

Impact of smart phones & tablets on the consumer buying behavior

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Abstract

The consumer buying behavior is mainly guided by, geographical cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. The Smartphone & tablet market is growing phenomenally. The smart phone & tablet users choose a device on the basis of varying needs. People who use smart phones look for more features & competitive pricing. The consumers who use tablets do not give undue importance to competitive pricing. They mainly use it to improve their work efficiency and many elderly people prefer tablets because of larger screen. The internal survey carried revealed that these devices have hastened online buying & selling, The general awareness has grown because of online search and digital marketing strategies of various companies for engaging consumers and giving impetus to them for CTA ie Call for action. Through this paper the researchers have tried to throw a light on the impact created by the usage of smart phones and tablets on the buying behavior of an individual.

Keywords

Smart Phones, Tablets, Phablets, consumers, Buying Behavior

Introduction

Technology is booming at a phenomenal pace. May it be computers, laptops, phablets, smart phones or smart gadgets. A lot of data is at our finger tips now. The reach of the mobile phones or the smart phones is growing exponentially. If we analyze the current scenario, the use of mobile phones amounts to 791 million which means approximately 67% of the population. Also, the fastest growth is seen in the rural areas. With this kind of evolution of the smart phone technology, a tremendous development is seen in the buying culture of the people. Seeing the phenomenal technological development, the organizations need to change their attitude towards the consumers. These new technology trends are influencing and challenging the consumer's buying behavior on a daily basis. There is a perceptible change seen in the behavior of the consumer, their daily lifestyles and performance of business activities. Therefore any brand management activities need a comprehensive, objective and precise data on mobile users, their behavioral patterns and experiences.

The speedy evolution of the smart phone technology has impacted consumers' behaviors, their daily lifestyle, marketing, and business activities. As the Smartphone technology is readily accepted by the users, it has become a critical key factor to determine its success in today's rapidly changing technologies. Thus, identifying and a proper understanding of this and other key factors that impact users' adoption of Smartphone technology is extremely important for any business to flourish. Smart phones and tablets facilitate communication. People are able to make use of the gadgets at their work place with ease and derive benefits out of them. The merits of using smart phones are – better communication, learning options, exposure to the latest things, enhancement of personality, ease in accessing applications, innovative ideas, platforms to hasten their social as well as commercial profiles.

Customer mind

The mind is not invisible as well as intangible. Our body and mind are separate entities. For example, when our body is at rest, our mind might be very busy, getting engrossed into so many thoughts.

The mind is formless, by nature so it is not obstructed by physical objects. The mind of a consumer is often referred as black box in the parlance of Marketing & sales. All the marketing strategies and tactics aim at occupying the portion of consumer's mind.

However, the marketers cannot ascertain what actually goes on in the consumer's mind hence, the black box. The marketers work on the principle of major internal impacts and the major steps in the decision-making process of consumers, but they do not know how consumers transform all these data, together with the stimuli, and give particular responses. Based on the response of consumers, they can be categorized into various types.

1) Consumers who buy seasonal goods - Those who sell raincoats, cold drinks, hot drinks, notebooks, study books, sweets tap the customers effectively when the season for the particular item comes. These consumers do major purchases during seasons. Eg in Diwali, a consumer will distribute lots of sweets among his relatives, friends.

2) Consumers who buy personal Goods - They buy goods for their personal use or family use. Eg they would buy mobile phones or laptops for their families. They will buy a car for the family use. They will also visit super markets or malls, will buy stuff for their families, wine & dine over there, watch a movie and come back happily.

3) Consumers who buy in bulk - These consumers buy in bulk for the organizations they work for. They are highly price sensitive, strict on Quality, would also give recurrent orders if they are satisfied with the product performance. They will see the institutional interest first which they work for. Since it is buying in bulk, the payments could be deferred.

4) Consumers who buy impulsively - Impulse buyers are consumers who make buying decisions impulsively or at the spur of the moment. The individuals who live alone or into nuclear families can take such decisions. They need to get connected with the product. If the product evokes an emotional appeal which they can connect with, they would buy the product immediately and will also make immediate payment.

Such impulse buying decisions are not just seen with products like chocolates and biscuits. They are also seen with expensive sarees, cosmetics, jewelry. The consumer who is an impulse buyer will not consult his or her family members and will not give a second thought for buying.

5) Consumer who buys need based - They buy goods and services only when they need them and not any other time. The hardware products, electrical fittings, heaters, Air conditioners are sold to need based consumers. Life Insurance companies do a brilliant job of creating the Need in the minds of consumers which results in buying.

6) Discount oriented consumers - These consumers buy goods and services primarily because of discounts they offer. They are highly price sensitive customers. Those companies who can give good discounts and promotional offers are able to win over such customers.

Discount driven buyers are price sensitive and would rather wait to purchase products when they come with discounts as opposed to when they are sold for full price.

7) Habitual consumers - Habitual consumers are those who consume brands as a result of habit. If the consumers are habituated to consuming some goods like cigarettes or liquor is the result of habit, then its acquisition becomes indispensable. Habitual consumers are those who feel compelled to use certain brands or types of goods.

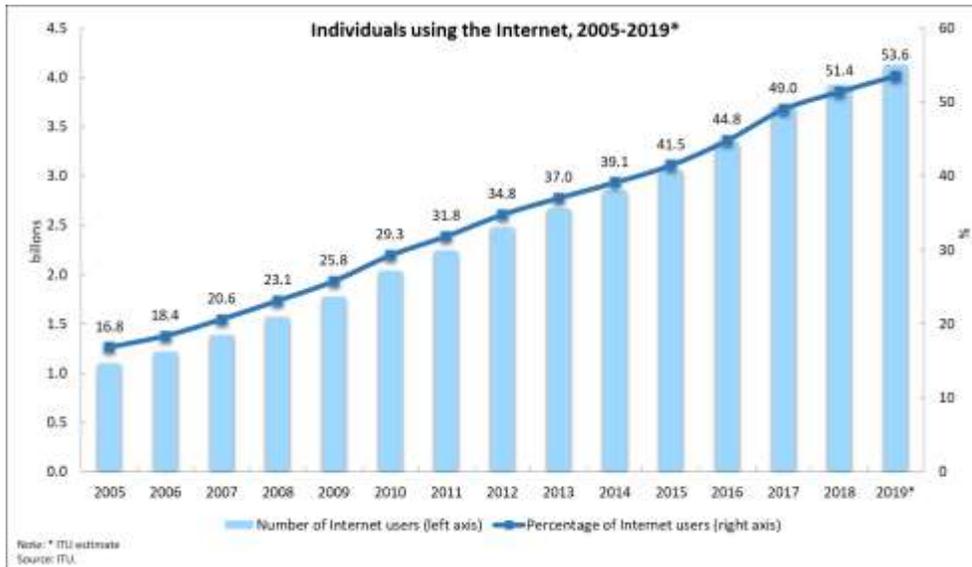
Marketers succeed in creating brand loyalty among this type of consumers. It is like choosing the same brand of perfume, the same brand of Beer, or shopping in the same mall for groceries or clothes.

There has been a lot of research on the mobile commerce ever since the mobile and portable devices were accepted as an effective mean of commercial transaction and efficient business practice. The use of smart phones has actually provided many benefits. Some to be numbered are

- It improves communication,
- It ensures learning options for the users,
- It results in proper exposure to the latest things,
- It hastens personality of mobile users,
- Access to various applications has become easier,
- Has provided business platforms newer ideas to grow their business

- Offers an innovative platform to advertizing and marketing industry.

The consumer shift towards the handy electronic devices and the kind of ease provided by these devices has actually affected the market in a big way.



The above figure says that we had 53.6 internet users in 2019 which is still growing every second.



Source: <https://blogs.cisco.com/sp/mobile-vni-major-mobile-milestones-the-last-15-years-and-the-next-five>

According to the study, the mobile and tablet manufacturers the world over are offering many different services, innovative data plans and excellent network quality. Therefore the mobile phones have become the prime element to impact the user preference for any product and also in defining the price of any product. The increase in the usage of

mobile phones in the recent years is a clear example of growth of the system, the significance of usage and opportunities offered by it.

Researchers have observed that the traditional approaches of advertizing and marketing are not able to deliver remarkably because of the increase in different types of media and new technology like digital marketing. In the old times, people used to work on the internet through the desktop systems. They had to start the desktop system log in to the internet and then they could surf on the net. It was a costly affair because generally a dial-up networking was used where they had to pay heavy telephone bills. But now the times have changed. Users can get connected anywhere at any point in time with very less cost. Also just knowing the way to use the mobile phone can make them work. They don't need to be literate even.

The use of phablets, tablets and smart phones and widespread of internet have actually impacted the life of a common man in various ways:

- On education
- On their health
- On their psychology
- On their social life
- On their purchasing methodologies
- On the advertizing techniques
- On customer retention methodologies
- And many more.

Buying behavior at different age groups

A child usually prefers a product either by seeing it or on advice of elders. A teenager (13-19 years) would normally solicit advice from the group of people they belong to or buy it by seeing a business offer. The adult consumers (50 -65 years) are the ones who are normally brand loyal and choose their specific brands out of their own choice.

A 15-year-old teenager may check as many brands as possible, may also check the reviews of existing & previous buyers, comparing the prices vis a vis the benefits & spend lot of time on Internet. The students of this age group can take risk while buying. Teenagers respond positively to various sales promotion offers such as heavy discounts, loyalty programme, complimentary gifts, and incentive schemes for repeat purchase. Normally students of this group do not have sufficient money on hand to buy things. Young people (22- 50 years) are potential buyers because they have a family which is expanding, they have more money because of employment or self-employment

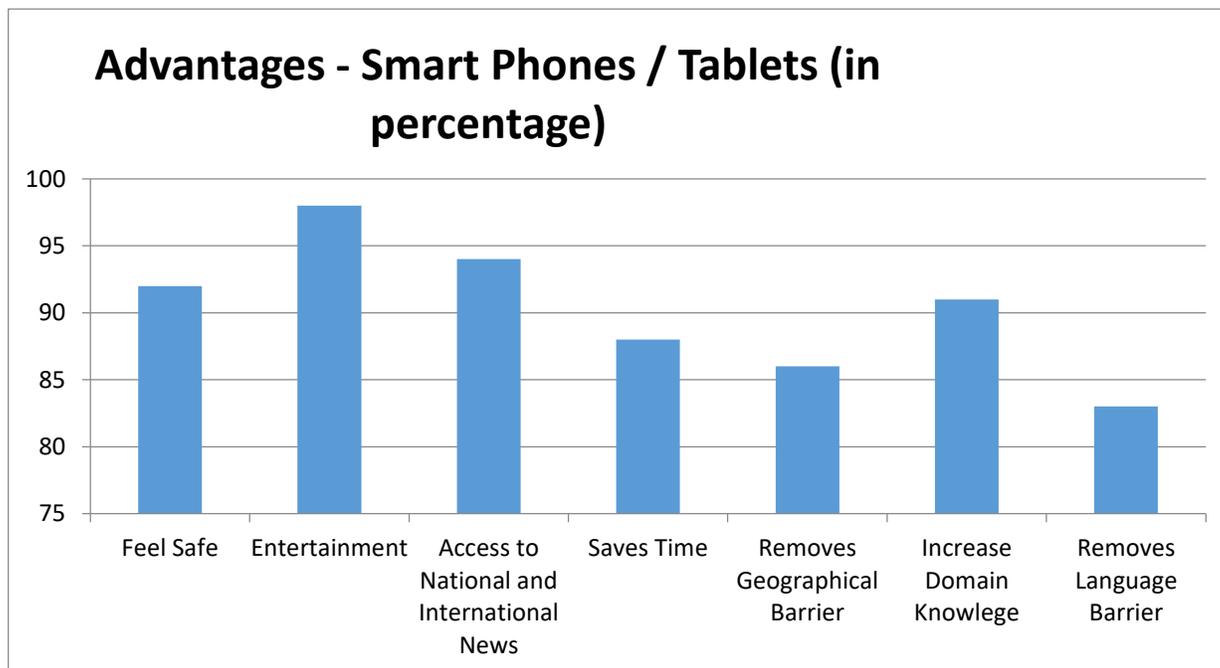
and they would buy things which look elegant, classy, full of additional features. The goods which offer value for money. At times they would also buy goods which are expensive.

The adults (50 -70 years) buy things when they see proper utility in it. Their purchase is always need based. They lack interest in critical evaluation. They end up becoming exclusive users of the brand & hence exhibit brand loyalty. They will switch over to other brands only if their favorite brand is not available in the shops. Young people will also be choosy while buying but the adults will not take much time in shopping. They will not look at various brands unlike teenagers or young consumers.

Old consumers (70-85 years) would simply like to stick to the brands which they were consuming or using all along. They may not go for shopping or may choose on line route for the same. They may tell their friends or family members to buy only a specific brand and in the event of that brand not being available may not prefer any other brand as a substitute. Of course, the buying decision will depend upon factors like his or her physical state, monthly income, pension, the expenditure on their medicines, insurance etc.

Impact of smart phones & tablets on consumers

A survey which was carried out in Atharva Institute of Management studies (AIMS) on 50 students in the age group of 22-26 years revealed the advantages and disadvantages of the usage on students. Out of 50 students who were selected for the survey comprised of 22 girls and 28 boys.



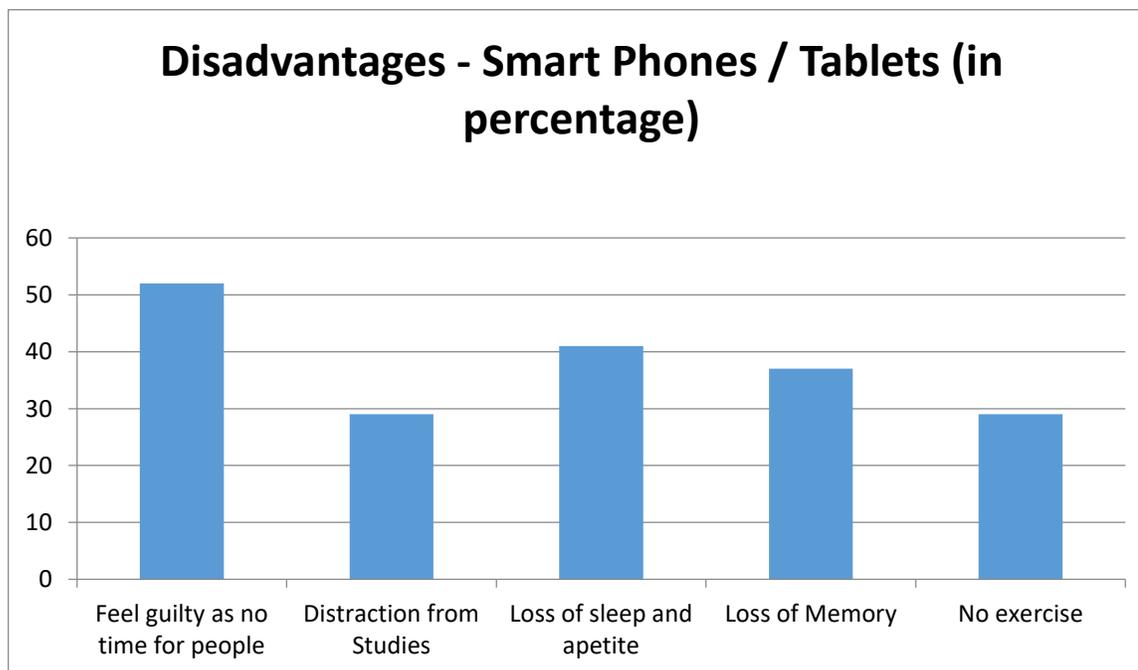
92% girls said that they feel safe with smart phones /tablets. 98% students said that there is lot of entertainment they get with these gazettes. So their brain remains activated and also gets amused every day.94% students expressed that they have access to the national & world news instantly and that is perceived by them as one of the finest facilities .88% students said that these devices save their considerable time in studying.86% students felt that these devices have removed geographical barriers completely and different societies have come closer. 91% students said that these devices have hastened their knowledge of general knowledge and domain knowledge. 83% Students said that features of different language connectivity has helped them getting connected with the elderly people who matter to them but these people do not now much English.

79% students said that these devices help them share their emotions, feelings with their friends, relatives, colleagues, professors and that helps them in terms of their emotional stability. They call these devises as a stress buster.

35% students mentioned that these gazettes create a wonderful opportunity for them in starting some online business.

90% students mentioned that these devices are of great use for digital money & wallets.98% students talked of creating teams and working in teams by expressing their views is a lot easier.

89% students said that these gadgets are of great use in buying anything & everything at any point of time. It also helps them during exams for buying eatables on line & having it at their convenient timings.



As regards Demerits, 52% students said that they feel guilty because they cannot give much time to their family members, relatives and friends because of average usage of 2.5 to 3 hours a day. They said that they feel guilty

about it. 29% students mentioned that they are not able to study with proper focus and concentration. There is an irresistible urge to see the developments & track contacts on app like what's app every 10-15 minutes. 41% students complained of symptoms like loss of sleep because they indulge in it at the cost of their sleep. 37% students mentioned that their over dependence on the gadget in terms of placing reminders has taken toll of their memories. They feel that their overdependence on the gadgets is worrisome factor but they cannot help it. They have accepted it as a part of their lives. 29% students talked of having less time for regular exercises and the complaints have started like severe neck pain, stiff muscles, muscle cramps etc.

Smartphone services make people use the internet or video services on their mobile devices, which can be done with traditional devices such as computers and TV. However, several limitations of technology such as inability to provide adequate signals might differentiate the quality of services in smartphones from that in other devices. For example, low bandwidth of smartphones, compared with the one of fixed broadband, can lower the usage of smart phones amongst consumers. In case of video service, smaller screen in smartphones can also restrict consumers to watch just news. (Gwangjae JUNG, Singapore management University)

Smartphones are becoming incredibly popular among consumers. Originally smart phones were used primarily in the corporate world. The credit of making smart phone popular among mass consumers goes to Apple who introduced smart phone in the mass consumer market.

Smart phones have impacted almost all the activities of consumers on a daily basis. The survey estimates that mobile devices are used by 80% of the world population and 42% of mobile subscribers in the US use Smartphone. 65% of Millennial use their Smart phones to read latest news, post status updates, read & reply to messages and post photos and videos. This proves that now consumers are leaving their desktop systems and shifting towards phablets. The firms which were manufacturing PCS on a large scale are experiencing bad sales in the consumer segment however their sale in the institutions is growing at a marginal pace.

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