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Brand Loyalty Among Smartphone Users (Apple Vs Samsung)

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Abstract: *This study examines brand loyalty among smartphone users with a focus on Apple and Samsung. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 100 respondents covering demographics, loyalty attitudes, switching behaviour, social media influence, and price sensitivity. Results show that 56% of respondents regularly buy the same brand, 61% feel emotionally loyal to brands they trust, and 55% agree that price affects their switching decision. Social media and peer recommendations were found to be the top sources of buying influence. The study concludes that brand loyalty in the smartphone market is real but conditional, and both Apple and Samsung need to focus on trust, value, and customer experience to retain their user base*

Keywords: Brand Loyalty, Smartphone Users, Apple, Samsung, Consumer Behaviour, Customer Satisfaction, Brand Image, Switching Behaviour, Price Sensitivity, Social Media Influence

I. INTRODUCTION

Smartphones have become an important part of daily life and people use them for communication, work, shopping, and entertainment. Because of this, the smartphone market has grown very fast and companies like Apple and Samsung spend a lot of money to attract and keep customers. In such a competitive market, understanding why consumers stay loyal to a brand or switch to another one is very important for businesses.

Brand loyalty means that a consumer keeps buying the same brand over and over again, even when other options are available. This happens because of factors like trust, product quality, price, and personal attachment to the brand. Apple and Samsung are the two biggest smartphone brands in the world and both have large and loyal customer bases, but for different reasons.

This study looks at what makes smartphone users loyal to Apple or Samsung, and what factors can cause them to switch. Data was gathered from 100 respondents through a questionnaire. The findings are useful for brand managers, marketing students, and anyone interested in understanding consumer behaviour in the smartphone industry.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The smartphone industry started growing rapidly after Apple launched the iPhone in 2007. Since then, smartphones have moved from being a luxury item to a daily necessity for most people. Today, global smartphone users number in the billions and the market is dominated by a few major players, with Apple and Samsung consistently at the top.

Apple follows a premium strategy by offering high-priced devices that are tightly integrated with its own operating system (iOS), apps, and services like iCloud, Apple Music, and FaceTime. This creates a strong ecosystem that makes it difficult for users to switch to another brand without losing data, apps, or connected device compatibility. Samsung, on the other hand, uses Android and offers phones across every price range from very affordable to ultra-premium. This wider reach helps Samsung attract a larger and more diverse customer base.

Despite their success, both brands face the challenge of customer retention. Consumers today have many choices and are exposed to constant advertising and peer influence. According to CIRP (2025), Apple's brand loyalty rate is around 89%, while Samsung's is lower but improving. Understanding the reasons behind these loyalty patterns is the focus of this research.

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III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Both Apple and Samsung spend billions of rupees each year on advertising, product development, and customer service. Yet many smartphone users still switch brands during each upgrade cycle. This raises an important question: what makes some consumers stay loyal while others switch?

Most existing studies on brand loyalty either focus on a single brand or look at western markets. There is not enough research comparing Apple and Samsung user loyalty specifically in the Indian context. This study aims to fill that gap by collecting primary data from Indian smartphone users and identifying the main factors that drive or reduce their loyalty to these two brands.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this study are:

- To understand how loyal Apple and Samsung smartphone users are and compare their loyalty levels.
- To find out what factors, such as price, quality, brand image, and social media, most affect brand loyalty.
- To check how often consumers switch brands and what triggers that decision.
- To understand the role of social media, influencers, and peer recommendations in shaping brand loyalty.
- To give practical recommendations to both brands on how to improve customer retention.

V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions guided this research:

- Do most smartphone users tend to buy the same brand repeatedly?
- What percentage of users feel emotionally loyal to a brand they trust?
- How often do consumers switch between smartphone brands?
- Does price play a major role in a consumer's decision to switch brands?
- How much do social media and influencers affect brand trust and purchase decisions?

VI. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is useful for several groups of people. For brand managers at Apple and Samsung, it provides direct feedback from consumers about what keeps them loyal and what pushes them to switch. For students and researchers in marketing, the study offers a real-world example of how brand loyalty works in the smartphone industry. For retailers and telecom companies, the data can help design better promotional offers and loyalty rewards. Overall, the findings of this study can help businesses make better decisions around pricing, marketing, and customer experience.

VII. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study surveyed 100 respondents from different age groups ranging from 18 to 55 and above. The questionnaire covered 16 questions on topics including demographics, brand loyalty, switching frequency, price sensitivity, social media influence, and sustainability. The study is limited to self-reported data collected at one point in time, which means it may not capture how attitudes change over time. The sample was collected through convenience sampling, so the results cannot be generalised to the entire population of smartphone users.

VIII. LITERATURE REVIEW

8.1 Concept of Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty has been studied by researchers for many decades. Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) defined it as the consistent, repeated purchase of a particular brand, driven by a psychological commitment to that brand. Over time, researchers began to separate loyalty into two parts: behavioural loyalty, which is about what people actually do (i.e., keep buying the same brand), and attitudinal loyalty, which is about how people feel (i.e., trusting and preferring a brand emotionally). In the smartphone context, attitudinal loyalty matters a lot because consumers form strong personal identities around the brands they use.

8.2 Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty

Research consistently points to several factors that drive brand loyalty. Oliver (1997) found that customer satisfaction is the strongest predictor of loyalty. When a product does what it promises and provides a good user experience, people are more likely to buy it again. Product quality, price perception, brand image, and after-sales service are other commonly cited factors. Switching costs, which include the effort and money needed to move to a different brand, also play a big role, especially for Apple users who are deeply embedded in the iOS ecosystem.

8.3 Smartphone Buying Behaviour

Smartphone users today are heavily influenced by digital media. According to Wiraguna et al. (2025), younger consumers often build their brand preferences based on what they see on social media and what their friends or family use. The operating system, camera quality, price, and design are among the top reasons why people choose a particular smartphone brand. Peer recommendations and online reviews have become more trusted than traditional advertising for many consumers.

8.4 Apple and Samsung: Brand Strategies

Apple has built one of the strongest brand identities in the world by positioning itself as a premium, design-focused, and aspirational brand (Alfiananda & Saputro, 2024). Its ecosystem lock-in strategy makes it difficult for users to leave, because switching to Android means losing iCloud data, iMessage history, and compatibility with other Apple devices. Samsung, as noted by Li et al. (2024), takes a different approach by offering a wide range of devices to suit every budget and by focusing on hardware innovation such as foldable screens and advanced camera systems. Samsung's challenge is building the same emotional connection that Apple has with its users.

8.5 Review of Related Studies

Tarigan & Yobeanto (2025) studied Samsung users and found that positive brand experiences lead to higher satisfaction and stronger loyalty over time.

Sidik et al. (2024) showed that brand image and product quality are the two most important factors in determining smartphone brand loyalty across multiple Asian markets.

Bhatt, Dave & Vidani (2025) found that Gen-Z consumers in India are strongly influenced by peer recommendations and social media when forming brand preferences.

Wiraguna et al. (2025) identified that Apple's Gen-Z users develop deep emotional bonds with the brand through shared identity and what the researchers call 'brand love'.

Alfiananda & Saputro (2024) confirmed that brand trust and brand experience are strong predictors of Apple iPhone loyalty.

Islam et al. (2024) highlighted that in developing markets, perceived value for money is the most powerful driver of smartphone loyalty.

CIRP (2025) reported Apple's loyalty rate at approximately 89%, with Samsung's rate increasing steadily as it improves its premium product lineup.

Lee (2024) found that Apple's ecosystem integration is the single most important structural factor that prevents users from switching brands.

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8.6 Research Gap

Most of the studies reviewed above either focus on one brand alone or examine markets outside India. A side-by-side comparison of Apple and Samsung loyalty using primary survey data from Indian consumers is missing from the existing literature. This study fills that gap.

IX. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws on three theories to explain brand loyalty behaviour among smartphone users.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991): This theory states that a person's intention to perform a behaviour (such as buying the same brand again) is shaped by their attitude toward the act, the influence of people around them (subjective norms), and how much control they feel they have over the decision. In the context of this study, a user's intent to remain loyal to Apple or Samsung is driven by their attitude toward the brand, what their peers use or recommend, and how easy or difficult they perceive switching to be.

Customer Satisfaction-Loyalty Model (Oliver, 1997): Oliver argued that satisfaction with a product or service is the most direct path to loyalty. When a consumer is happy with what they bought, they are more likely to buy it again and recommend it to others. This model is directly applicable to understanding why respondents who rate their brand highly are also the ones who show the strongest repeat purchase behaviour.

Brand Equity Theory (Keller, 1993): Keller's theory explains that a brand with strong equity, meaning high awareness, positive associations, and loyal users, can charge higher prices and retain customers more effectively. Apple's high brand equity is one of the key reasons it maintains a loyalty rate of about 89%, as its name alone carries strong positive associations for most consumers.

Together, these three frameworks help explain why consumers develop loyalty, what sustains it, and what conditions might cause it to break down.

X. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

10.1 Research Design

This research uses a descriptive and quantitative design. A questionnaire was used to collect structured data from respondents. The design was chosen because it allows for easy comparison of responses across a large group of people and makes it possible to identify patterns and trends in the data.

10.2 Sample and Data Collection

A total of 100 respondents participated in the survey. The questionnaire was distributed online through social media and email links. Respondents included both male and female smartphone users from age groups ranging from 18 to 55 and above. Convenience sampling was used, which means respondents were selected based on availability and willingness to participate.

10.3 Questionnaire Structure

The questionnaire had 16 questions divided into two parts. Part A collected demographic information including age and gender. Part B included Likert-scale questions on brand loyalty, switching frequency, price sensitivity, social media influence, influencer impact, and sustainability. Two questions focused on specific behaviour: whether the respondent buys the same brand repeatedly, and what they would do if their preferred brand raised its price.

10.4 Data Analysis Method

Responses were tabulated and analysed using frequency distribution. Each question was summarised as a count and percentage of total responses. Bar charts and pie charts were created from the actual survey data to visually present the findings. No data was assumed or estimated; all figures in the analysis section come directly from the 100 completed responses.

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XI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

11.1 Age Distribution of Respondents

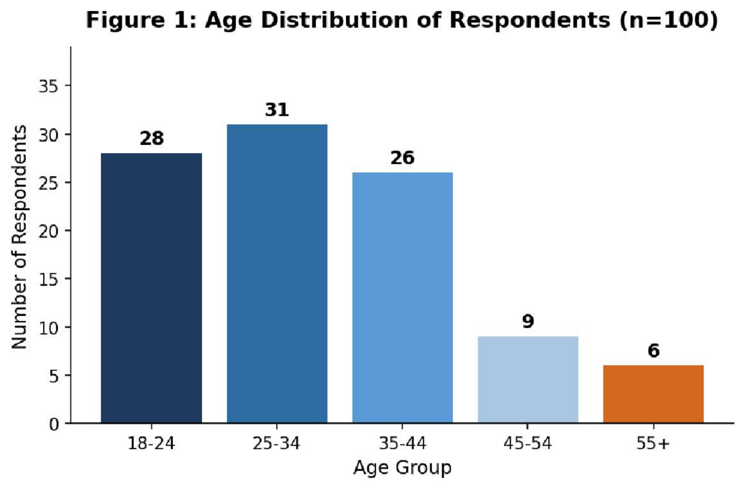

Figure 1: Age Distribution of Respondents (n = 100)

The survey received responses from five age groups. The 25–34 age group had the highest participation with 31 respondents (31%), followed by the 18–24 group with 28 respondents (28%), and the 35–44 group with 26 respondents (26%). The 45–54 age group contributed 9 respondents (9%) and the 55+ group had the fewest participants at 6 respondents (6%). This shows that most of the respondents are young adults between 18 and 44, making up 85% of the total sample, which is expected since this group is the most active smartphone user segment.

11.2 Gender Distribution

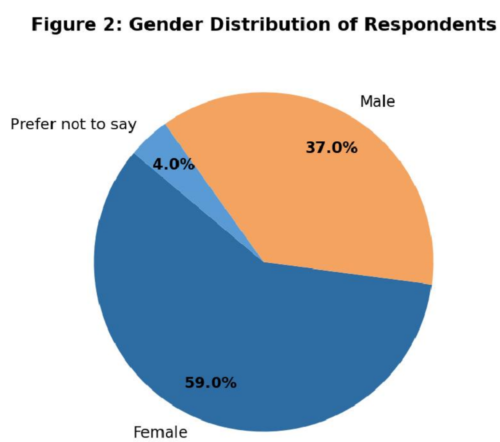

Figure 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents (n = 100)

Out of 100 respondents, 59 were female (59%), 37 were male (37%), and 4 preferred not to state their gender (4%). Female respondents formed the majority of the sample, which may be because they were more reachable through the distribution channels used. This gender composition should be kept in mind when interpreting results on brand preference and emotional attachment to brands.

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11.3 Repeat Brand Purchase Behaviour

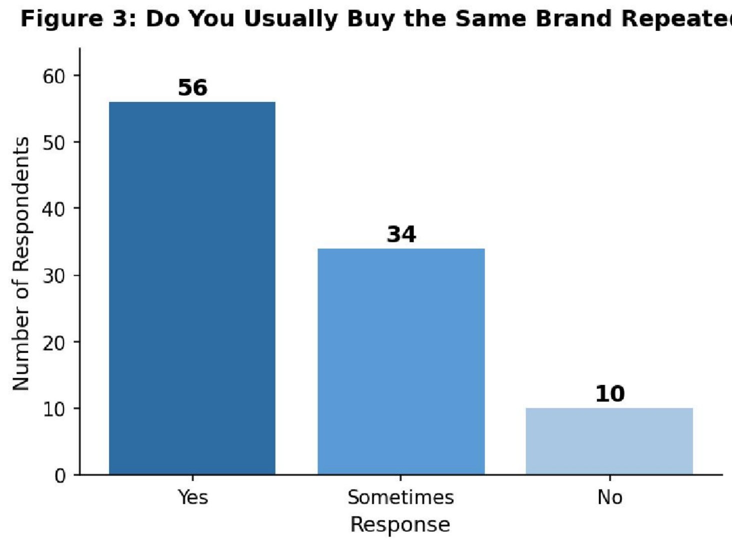

Figure 3: Do You Usually Buy the Same Brand Repeatedly? (n = 100)

56 out of 100 respondents said ‘Yes’ they usually buy the same brand (56%), 34 said ‘Sometimes’ (34%), and only 10 said ‘No’ (10%). Together, 90% of respondents show some level of repeat purchase behaviour, which is a clear sign that brand loyalty is present in this sample. The small group of 10% who said ‘No’ are the most brand-neutral consumers and are less likely to be retained by any single brand through traditional loyalty strategies.

11.4 “I Feel Loyal to Certain Brands I Trust”

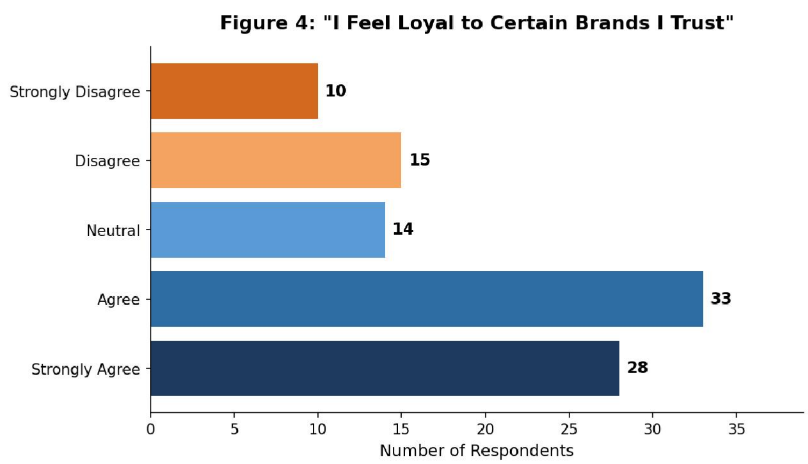

Figure 4: Attitudinal Brand Loyalty – “I Feel Loyal to Certain Brands I Trust” (n = 100)

33 respondents agreed (33%) and 28 strongly agreed (28%), which means 61% of respondents feel emotionally loyal to brands they trust. 14 were neutral (14%), while 15 disagreed (15%) and 10 strongly disagreed (10%). This confirms that brand loyalty in this sample is not just about habit but also involves a sense of trust and emotional preference, which is harder for competitors to break by simply offering a lower price or a new feature.

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11.5 Brand Switching Frequency

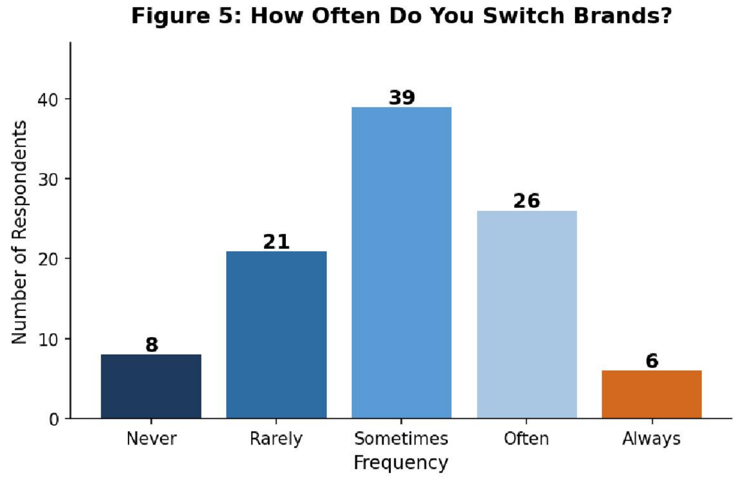

Figure 5: Frequency of Brand Switching Among Respondents (n = 100)

39 respondents said they switch brands 'Sometimes' (39%), 26 said 'Often' (26%), 21 said 'Rarely' (21%), 8 said 'Never' (8%), and 6 said 'Always' (6%). Only 8% never switch, meaning absolute brand loyalty is very rare. The 65% who switch sometimes or often indicate that a large portion of consumers are open to change if the right offer comes along, which is a risk both Apple and Samsung need to manage through strong customer engagement and competitive pricing.

11.6 Price Influence on Brand Switching

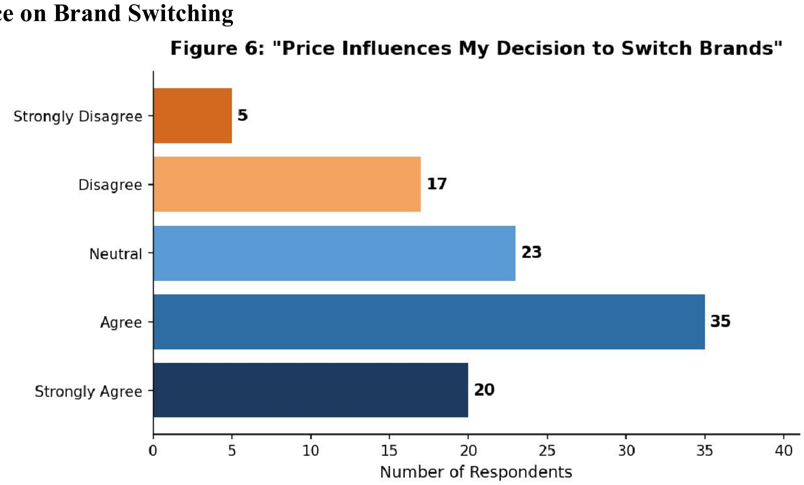

Figure 6: Price Influence on Brand Switching Decision (n = 100)

35 respondents agreed (35%) and 20 strongly agreed (20%) that price influences their decision to switch brands, totalling 55%. 23 remained neutral (23%), while 17 disagreed (17%) and 5 strongly disagreed (5%). More than half the sample acknowledges that price affects switching, which is a major signal for premium brands like Apple that pricing decisions directly impact customer retention. Samsung, which offers products at multiple price points, has a natural advantage in managing this price sensitivity.

11.7 Social Media Influence on Brand Trust

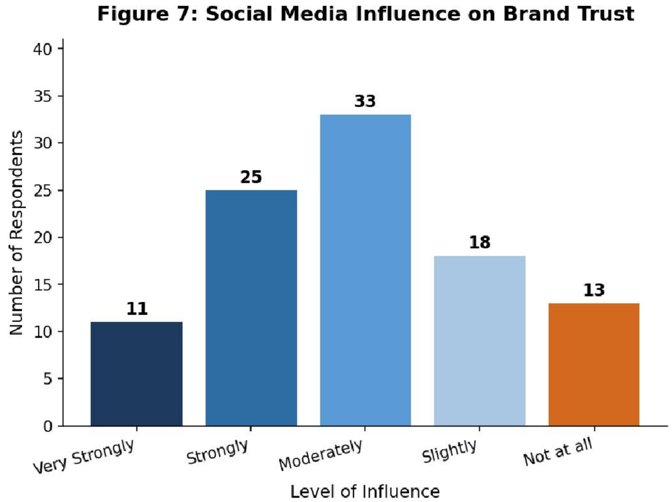

Figure 7: Social Media Influence on Brand Trust (n = 100)

33 respondents said social media ‘Moderately’ influences their brand trust (33%), 25 said ‘Strongly’ (25%), 18 said ‘Slightly’ (18%), 13 said ‘Not at all’ (13%), and 11 said ‘Very Strongly’ (11%). Overall, 69% of respondents are at least slightly influenced by social media content when forming trust in a brand. This highlights the importance of consistent and authentic brand communication on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter, especially for reaching the 18–34 age group that made up most of this sample.

11.8 Influencer Impact on Brand Trial

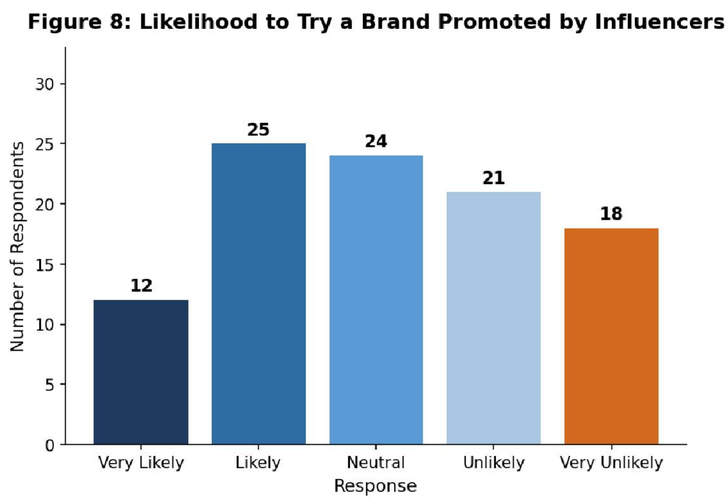

Figure 8: Likelihood of Trying a Brand Promoted by Influencers (n = 100)

25 respondents said they are ‘Likely’ to try an influencer-promoted brand (25%), 12 said ‘Very Likely’ (12%), 24 were ‘Neutral’ (24%), 21 said ‘Unlikely’ (21%), and 18 said ‘Very Unlikely’ (18%). While 37% are positively inclined toward influencer-promoted brands, 39% are resistant to this type of marketing. This means influencer campaigns alone are not enough to build loyalty; brands must combine them with product quality, user reviews, and direct consumer experiences.

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11.9 Primary Source of Buying Influence

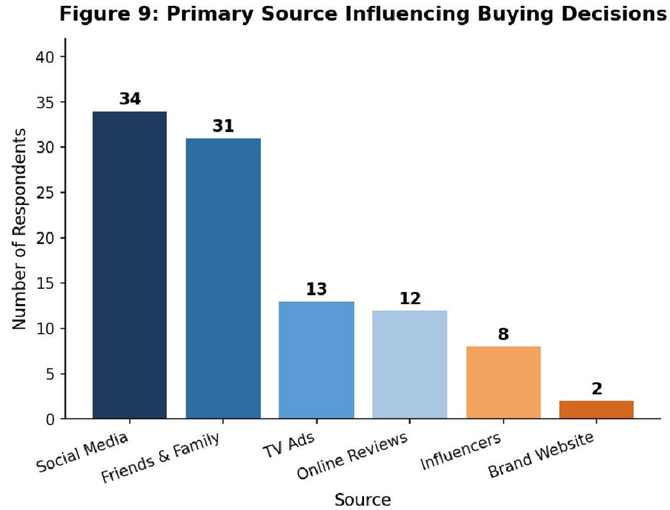

Figure 9: Primary Source Influencing Buying Decisions (n = 100)

Social Media was selected by 34 respondents (34%) as the top source of buying influence, followed by Friends & Family with 31 respondents (31%). TV Ads came third with 13 respondents (13%), Online Reviews with 12 (12%), Influencers with 8 (8%), and Brand Website with just 2 (2%). Social Media and Friends & Family together account for 65% of buying influences, showing that personal and digital peer networks are far more powerful than traditional advertising channels or official brand platforms in shaping smartphone purchase decisions.

11.10 Importance of Sustainability in Brand Choice

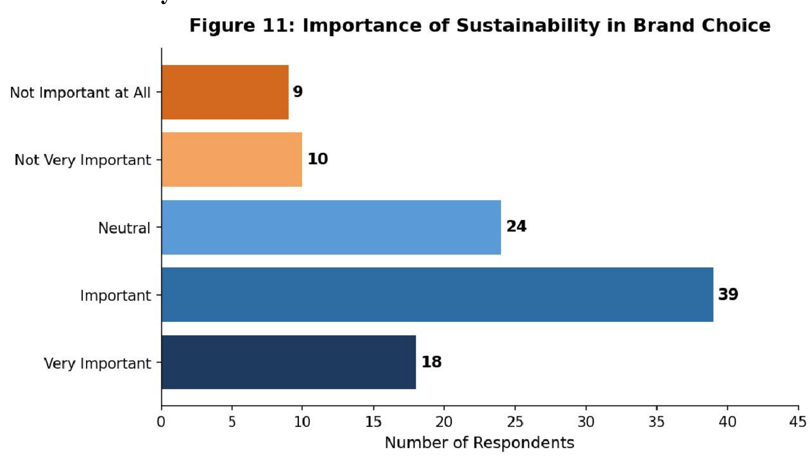

Figure 11: Importance of Sustainability and Ethical Practices in Brand Choice (n = 100)

39 respondents rated sustainability as ‘Important’ (39%), 18 as ‘Very Important’ (18%), 24 as ‘Neutral’ (24%), 10 as ‘Not Very Important’ (10%), and 9 as ‘Not Important at All’ (9%). A total of 57% consider sustainability important or very important, which means that brand values and ethical practices are no longer secondary concerns for a majority of consumers. Both Apple and Samsung should communicate their environmental policies clearly to strengthen loyalty among this group.

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11.11 Response to a Preferred Brand Price Increase

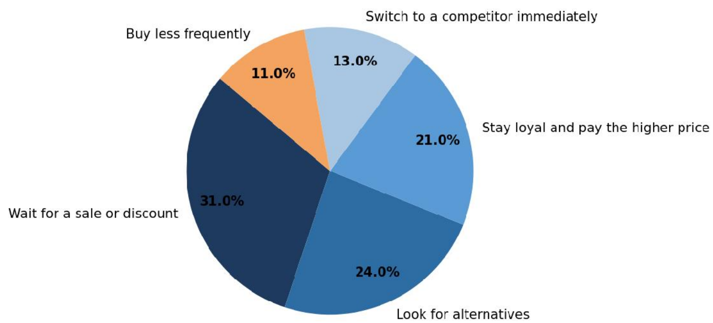

Figure 10: Consumer Response to Preferred Brand Price Increase (n = 100)

When asked what they would do if their preferred brand raised its price, 31 respondents said they would 'Wait for a sale or discount' (31%), 24 would 'Look for alternatives' (24%), 21 would 'Stay loyal and pay more' (21%), 13 would 'Switch to a competitor immediately' (13%), and 11 would 'Buy less frequently' (11%). Only 21% would remain fully loyal under a price increase, meaning 79% of consumers would change their behaviour in some way. This is a clear warning that price hikes carry significant risk of customer loss for both Apple and Samsung.

XII. KEY FINDINGS

- 56% of respondents buy the same brand repeatedly and 34% do so sometimes, meaning 90% of surveyed users show some form of repeat purchase behaviour.
- 61% of respondents feel loyal to brands they trust (33% Agree, 28% Strongly Agree), showing that trust and emotional attachment are strong foundations of brand loyalty.
- 65% of respondents switch brands either 'Sometimes' (39%) or 'Often' (26%), which shows loyalty exists but is not unconditional.
- 55% of respondents agree that price influences their decision to switch brands, making pricing one of the most sensitive areas for both Apple and Samsung.
- 69% of respondents are at least slightly influenced by social media when forming brand trust, with 33% saying 'Moderately' and 25% saying 'Strongly'.
- Social Media (34%) and Friends & Family (31%) together are the top buying influences for 65% of respondents, far ahead of TV Ads (13%) and Online Reviews (12%).
- Only 21% would stay fully loyal if their preferred brand raised prices, while 79% would change their behaviour by waiting for discounts, looking for alternatives, or switching.
- 57% of respondents say sustainability and ethical practices are important (39%) or very important (18%) when choosing a brand.

XIII. DISCUSSION

The data from this study shows that brand loyalty among smartphone users is present but conditional. The majority of respondents have a preference for a particular brand and tend to stay with it, but their loyalty has clear boundaries, especially when prices go up or a better product becomes available. The 56% who always buy the same brand and the 61% who feel emotionally loyal confirm that Apple and Samsung have both been successful in building attached user bases. However, the high switching rates (65% switch sometimes or often) show that retaining these users requires ongoing effort.

One of the strongest findings is how much Social Media and Friends & Family shape buying decisions. Together they account for 65% of the primary buying influence, which is consistent with what researchers like Wiraguna et al. (2025) and Bhatt et al. (2025) found in studies on Gen-Z brand behaviour. This confirms that peer validation and digital content are now more powerful than any TV commercial or official brand campaign.

The 55% who agreed that price affects switching is a direct message to brands, particularly Apple, that premium pricing is a loyalty risk. When 79% of consumers say they would change their behaviour after a price increase, it becomes clear that no brand can take its customers for granted. Samsung's multi-tier pricing strategy gives it an advantage here, as it can absorb price-sensitive users at lower price points while still serving premium buyers.

The 57% who consider sustainability important shows that beyond product performance and price, brand values are becoming a factor in purchase decisions. This is especially relevant for the 18–34 age group, which made up 59% of this sample and is generally more environmentally aware. Both Apple and Samsung have launched sustainability initiatives, but our data suggests there is still room to communicate these more effectively to consumers.

XIV. CONCLUSION

This study surveyed 100 smartphone users to understand brand loyalty in the context of the Apple vs Samsung competition. The results make it clear that brand loyalty does exist among consumers, with 90% showing some form of repeat purchase behaviour and 61% expressing emotional loyalty to trusted brands. However, this loyalty is sensitive to price, competition, and social influence.

Price is the biggest risk factor, as 79% of respondents would alter their behaviour following a price increase. Social media and peer recommendations are the most powerful tools for shaping brand decisions, accounting for 65% of primary influence. Sustainability is emerging as a meaningful factor, with 57% of respondents saying it matters in their brand choice.

For Apple and Samsung to maintain and grow their loyal customer bases, they need to continuously deliver on product quality, keep pricing justified in the eyes of consumers, invest in social media presence and authentic peer engagement, and clearly communicate their brand values including sustainability efforts.

XV. RECOMMENDATIONS

For Apple:

Maintain strong ecosystem integration across all devices as it is one of the biggest reasons why users find it hard to switch away from Apple.

Offer more flexible payment and trade-in options so that price-sensitive consumers do not feel priced out, especially since 55% of respondents said price affects switching.

Actively communicate sustainability efforts through social media since 57% of respondents care about ethical brand practices.

For Samsung:

Work on building deeper emotional connections with consumers through consistent brand storytelling, since Apple currently enjoys stronger attitudinal loyalty among surveyed users.

Improve software update policies across all device ranges to reduce the quality perception gap with Apple.

Use social media influencers and peer review campaigns more strategically, targeting the 18–34 age group which made up 59% of this survey's respondents.

For Both Brands:

Since 65% of buying decisions are influenced by Social Media and Friends & Family, invest in community-based marketing and word-of-mouth strategies over traditional advertising.

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Design loyalty reward programmes that give long-term customers real benefits such as upgrade discounts, exclusive accessories, or priority service.

Be cautious with price increases, as the data clearly shows that 79% of consumers would react negatively to any rise in price from their preferred brand.

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