% 0	19% 10	43% 23	38% 20
“Other people judge me by the kind of smartphone that I have.”	36% 19	23% 14	19% 10	13% 7	6% 3
“The quality of my smartphone is good”	0% 0	4% 2	11% 6	36% 19	49% 26
“My smartphone is a good value for the money I paid”	4% 2	8% 4	8% 4	38% 20	42% 23
“I will switch to another brand when purchasing a new smartphone.”	25% 13	26% 14	36% 19	9% 5	4% 2
“I would recommend my smartphone brand to my friends.”	0% 0	0% 0	15% 8	23% 12	62% 33
“I consider myself to be a loyal buyer to my smartphone brand.”	6% 3	15% 7	26% 14	30% 16	25% 13
“My smartphone brand is more than just a product to me.”	9% 5	17% 9	46% 24	19% 10	9% 5

Brand Equity Measurements:**Brand Loyalty**

In reference back to the Table I Matrix (pages 15-17) which details out which questions were measured for determining the level of brand loyalty, I compared the percentages from the questions that were used in determining brand loyalty. When looking at the Apple responses, it shows that Apple has a strong hold on their customers because 40 percent strongly agreed and 34 percent agreed that they would still pick the Apple brand for their smartphone even if the competing smartphone had the same functionality as the Apple smartphone. Aaker in his text places this at a level four on the pyramid of brand loyalty as being that a consumer that “Likes the brand.” The consumer of the product or in this case the Apple smartphone buyer is a committed buyer. When Samsung users were asked the same brand loyalty questions the results showed that 27 percent strongly agreed and 40 percent agreed. So when comparing the overall agreeability from the respondents Apple beat Samsung with a 74 percent to 67 percent respectively.

The results of Apple showing higher brand loyalty over Samsung is not a big surprise because a study performed by UBS showed that 93 percent of Apple users would purchase another as their next smartphone (Sarnataro, 2011). This study shows how brand loyal Apple’s customer base is as a whole. However, after reading this study, I had expected the results to be a little higher, more around the 75 percent or higher range.

Brand Association

For the purpose of this study, the question that was used dealt with the smartphone’s users and how they felt others perceived that user’s smartphone. What this focused on is how the user felt with their brand in regards to a status symbol. The question that was used to determine

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price was the question about whether or not the users felt that others judged them by the phone that they had. The respondents for Apple showed that 3 percent strongly agreed and 19 percent agreed as compared to Samsung users who had 6 percent strongly agreeing and only 13 percent that agreed with the statement. What this shows is that is users are willing to pay a price premium for an Apple smartphone as a status symbol (Aaker 191). There was even a comment made on one of the surveys, by a 18-25 male, which read “iPhones are simply a status symbol.” The results from the questions measuring price really back this statement up and are dealt more with in the perceived quality section.

Perceived Quality

To measure this element of brand equity I three questions in the survey. The first being straight forward and asking the respondents whether they thought the quality of their smartphone was good. For the Apple users 93 percent of them strongly agreed and agreed that they thought the quality was good. For Samsung respondents the percentage was 85 percent strongly agreed and agreed. The second question that was used was: “My smartphone brand is more than just a product to me.” The Apple respondents had the same percentage as the Samsung respondents at an 85 percent, who strongly agreed and agreed with the question. Both brand users place more value on the phones than the phones just having the tangible value of just being a phone that makes phone calls and sends texts. According to Aaker (1991) perceived quality is intangible. It involves the consumers’ feelings about the brand (pg 86). Another one of the questions that I added into the survey asked users what price they would pay for their smartphone, not including a contract and the average answer for an Apple smartphone is \$219.23 and the Samsung user would spend \$187.10. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that Apple users are willing to pay 15 percent more for their phone than Samsung users. Aaker discusses how he found that

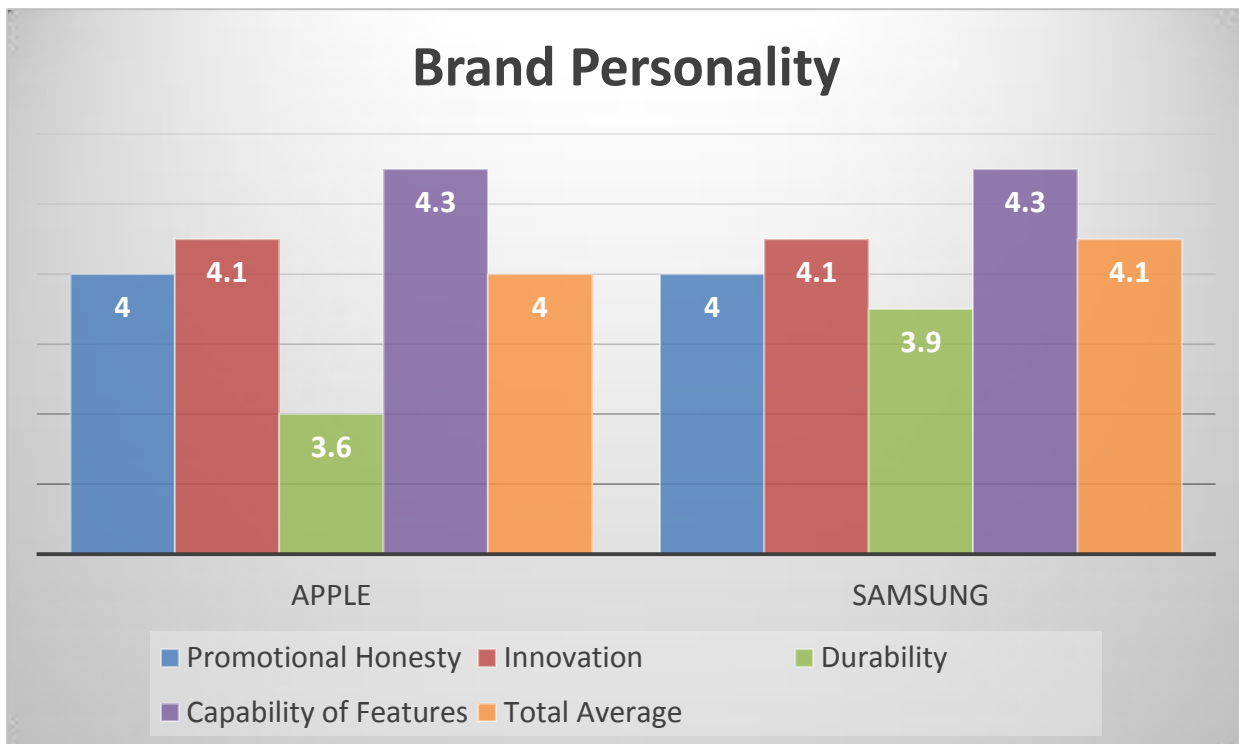
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in 36 different studies showed that for consumers price was a quality queue almost as much as the brand name itself (p.99). What the results show is that when comparing the responses for both questions; Apple smartphone possess a higher perceived quality over Samsung.

Brand Assets in regards Satisfaction

In this study the question used about how satisfied the consumers were with their particular smartphone brand by how likely they were to recommend their smartphone to their friends. For the Apple users, 44 percent of them said that they strongly agreed that they would recommend an Apple Smartphone to their friends and when compared to Samsung smartphone users 62 percent strongly agree that they would recommend their brand. If the user is not satisfied with their smartphone brand they are not going to recommend their smartphone brand to their friends and family. The conclusion that can be drawn is that Samsung users are more highly satisfied with their smartphone brand than Apple users.

Brand Identity:



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To measure the brand identity of Apple and Samsung smartphones I used the Big 5 personality traits of Promotional Honesty, Innovation, Durability, and Capability of Features. As mentioned earlier I had to throw out the data for the trait of Prestigious because of the numbering error. The graph pictured on page 25 gives a representative depiction of how the 180 students, on average, answered to the four different elements on brand identity. When looking at the Apple results, you can see that the lowest bar is under Durability and it is set at a 3.6 where as compared to Samsung which is set at a 3.9. However, a difference of only .3 would fall within the margin of error meaning that the difference for Brand identity between the two different brands is statically close enough to not be able to justify selecting one brand over the other.

Ecosystem and Switching Costs

When looking at the data results from the ecosystem and switching costs section of the survey, there are many things that can be pulled from it. First we will look at the Apple results. The data showed that 94 out of the 127 respondents have two or more products that are made by Apple. That boils down to 74 percent which is about 3 out of every 4 Apple users have made the “buy in” to the Apple Ecosystem. Most respondents had either the Mac computer or the iPad. When comparing that to the Samsung users, only 19 out of the 53 respondents owned more than two product made my Samsung which averages out to 33 percent which is, 1 out of every 3 Samsung users own more than one Samsung product. The most often seen response was users owning a Samsung television.

Another one of the questions that were used to determine if the barrier of switching costs were keeping the smartphone users from switching brands was questions 12 and 13 (Appendix D). Question 12 was directed at discovering if it was the ecosystem of already owning products made by that user’s brand is what was keeping the user from switching because question 13 took

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out the variable of already own other products made by Apple or Samsung. The results came back that 15 percent of Apple users and 8 percent of Samsung users would switch to another brand had they not already owned other products made by their specified smartphone brand. However what I found is that 46 percent of Apple users and 45 percent of Samsung users would not switch brands even if they did not already own products made by their smartphone brand or even if the switching costs were lower. What this shows is that brand loyalty is strong for both of these brand users towards their specified brand. The study by USB (mentioned under Brand Loyalty in the results section) can be used to back up the results because the results showed that Apple had a 93% retention rate. This means that about 9 out of every 10 Apple smartphone users intend to make their next smartphone purchase an Apple iPhone purchase.

Conclusion

Brand Equity

After comparing the four elements of Brand Equity: Brand Association, Brand Loyalty, Brand Assets (measured through brand satisfaction, and Perceived Quality I have found that the Apple brand has a higher brand equity amongst the Missouri Southern State University students as compared to the Samsung brand. Apple smartphone users rate their responses higher than Samsung users in the categories of Brand Loyalty, Brand Association, and Perceived Quality. However something that I found to be interesting is that Samsung users however responded that they were more satisfied with their smartphone more than Apple users. Cush (2010) released a review that showed that in 2009 Samsung ended as the number 1 handset stock holder.

Even though Brand Awareness was not directly measured in the survey, I feel like these results were a reliable and valid form of measuring Brand Equity because my choosing of the

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two brands was based off of brand awareness. I selected two of the most popular smartphone brands in the Joplin area. The results collected for the surveys support my hypothesis in the fact Apple has the higher brand equity over Samsung however as I later discuss it is not the switching costs or ecosystem that entices the Apple users to continue using the Apple smartphone.

Brand Identity

As mentioned in the results section of the paper, the differences in the individual personality traits as well as the overall personality measure is so small that it falls within the margin of error. By making note of this, I cannot make a valid conclusion for which brand, Apple or Samsung, have the higher ratings in regards to brand personality, when looking at brand identity.

Ecosystems

After analyzing the results between the two smartphone brands in regards to ecosystem I am concluding that the prevalence for building an ecosystem within a smartphone brand is not what keeps the users from switching brands, it is the loyalty that the brand has built with the user. Yes, once a user has your product and they are satisfied with the quality that they have received from the product, then they are more inclined to buy more of your brand's products. However if by chance the satisfaction level rises above the minimal rate of tolerance the user will start looking for better options for a higher quality smartphone.

Brand Preference

Brand Preference is measured by the combined results gathering from the variables used to measure Brand Equity and Brand Identity. After analyzing the results between Brand Equity and Brand Identity: I have concluded that on the Missouri Southern State University campus, Apple smartphones are the more preferred smartphone. I developed this conclusion because

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Apple had the higher ratings from users for Brand Equity. The two brands (Apple and Samsung) fell within the margin of error for brand identity making it unreliable to determine an absolute top brand for that variable based off of the personality traits used to measure brand identity. This then led me to determine that Apple is the more preferred brand on the Missouri Southern State University campus.

When the study was performed in Sweden, the researchers found that Apple was also the more preferred brand for their University. A difference is, when the study was performed in Sweden, Apple had a lot higher margin over Samsung when it came to Brand Identity. So it looks like Apple being the more preferred brand is not just a Missouri Southern analysis but results determine the same outcome all the way across the globe.

Discussion

Critiques

Critique #1

If I were to do this study again or if someone else were to do this study, I would suggest that the researcher(s) give a pre-test of their survey to a handful of their sample group to test and see what problems or questions might arise from the respondents. This would have cleared up some confusion that my respondents had while taking my survey. My most skipped and most confusing question was question number 6 in my survey. The question was asking students what price they “valued” their phone at. Some students asked what I was wanting while taking the survey, some just skipped it entirely while others would put what they would pay per month for their phone or write in the blank “I don’t Know.” After knowing this, a different way that I would word the questions is: “What price would you pay, a onetime payment, to own your phone

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(no contract)?” I believe this wording would clear up any confusion that the respondents may have had.

Critique #2

I also think that a pre-test would have caught the miss-numbering of “Prestigious” under the questions that were directed towards brand identity. With the miss-numbering I was then inclined to not use the data from the prestigious trait. The reason being that since there was no 3’s it eliminated any middle responses and by not wanting to include the “6” this created a problem because if I did not include it, then it got rid of any of the highest responses. Also when a respondent had circled the “4,” I could not reliably and validly know for sure if the 4 that was circled was supposed to be a 3 or a 4 and same goes for the 5 on the survey. In the sense that I did not know for sure if the 5 was meant to be a 4 or a 5.

Critique #3

I think that had the questions for Brand Awareness been added into the survey, I would have gotten the same results of Apple having the higher brand equity than Samsung because Apple had higher agreeability in three of the areas already leaving them with the majority even if Brand Awareness had been measured. I would have really liked to have had the data results from the questions dealing with Brand Awareness. The two questions that I would have added with be:

1.) When you see  you think of the Apple brand.”

2.) When you see  you think of Samsung brand?

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Apple logo: (Janoff, 1998)

Samsung logo: (Samsung, 1993)

I would add the questions under the question 5 series of questions. By doing this I could continue with the Likert scale. That way my results would have been consistent with the rest of my brand equity results.

Critique #4

Before I had received my data from the students who took the surveys I had anticipated that I would have received a more evenly matched up number of Samsung users compared to Apple users. As you seen you're the data that I collected Apple users were extremely over represented in this study. I do not believe that this skewed my results because I didn't use the same divisor for both Samsung and Apple.

Recommendations

Suggestion #1

The survey from this research can be used by other researchers to aid in determining which smartphone Apple or Samsung has higher brand equity. Doing this study in different locations could be used to analyze and compare to see if there are any differences by location or maybe age group. There are many different possibilities to expand upon this research. However during the course of my study I learned that Google now owns the Android brand, which would lead to a deeper research that compares the brands of Google to Apple to see which brand holds more brand equity or as this research did, go a step farther and determine which brand is preferred by users through the incorporation of brand identity.

Suggestion #2

I suggest that if this research is to be repeated or a way to expand upon it, is to the add questions to the survey that address Brand Awareness. There are severally avenues to accomplish this. I would suggest adding questions that address the different brands in regards to dealing with their logos. If the future researcher would like to continue with the Likert scale in these questions, they could direct questions such as, “When you see (insert brand logo here) do you think of (insert brand name here).” The examples of the questions that I would use are under my critiques section, under critique #3. Then the respondent could on a scale of 1-5 select their measure of agreeability to the statement. Then as discussed in my methodology determine the percentages for each level of agreeability.

Suggestion #3

Technology is an ever changing platform. Just as soon as some case studies are released for brands such as Apple or Google, they are old information because the companies have already created something new and innovative. For future research I think that it would be very interesting to see how Apple compares to Microsoft in the world of software ecosystems and what customers are looking for when deciding which ecosystem to buy into. I believe this is the direction that technology is going. Google, I believe is trying to build their own ecosystem, because just recently within the past few years they bought the Motorola brand, not for the brand name itself, but more so for the patents to the Android software. So if a research waits about 1 or 2 years I believe the real study will be comparing the strength of the software ecosystems that Apple, Microsoft, and Google are potentially going to create.

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Appendix I:

Dear Student:

I am working on my Honors Senior Thesis and I am studying Missouri Southern State University students' preference between Apple and Samsung smartphones. Please help me by taking a few minutes of your time to answer the questionnaire about your personal experience with your Smartphone. Smartphones are mobile phones with voice service, e-mail and messages facilities, internet access and other features depending on the device. Smartphones usually have applications that computer and personal digital assistants have, such as retrieving emails and having internet access. Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

Have you ever owned an Apple or Samsung Smartphone? (Please circle one of the choices)

Yes (Please Continue to Question 1)

No (Please Answer the Following Question)

If "no", why?

Please answer the following questions by circling the appropriate choice.

1. Which of the following brands do you own today? (Or the latest you owned)?

Apple

Samsung

How did you hear about the brand originally? (Please circle one)

Tv ad

Internet

family member/friend

other

If other please specify:_____.

2. What is Your Age? (Please circle one)

18-25

26-40

41-60

61+

3. What is Your Gender? (Please Circle One)

Male

Female

4. What other types of Electronics Do you own? (Please circle ALL that apply)

Tablet

mp3 player

laptop

Desktop Computer

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5. Do you agree with the following statements, please consider: on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree) then mark the suitable box.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
“I would choose my current smartphone brand even if the other brands have the same functionality as my current smartphone.”	1	2	3	4	5
“Apple is a strong brand”	1	2	3	4	5
“Samsung is a strong brand”	1	2	3	4	5
“Other people judge me by the kind of smartphone that I have.”	1	2	3	4	5
“The quality of my smartphone is good”	1	2	3	4	5
“My smartphone is a good value for the money I paid”	1	2	3	4	5
“I will switch to another brand when purchasing a new smartphone.”	1	2	3	4	5
“I would recommend my smartphone brand to my friends.”	1	2	3	4	5
“I consider myself to be a loyal buyer to my smartphone brand.”	1	2	3	4	5
“My smartphone brand is more than just a product to me.”	1	2	3	4	5

6. What price would you pay just to own your phone (without a contract)

\$_____.

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7. Classify the characteristics of the brand of your Smartphone, please consider on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest) mark the suitable box.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Promotional Honesty	1	2	3	4	5
Innovation	1	2	3	4	5
Durability	1	2	3	4	5
Capability of Features	1	2	3	4	5
Prestigious	1	2	4	5	6

8. Do you stay with your specified smartphone brand because the cost of switching brands is too expensive?

Yes no

9. Do you own other products made by your smartphone brand?

Yes no

a. If yes, please list the products you own made by your smartphone brand

-

-

-

10. How many smartphones have you owned?

11. How many from

Apple _____ Samsung _____ . Other _____ .

a. If "Other," please specify brand(s): _____ .

12. Do you think that if you did not already own products that were made by your smartphone brand and the cost of switching were lower; would you be more willing to switch brands?

Yes No

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13. If the cost of switching from one brand to another were lower, would you be more willing to switch smartphone brands?

Yes

No

14. Which area of study are you associated with? (Mark the suitable box)

School of Arts and Sciences

School of Business

School of Education

School of Health Sciences

Undecided