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**CONSUMER PURCHASING DECISION PROCESS IN BUYING
SMARTPHONES IN NIGERIA**

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I hereby declare that I have compiled the thesis independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors have been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading.

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ABSTRACT

The study of consumer behaviour is crucial in marketing because it helps marketers to understand consumers' expectations regarding a product. Since the mobile phone industry in Nigeria has recently seen a surge in smartphone purchases, it is important to examine consumer behaviour towards smartphones. More so, because fewer studies have been conducted on the purchase of smartphones in Nigeria by consumers aged 50 to 70 years, it is germane to conduct a study on that age group. This thesis, therefore, aims to find out about the purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years in buying smartphones in Nigeria.

The first chapter comprises the theoretical framework. Here, the researcher presents existing literature on consumer decision-making and the consumer purchasing decision process. The second chapter focuses on the market overview and the research methodology adopted for the study. The last chapter introduces the results, findings, discussion, and suggestions.

The study makes use of the quantitative method using an online survey to collect data. The analysis of the data is carried out based on responses from 150 respondents who participated in the study. The data is analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, and graphs. Also, SPSS Statistics was used to conduct a Spearman's rho Correlation on the data. Based on the findings, the study concludes that most of the consumers aged 50 to 70 years in Nigeria go through the five stages of the consumer purchasing decision process while buying their smartphones. Similarly, the study reveals that consumers aged 50 to 70 years do not skip any stage of the purchasing decision process while buying smartphones. Thus, the author recommends, among other things, that smartphone manufacturers should create marketing strategies that aid their active involvement at every stage of the consumer decision-making process. This would contribute to an increase in smartphone purchases by consumers aged 50 to 70 years as well as the long-term sustainability of smartphone companies.

Keywords: purchasing decision process, smartphones, consumer behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the mobile phone has evolved from being a wireless device with which a user may only make and receive calls. With contemporary technical advancements and breakthroughs, many mobile phones may now operate as portable digital media players, digital cameras, browsers, gaming devices, storage devices, video and voice recorders, virtual assistants, and GPS navigating systems, among other things. These mobile phones known as smartphones may benefit their users by offering an instantaneous response, information, and knowledge on politics, economics, education, entertainment, tourism, finance, healthcare, lifestyle, photography, religion, and social networks.

Various sources estimate the number of smartphone users in Nigeria to be between 25 and 40 million, out of a total of 170 million mobile subscribers (Statista, 2020). The GSMA Intelligence Consumer Insights Survey reported that mobile internet penetration in Nigeria has doubled from 2014 to 32 per cent by 2019 and it is expected that internet usage in the country will increase in the future years. With the digital divide that exists between the young and old, the younger population being more receptive to recent technologies than the older adults, the population of smartphone consumers aged 50 years and older are in the minority. There is a need to investigate consumers in the 50 to 70 age group who prefer to buy smartphones over basic mobile phones.

Studies have been carried out on the consumer purchasing decision process in buying smartphones among the youths in Nigeria (Olowogboye, 2017; Ayodele, 2016; Isibor, et.al., 2018). The research problem is that there is not enough relevant information on the purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years in buying smartphones in Nigeria. Therefore, there is a need to examine the decision-making process and the stages that consumers in this age group go through in buying smartphones in Nigeria. In this study, the term “consumers aged 50 to 70 years” is taken to mean the same as the “older generation”. This age category is selected because although older adults have the mental and cognitive capacities to respond to the survey. Moreso, the final retirement age in Nigeria is 70years old.

The thesis aims to find out the purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years in buying smartphones in Nigeria. To achieve this aim, the researcher presents four research questions for the study:

1. What is the purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years in buying smartphones in Nigeria?
2. Which of the stages of the purchasing decision process do consumers aged 50 to 70 years skip when buying smartphones?
3. Which of the stages of the purchasing decision process do consumers aged 50 to 70 years find most important when buying smartphones?
4. What influences the purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years the most when buying smartphones?

The knowledge gained from the study will assist smartphone producers in knowing how to cater to the needs of consumers in that age group. It is also expected that this study will assist marketers in knowing how to properly match their effort to the steps consumers aged 50 to 70 years take to decide on what to buy. In addition, the study will contribute to existing knowledge in the field of marketing, with a particular interest in consumer behaviour.

The theoretical background of the study was developed through literature such as journal articles and books. Also, the author conducted the research using the quantitative method. The findings of the thesis were gathered by a survey created with Google Forms which a total of 150 respondents took part in. The findings and conclusions were reported at the end of the study.

The thesis is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter focuses on the theoretical background. Theories of decision-making and its process are chosen as relevant topics. Books and articles were employed to establish the theoretical basis. The second chapter focuses on the market overview and the research methodology. Research methods are described in detail, and the survey and its structure are introduced. The third chapter presents the results, findings, discussion of findings, and suggestions. Lastly, the author presents the conclusions of the research followed by a list of references and appendices.

1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR

1.1. Consumer decision-making

Consumers are decision-makers who go through steps and procedures to select the goods and services that best meet their needs. It is important to study the behaviour of consumers as this will help to reveal the necessary steps involved in consumer purchasing decision-making. The study of customer behaviour also enables marketers to understand and predict the purchasing behaviour of consumers in the marketplace; it is concerned not only with what consumers buy but also with why they buy it, when and where and how they buy it, how frequently they buy it, as well as how they consume and dispose of it (Barmola et al. 2010).

Consumer behaviour is defined as the actions consumers take in seeking, purchasing, using, evaluating, and discarding goods and services that they believe meet their needs (Belch, Belch 2021, 105). The same concept has been defined as "the study of individuals, groups or organizations, and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society" (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh 2010, 6-7). Based on the definitions, it is possible to conclude that consumer behaviour examines the various actions undertaken by customers to ensure that their needs are met.

The responsibility of marketers is to study the purchasing behaviour of consumers for them to take informed actions. All marketing decisions and rules are founded on assumptions and knowledge about consumer behaviour (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh 2010, 8). More so, a market is shaped based on the decisions consumers make. Similarly, marketers' success in influencing purchase behaviour depends to a large extent on how well they understand consumers (Stankevich, 2017). The knowledge of purchasing behaviour sheds light on the psychology of thinking, feeling, reasoning, and choosing among available alternatives. It also explains how the consumer's environment

influences them and how consumer motivation and decision-making strategies differ across products (ibid). It is therefore important that marketers understand the precise demands consumers are attempting to meet and how those needs are translated into purchasing decisions.

A consumer purchase decision is a decision-making process in which a consumer decides whether to purchase a product (Kotler, Armstrong 2012). Also, consumer purchase decision has been defined as 'behaviour patterns of consumers that proceed, determine, and follow the decision process for the acquisition of need satisfying products, ideas, or services' (Du Plessis et al. 1991, 11). Amongst other things, a consumer purchase decision is based on consumers' needs, limited resources, and the existence of alternatives.

1.2. Consumer purchasing decision process

The entire activity that a consumer goes through in deciding to buy a product is called the purchase decision process. One helpful way to characterize the decision-making process is to consider the amount of effort that goes into the decision-making process each time it must be made (Solomon et al. 2006, 261).

The purchasing process as well as the decision-making that accompanies it does not just begin with the actual purchase of goods but starts well before it and continues long after. It is therefore critical that marketers focus on the entire process, not just the purchase decision (Kotler, Armstrong 2012, 152). The more difficult the decision, the clearer and more crucial the steps of the process become (Solomon et al. 2006, 261). Furthermore, when consumers have little or no experience purchasing a certain product and have almost no understanding of the brands offered and/or the criteria to apply in making a purchase decision, a more complicated decision-making process may develop (Belch, Belch 2021, 122).

Researchers have found it useful to present the amount of effort that is put into decision-making each time in terms of a range, with habitual decision-making at one end and extended problem-solving at the other while limited problem-solving is at the centre, being where many judgments are made (Solomon et al. 2006, 261). Extended problem-solving is a process that is frequently initiated by a motive that is quite essential to the self-concept, and the final decision is regarded to be risky. The consumer attempts to get as much information as possible from both internal and

external searches. Depending on the value of the decision, each product alternative is carefully evaluated by analysing the properties of one brand at a time and seeing how the characteristics of each brand shape up to some set of desirable qualities. Limited problem-solving is typically more basic and straightforward than extended problem-solving. Here, buyers are less motivated to seek information or critically examine each option. Instead, people employ basic decision rules to pick between alternatives. These cognitive shortcuts allow customers to rely on general rules rather than having to start from scratch every time a decision must be made. Habitual decision-making refers to decisions that are made with little or no conscious effort. Many purchases are so routine that we may not know we have made them until we check in our shopping carts. We make decisions with little effort and no cognitive control(ibid).

Traditional economics-based theories assumed that customers act rationally to maximize satisfaction in their purchases of products and services. According to this viewpoint, individuals calmly and methodically integrate as much information as possible with what they already know about a product, patiently considering the benefits and drawbacks of each possibility, and reaching a satisfying conclusion (Solomon et al. 2006, 259). However, it has been discovered that not all consumption is made with a rational decision. In routine or impulse buying situations, some of the decision-making stages are likely to be skipped. Buyers may go rapidly or slowly through these stages, and some of them may be reversed depending on the buyer's characteristics, the goods, and the purchasing scenario (Kotler, Armstrong 2012, 155). Hence, it can be concluded that the stages of the consumer purchasing decision process are dependent on several factors.

Many scholars have proposed various models to explain the consumer decision-making process (e.g. Howard- Sheth, 1969, Nicosia, 1966, Engel et al. 1968). This thesis dwells on the five-step purchase decision process which was first introduced by John Dewey in 1910. It is a well-acknowledged notion that still serves as the foundation of a popular consumer behaviour model. Among the several models that have been developed, the Engel- Kollat-Blackwell Model (EKB Model), is the most frequently recognized (Engel et al. 1968).

This five-step approach provides a basis for more modern concepts by emphasizing the "moments that count" in the consumer decision-making process (Stankevich, 2017). It also acts as a structure for marketers to comprehend the steps that lead to a purchase, as well as assists with customer-company business transactions, proving to be an excellent model for application in today's environment (ibid). The five-step model is relevant for everyone making marketing decisions since

it forces marketers to understand the whole purchasing process rather than just the purchase decision, which might be too late for a company to affect (Panwar et al., 2019).

The Engel-Kollat-Blackwell Model of consumer decision-making is presented as problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation.

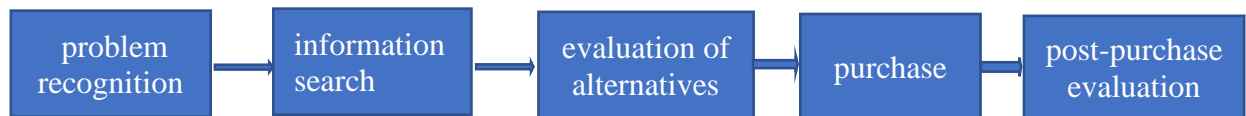


Figure 1. Engel- Kollat-Blackwell Model of consumer decision-making
Source: Engel et al. (1968)

The EKB model is a traditional model that suggests that consumers go through all the five stages while making a purchase. The stages are explained below:

1.2.1. Problem recognition

Problem recognition is caused by a person's perceived disparity between the desired condition and an actual state (Solomon et. al., 2006, 258). This occurs when a consumer perceives a need and is motivated to solve the problem (Belch, Belch 2021, 107). Problem recognition occurs as a "result of an imbalance between actual and desired needs" (Lamb et al. 2011, 190). Need is a vital component of the decision-making process, and its recognition is never skipped by a consumer as it is in some other stages of the decision-making process (Majamäki, 2019). From the views of the researchers above, it can be concluded that the initial step that precedes a decision to buy a product usually begins with a consumer's realisation of a need.

The strength of the underlying need drives the entire decision process (Armstrong, 1991). This implies that the greater the need a consumer has for a product or service, the more likely it is for the consumer to purchase such a product. It is therefore important that marketers ensure that their products are targeted toward meeting the needs of consumers. A need may be triggered by internal or external stimuli. Internal stimuli are a person's basic needs such as hunger or thirst that rise to a degree high enough to become a drive (Kotler, Armstrong 2012, 152). External stimuli encompass outside effects such as advertisement or word-of-mouth. They are induced by external events. An

example of this is having the desire or being persuaded to buy a smartphone after seeing other people using theirs or after watching an advertisement on smartphones.

Abraham Harold Maslow, an American psychologist, is best known for developing Maslow's hierarchy of needs. He argues that needs are ranked in order of importance and only once a human has met the needs of one level can he go to the next. He proposes five fundamental levels of human needs, which are physiological, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. According to Maslow, the lower-level needs which are physiological needs and safety needs must be met before the higher-level needs such as self-actualization needs, esteem needs, and social needs.

Consumers can recognize their problem/need based on the following sources: out of stock, dissatisfaction, new needs/wants, related products/purchases, market-induced problem recognition and new products (Belch, Belch 2021, 107-108).

Out of stock occurs when consumers exhaust their existing supply of a product and need to replenish their stock. One of the most common events that lead to a customer recognizing a problem is the depletion of his supply of products. In doing this, consumers select known or familiar brands and straightforwardly make their decisions based on routine (ibid). For instance, a consumer who runs out of milk or eggs would go to the store without delay to restock the milk or eggs they previously had finished.

Dissatisfaction happens when consumers see the need to purchase a product because they are not satisfied with the current product or service. The customers desire a better product or service than the one they presently have (ibid). For instance, a consumer has a headphone that is not spoiled yet but performs below expectation, so he/she decides to buy another one.

Changes in the life of a consumer often prompt him/her to identify new needs or wants. These changes may be due to changes in life stages or demographic variables like age group, income, occupation, lifestyle, etc. (Mishra, 2018). For instance, a consumer who is single and unmarried may want a small sports car but when such a consumer gets married and has a family, he/she is likely to prefer to buy a big car that would accommodate the whole family. Throughout their life, consumers who are older adults experience a loss of social contact as well as a reduction in social

activities. As a substitute, they rely on media consumption for enjoyment and information gathering (Johnson, 1993).

Regarding related products/purchases, the purchase of a product may lead to recognition of the need for accessories, spare parts, or complementary goods and services (Belch, Belch 2021, 108). For instance, if a consumer purchases a mobile phone, then the consumer will also need to buy accessories like an earpiece, a screen guard, and a phone charger if they are not sold together with the mobile phone.

Marketer-induced problem recognition occurs because of marketers' actions that urge consumers to feel dissatisfied with their existing condition or circumstance (ibid). For instance, a consumer may watch or listen to an advertisement on the latest version of a smartphone that emphasizes and showcase new features that are lacking in previous versions. Such a consumer may afterwards feel the need to buy the latest version of the smartphone since the one they had has become outdated. Marketers try to convince consumers to move to other brands even when their usual brands are satisfactory by employing advertising and sales promotion techniques such as free samples, introductory pricing offers, and coupons (ibid).

New products are introduced, and consumers are made aware of them. The consumer becomes aware of the innovative products that offer a better way to satisfy a need (ibid). They might not have noticed the need before the introduction of the new product. For example, the introduction/advertisement of a self-stirring mug to a consumer who formerly used to stir their coffee with a teaspoon. Before the advertisement, the consumer might not have seen a need to purchase such a product.

The sources of problem recognition have been categorized into three (Mishra, 2018):

1. Latent product-related sources of need recognition– These are related to products though hidden or concealed as sources of need recognition. They include the need for innovative products, visible benefits from the product and offers, deals, and discounts on the product.
2. Latent non-product-related sources of need recognition–These are not related to products but are dormant as sources of need recognition. They include the need to stay fashionable, status improvement, peer interaction, celebrity endorsement and standard of living.

3. **Manifest sources of need recognition**—They are obvious sources of need recognition. They include dissatisfaction with the current product, changes in needs and need for related products.

Generally, problem recognition is the point at which a consumer becomes aware that they must purchase a product or service to meet a need or want. It is frequently considered perhaps the most important phase in the process because if customers do not identify a problem or need, they will likely not consider purchasing a product.

1.2.2. Information search

At this stage, a pre-purchase search is conducted in which potential consumers can look for internal or external information that will assist them in meeting their recognized needs. It is also a stage at which the consumer searches for a value in a potential product or service. During this period, the consumer's options are recognized or clarified.

Often, the initial search entails going through and retrieving various information stored in memory about past experiences and/or different purchase alternatives. This retrieval of information is referred to as internal search (Belch, Belch 2021, 112). If the product is regarded as essential or a routinely purchased item, an internal information search may be sufficient to prompt a purchase. The knowledge stored in memory is adequate to assess options and decide on many recurring purchases. If the internal search yields insufficient results, or a person's previous experience is limited, the consumer will conduct an external search to obtain further information. When it comes to information sources, consumers aged 50 to 70 years rely on internal knowledge (Altobello, Hale 2009). If their internal knowledge is lacking or inconsistent, they tend to seek information from both impersonal sources such as the media and intimate sources such as family members or specialists (Lumpkin et al.1988; Dahl, et al. 2013).

External research is conducted when a person has no prior knowledge about a product. An example of an external information search is asking friends and family about their experiences with purchasing a new product (Belch, Belch 2021, 112). Public resources like reviews and blogs can also be used to conduct external research (Stankevich, 2017). Marketer-dominated sources such as salespeople and advertising can be useful as well. In certain circumstances, the consumer may already be aware of the needed information because of previous purchases and product usage.

The amount of time dedicated to the information search usually depends on the consumer's experience with buying the product, the risk involved and the level of interest (Stankevich, 2017). The time dedicated to it also depends on the type of product being considered and the medium through which the purchase will be made. On the Internet, search effort (for price and non-price information) is dramatically reduced (Gupta, et al. 2004).

Summarily, at this stage, information search involves two types: internal search and external search. While internal search refers to a consumer's search for information based on their cognition of items, the purchasing experience, and past recollections, external search refers to the process of obtaining information from the outside world.

1.2.3. Evaluation of alternatives

At this stage, the consumer evaluates the various brands, goods and services that have been identified as suitable to satisfy the need or motivations that prompted the decision process. A consumer may ask questions like, "Do I really need this product?" "Are there alternatives?" "Is the original product that bad?" (Stankevich, 2017). Many times, the consumer selects one of the most important attributes based on which he or she makes a final decision or uses a method of exclusion (ibid). The process for a customer at this point is unique to the individual consumer and the specific buying situation since they are seeking the best deal. The meaning of the best deal is based on factors that are more important to each buyer, such as price, quality, brand, product positioning, location, the consequences of utilizing the product, and so on (ibid).

Consumers may evaluate alternatives based on the functional (tangible) and psycho-social (intangible) benefit they provide (Belch, Belch 2021, 117). The tangible benefit that may be experienced by the customer, such as taste or physical appearance, are known as functional benefits. The more abstract benefit or personality-related features of a brand, such as the social appeal gained by wearing an expensive suit, designer label, or driving a 'hot' automobile, are known as psycho-social benefits (ibid). In terms of evaluation criteria, the selection of consumer service providers for older consumers is mostly dependent on social factors, with less emphasis on functional and economic variables (Grougiou, Pettigrew 2011).

Once the evoked set (different brands considered as purchase options during the alternative evaluation process) has been decided upon, the consumer performs a final evaluation to further narrow down their choice. In doing so, the consumer compares the decision alternatives based on certain criteria that are important to them (Belch, Belch 2021, 117). The evoked set is often limited in comparison to the overall number of possibilities accessible. Consumers often employ two sorts of information when considering prospective alternatives: (a) a "list" of brands from which they want to make their pick and (b) the criteria they will use to evaluate each brand. Choosing from a sample of all conceivable brands is a human trait that aids in the decision-making process. (Schiffman, Kanuk 2007, 534). According to research, senior purchasers are more brand loyal and less likely to try a new brand than younger buyers (Lambert-Pandraud et al. 2005).

The search for alternatives, as well as the methods used in the search, are affected by factors such as time and money costs; how much information the consumer already has; the amount of the perceived risk if a wrong selection is made; and the consumer's predisposition toward particular choices as influenced by the attitude of the individual toward choice behaviour (Burnett 2011, 86). It is difficult to select a consumer assessment process because a consumer does not use a single evaluation process in all purchasing decisions but may use several evaluation processes to get a good judgment (Kotler, Armstrong 2012, 153).

It can be concluded that the process of evaluating alternatives relates to customers' evaluations of various items accessible from the standpoints of functional and psychological benefits. Consumers will select which product aspects are significant to them based on their unique circumstances, tastes, and behavioural characteristics.

1.2.4. Purchase

Once a consumer chooses which brand to buy, he/she implements the decision to proceed through to the actual purchase. Three categories of purchase decisions have been identified as fully planned purchases (both the product and the brand are chosen before the store visit); partially planned purchases (there is an intention to purchase the product, but the brand selection is postponed until shopping); and impulse purchases (both the product and brand are chosen in the store) (Engel et.al. 1993).

The consumer develops an intention to purchase the most desired brand since they have weighed all their options and determined the value that it will provide them with. A purchasing intention differs from a purchase that is made since the consumer may make a purchase intention to buy specific goods at first without completing the transaction. The extent to which purchase intentions result in actual sales is known as the sales conversion rate (Armstrong, 2000).

There are two kinds of intervening factors that might impact the shift from purchase intention to purchase decision. The factors are (Kotler, Keller 2011, 154):

1. Other people's attitudes. The extent to which a consumer is influenced by other people's negative ideas about the brand or product chosen by the consumer influences the level of effect of this factor.
2. Unanticipated intervening situational factors. These are factors that develop because of an unanticipated circumstance that alters customers' purchasing intentions. For highly involved and sophisticated transactions, there is sometimes a time delay between the formulation of a buy intention or choice and the actual purchase. Individuals normally make a purchase decision based on their expected monthly pay, expected price, or desired product advantages, but unexpected changes in such factors might influence consumer purchasing intentions (Kotler, Armstrong 2005, 284).

A consumer is more likely to choose a store in whom he or she has faith and trust, as well as the most convenient payment option, to finish the purchase process (Blyth, 2005). Hence, ease of location and payment is also a consideration when making a purchase choice. Regarding the impact of the store and product attributes on purchase decisions, early studies show that product prices have a major impact (Greco, 1986). Some other studies show that older consumers choose product quality in purchase decisions, assortment variety and product features before price (Burt, Gabbott 1995).

There is frequently a time lag between the development of a buying decision and the actual purchase, especially for complex purchases like vehicles, personal computers, and consumer durables. Nondurable products, which include numerous low-involvement items such as everyday goods, may have a short period between decision and purchase. At this stage, it is vital to entice the buyer with a purchase intention and a time lag (Stankevich, 2017). The purchase decision stage of the consumer decision-making model can be impacted by the customer's preferences for a certain brand as well as the opinions of family, friends, and reference groups (Ganlari, 2016). The

outcomes of alternative evaluations, environmental factors, and store selection all influence consumers' final purchase decisions.

1.2.5. Post-purchase evaluation

The final phase follows the purchase and usage of the goods or services. The customer compares the level of performance to their expectations and decides whether they are satisfied or not. Satisfaction happens when a customer's expectations are met or surpassed; dissatisfaction arises when performance falls short of expectations. Marketers must promise to the extent that their brand can deliver to customers (Kotler, Armstrong 2012, 154).

The post-purchase evaluation provides key feedback because it influences future purchase patterns and consumption activities (Foxall, 2005). If a post-purchase evaluation is positive, the consumer will be encouraged to purchase the same brand or purchase from the same company in the future. This is also known as post-purchase intention. An unfavourable evaluation may lead the consumer to form negative attitudes toward the brand, reducing the possibility of purchasing it again or possibly removing it from the evoked set (Belch, Belch 2021, 121).

If a consumer discovers that the product meets or exceeds the promises made or their expectations, they may become a brand ambassador, influencing other potential customers in the information search stage of their customer journey, and increasing the likelihood of the product being purchased again. However, if the purchased product fails to meet up to the promises made, potential customers may be retrained from showing interest in the product by negative comments given. Older consumers often rate service employees less favourably than younger consumers do, and this negative perception extends to evaluations of the service company (Schmidt et al. 2012).

Findings have shown that having a sense of regret about a purchase has a negative influence on the degree to which a consumer is happy, which has a negative impact on product repurchase (Bui et al. 2011). It is also possible for consumers to experience cognitive dissonance after purchase (Belch, Belch 2021, 121). Cognitive dissonance is a feeling of psychological tension or post-purchase uncertainty experienced by a consumer after making a difficult purchase decision. Dissonance is more likely to occur mainly in situations where the customer must pick between similar alternatives particularly if the alternative possesses distinguishing or desirable characteristics that the chosen alternative does not (ibid).

Summarily, post-purchase evaluation is the final stage of the customer purchasing process. Assessing and comparing product qualities such as pricing, quality, and service are done at this stage. Consumers relate their expectations about the purchased product to the perceived value and then seek other people's opinions to arrive at a conclusion about the experience. A result which has a significant effect on their next purchase decision.

2. MARKET OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. Smartphone purchases in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the major development in the telecommunications industry did not occur until the year 2001 when mobile phones and mobile networks were introduced into the country. Before the introduction, Nigerians simply purchased landlines provided by the sole accessible telecommunications firm, Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL). These analog landlines were big and connected to several wires and this made them impossible to carry around. The narrative changed with the introduction of mobile phones into the country. At first, only a few mobile phones were sold as not many people could afford them. The available types were the ones that performed the basic functions of making and receiving calls as well as sending and receiving text messages. Some years after, with rapid technological advancements, smartphones began to be in circulation in the country.

As of February 2014, there were over 129 million mobile phone users in Nigeria, of which just about 5 million were active smartphone users (Nigerian Communications Commission, NCC, 2014). However, according to GSMA, the mobile internet penetration in Nigeria doubled since 2014, reaching 32% in 2019 (Bahia, Delaporte 2020). Based on reports from various sources, the number of smartphone users in Nigeria is estimated to be between 25 and 40 million, out of a total of 170 million mobile customers (Statista, 2020). The growth of sales and use of smartphones in the country has been phenomenal, with almost 40 million smartphone users as of 2018 (Igyuve, 2020). As of December 2020, around 106 million Nigerians were subscribed to the various internet network providers present in the country (Nigerian Communications Commission Annual Summary Report, 2020). It should also be noted that many Nigerians use the internet through their mobile phones as Data Reportal reveals that 92.4% of the total internet users in Nigeria are from smartphones (Kemp, 2021).

The smartphone market in Nigeria has not only been a thriving one, but it continues to display immense potential. In 2019, Nigeria was reported to have the largest smartphone market in

Africa. Smartphones have a wide range of functionalities. Smartphones have grown in popularity in the twenty-first century because of interesting features that can perform various functions such as accessing emails, biometrics, and social networking platforms, among others (Masiu, Chukwuere 2018). A lot of things that people needed different gadgets for in times past have easily been consolidated into one device.

Smartphones have become more than telecommunication devices and are now status symbols for their users (Liadi, 2016). Some positive and negative uses and impacts of smartphones have been identified. They range from their use for distance learning and research to their aid for cheating in exams. People use their smartphones for online shopping. Data shows that about 81% of Nigerian smartphone users use these smartphones for online shopping (Trevinal, Stenger 2014). Online shopping is rather spontaneous and can be conducted in many different places (Saleem, 2020). Many shoppers relieve stress by merely window shopping online and they engage in this with their smartphones.

Researchers have found that some motivating factors among university students in Nigeria and the Benin Republic for the purchase of smartphones over other telecommunication devices are the access to the internet that it gives them, and their ability to connect to others (Tunmibi, et al. 2015). Ayodele, in his study on the deciding factor that drives smartphone buying among young people in Anambra State, Nigeria, notes that aesthetic value has the most important impact on purchasing behaviour among young adults (Ayodele, 2016). Also, brand image, product features, country of origin, peer group and price individually are significantly related to the consumer purchase decision among students of tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria (Olowogboye, 2017).

Even though smartphones appeal to people of various ages, a sizable proportion of smartphone users appear to be young customers in the age range of undergraduate students (Juwaheer et al. 2014). Several studies have shown that older people are less likely to adopt new technologies than teenagers (Schleife, 2010, Srinuan, Bohlin 2011). A study by Pew Research Center has concluded that people ages, 18 to 29 are more likely to own smartphones than people ages 50 and older (Silver, Johnson 2020). Based on this knowledge, researchers seem to have concentrated more on smartphone purchases and usage by the youth than on the 50 years and older age group. However, it is worth noting that some consumers aged 50 years and older still prefer to purchase smartphones over the basic ones since smartphones can also benefit them in several ways.

Smartphones can assist the older generation to stay in touch with their loved ones who do not live with them. The 50 years and older age group can also alleviate boredom using smartphones as it allows them to play games, watch events around the world, listen to audiobooks, and connect with people on social media. Beyond that, it can function as a calendar, alarm clock, GPS tracker, and engaging device. Smartphones could also be quite useful as a wellness tracker for this age group. It is on this note that the focus of this research is on the purchase of smartphones by consumers aged 50 to 70 years.

2.2. Research method

This thesis aims to find out the purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years in buying smartphones in Nigeria. The author made use of the quantitative method for this. The rationale for this choice is that the quantitative method is suitable for gathering relevant information from a large number of respondents and the method will help to provide a comprehensive view of the consumer purchasing decision process for buying smartphones in Nigeria. An online survey was created using Google Forms. Information for the study was gathered by administering questionnaires to Nigerian consumers between the ages of 50 to 70years old. This cohort was selected because the author thinks that individuals within this age category though older adults, have the mental and cognitive capacities to respond to survey-type of questionnaires. Moreso, the final retirement age in Nigeria, which is the age of retirement of professors working in universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics, is 70years old.

The questions in the survey majorly centred on the theory of the five-stage model of the consumer purchasing decision process. A major part of the questions was the Likert scale while others were multiple-choice questions. This was done to simplify the questions as much as possible for the respondents and to make the questions quantifiable for better analysis. The author ensured that all the questions were easy to answer. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section was to find out whether the respondents are using smartphones or not and the brand of smartphone they are using. The second section had five question topics with twenty statements on the consumer purchase decision process. The section also had one question on the factors that influenced the respondents' choice of smartphones as well as one question on the stage the respondents find most important when buying smartphones. The third section was comprised of demographic questions.

The questionnaire was written in the English language. When it was ready, the author sent a copy to her supervisor to determine the face validity of the proposed questionnaire. Comments and suggestions from the author's supervisor were taken into consideration in improving the questions and structure of the online questionnaire. Eventually, the author made certain that the questionnaire was ready to be distributed to the intended audience.

Non-probability sampling, particularly convenience sampling, was adopted for the research. The research area was selected as Oyo State, Nigeria. The study was conducted among the staff of the University of Ibadan in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo state Nigeria. The questionnaires were shared with the author's contacts at the university who also sent them to other members of staff of the university. The data collection took two weeks which was from 24.03.2022 until 07.04.2022. This duration was considered appropriate for the study. The questionnaire had 150 respondents in total. Most of the respondents were from the age group of 50-54 years, accounting for approximately 40% of all respondents.

All the information gathered from the questionnaire items was statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, and graphs. SPSS Statistics was also used to conduct a Spearman's rho Correlation Analysis on the data. The online questionnaire is represented in Appendix 1, while the survey results analysis with their various graphics is presented in Appendix 2 and 3. The questions about the respondent's gender, age, and educational background made up the demographic background of the respondents.

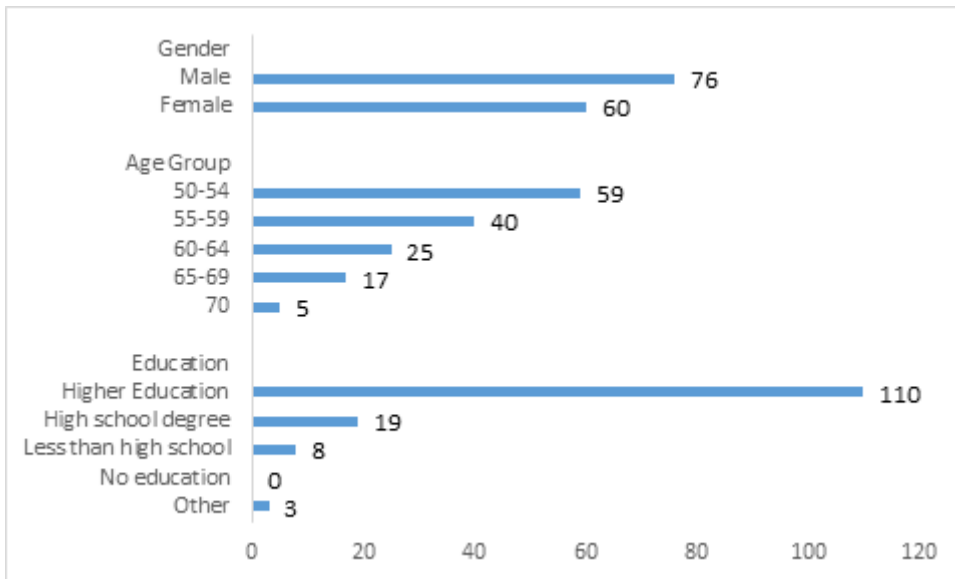


Figure 2. General characteristics of the respondents
 Source: Adeleye (2022) author’s survey

Figure 2 shows how the gender, age groups and educational level of the respondents were divided. As seen in the last section of appendix 2, the dominating gender among the 150 respondents was men since 76 of the respondents were men and 60 were women. The target group was 50 to 70 years old. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 50 to 54 years as this age group made up 59 (40%) of the total respondents. 40 (27%) of the respondents were from age 55-59 years, 25 (17%) of them were from age 60-64 years, 17 (12%) were from age 65-69 while 5 (3%) constituted respondents that were aged 70 years. Furthermore, it can be seen from the chart above that the educational level of the majority of the respondents is higher education which accounted for 110 (79%) of the total number. 19 (14%) of the respondent had a high school degree, 8 (6%) of the respondents had less than a high school degree and 3 (2%) chose the ‘other’ option.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Findings

This chapter presents the result of the survey questionnaire. In total, 150 people answered the questionnaire. 4 of the respondents did not have a smartphone as shown in Appendix 2. Those who did not have a smartphone could not proceed with the survey questions, but their demographics were still collected to find out the number of respondents without smartphones.

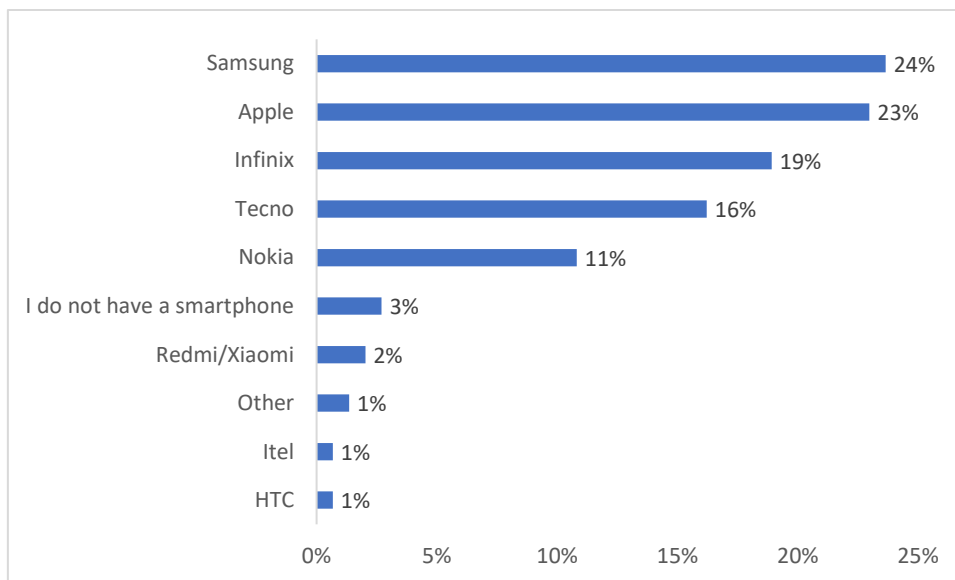


Figure 3. “Which brand of the smartphone are you using?”

Source: Adeleye (2022), author’s survey

Figure 3 shows how the brand of smartphone usage is divided among respondents. The online questionnaire was spread among 9 brands of smartphones. Out of the 150 respondents that answered the questionnaire, 35 (24%) respondents were using Samsung. This was closely followed by 34 (23%) who were Apple users. 28 (19%) used Infinix, 24 (16%) used Techno, 16 (11%) used Nokia and 2 (2%) used Redmi/Xiaomi. Itel and HTC had 1% of respondents using them while 4 (3%) indicated that they did not have a smartphone.

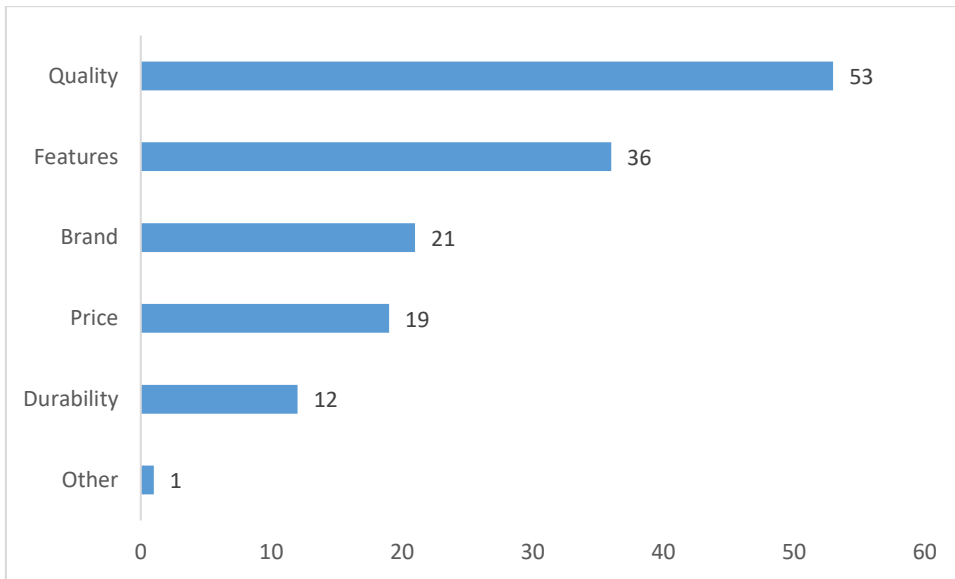


Figure 4. “Which of the following influenced your choice of smartphone the most?”
 Source: Adeleye (2022), author’s survey

The respondents were asked to choose the factor that influenced their smartphone choice the most. From figure 4 above it can be seen that quality was chosen to have the greatest influence as 53 (37%) of the respondents chose it followed by the smartphone feature which was chosen by 36 (25%) of the respondents. 21 (15%) of the respondent chose brand, 19 (13%) went for the price and 12 (8%) of the respondents chose the durability of the smartphone leaving just 1% of the respondent choosing another factor not included in the list. The division of the respondents’ choices is shown in Appendix 2.

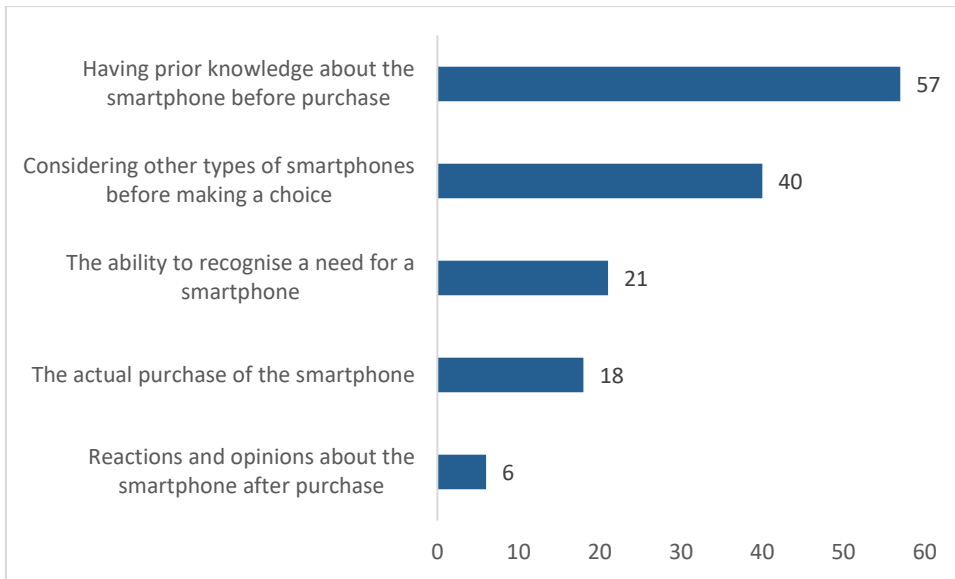


Figure 5. “Which of the following activities did you find most important?”
Source: Adeleye (2022), author’s survey

From figure 5, the author asked the respondents to choose the activity (which makes up the stages of the consumer decision process) they considered most important while going through the purchase of their smartphone. It can be seen that the majority of the respondents selected “having prior knowledge about the smartphone before purchase” which made up 57 (40%) of the total respondents. 40 (28%) of the respondents chose “considering other types of smartphones before making a choice”. 21 (15%) of the respondents chose the most important as “the ability to recognise a need for a smartphone”. 18 (13%) stated that “the actual purchase of the smartphone” is the most important and finally, 6 (4%) of the respondents said their “reactions and feeling/opinions about the smartphone after purchase” is the most important stage while going through the purchase of their smartphone.

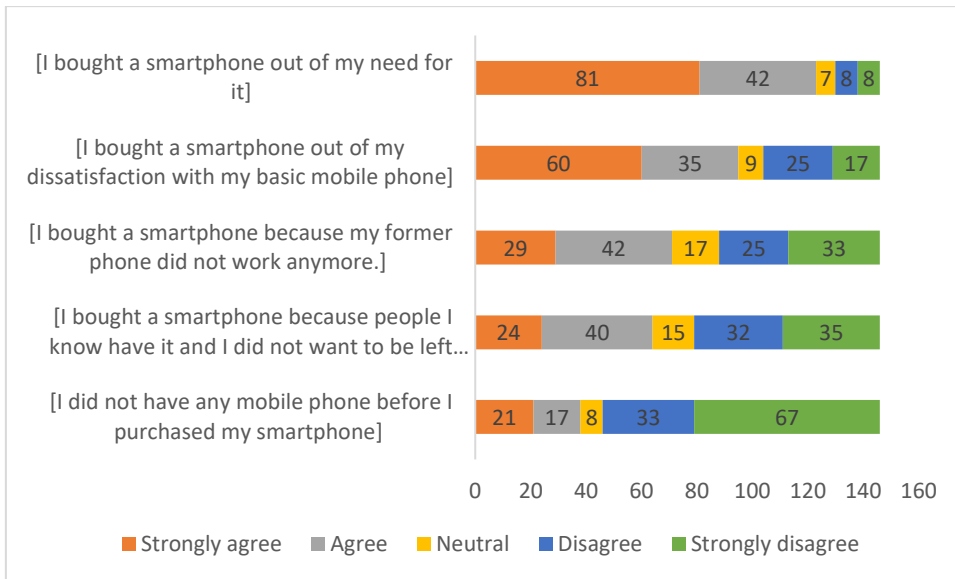


Figure 6. “What was the need behind the purchase of your smartphone?”
Source: Adeleye (2022), author’s survey

The respondents were asked what the need behind the purchase of their smartphone was through some statements. The majority of the respondents indicated that they bought their smartphones out of their need for them as shown in Figure 6. While responding to the statement, “I bought my smartphone out of the need for it,” 81 (55%) respondents strongly agreed and 42 (29%) respondents agreed. 7 (4.8%) respondents were neutral while 8 (5%) respondents each disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Regarding the statement, “I bought my smartphone out of the dissatisfaction with my basic mobile phone,” 60 (41%) respondents strongly agreed and 35 (24%) respondents agreed with this statement. 9 (6%) were neutral, 25 (17%) disagreed and 17 (12%) respondents strongly disagreed. Also, while responding to the statement, “I bought my smartphone because my former phones did not work anymore,” 29 (20%) respondents strongly agreed and 42 (29%) of them agreed. 17 (12%) respondents were neutral, 25 (17%) disagreed and 33 (23%) strongly disagreed with it. Likewise, the respondents gave their responses to the statement, “ I bought my smartphone because the people I knew had them and I did not want to be left out,” 24 (16%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, and 40 (27%) respondents agreed. 15 (10%) respondents were neutral, 32 (22%) respondents disagreed, and 35 (24%) respondents strongly disagreed.

Finally, in response to the statement, “I did not have any mobile phone before I purchased my smartphone, 21 (14%) respondents strongly agreed and 17 (12%) respondents agreed. 8 (5%) respondents were neutral, 33 (23%) respondents disagreed, and 67 (46%) strongly disagreed.

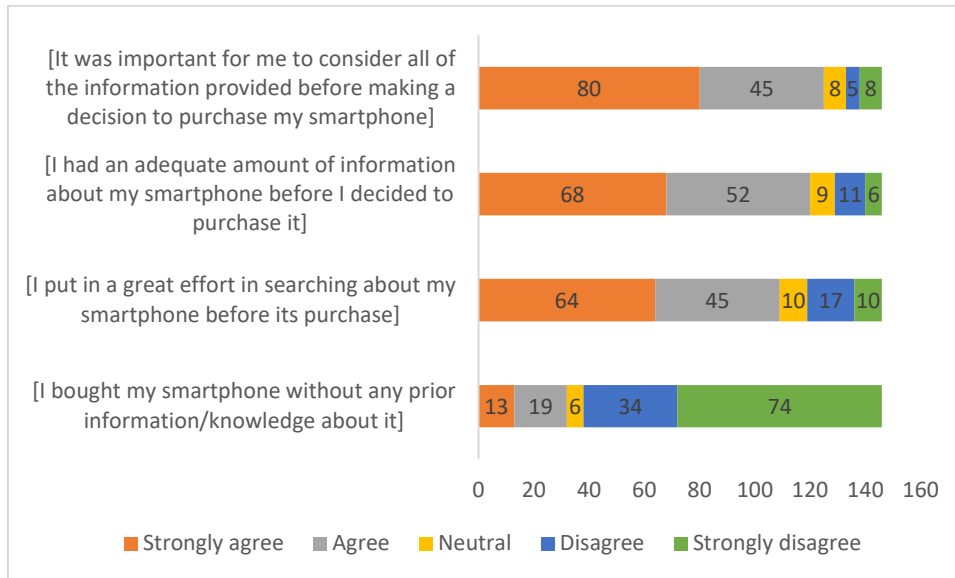


Figure 7. “How informed were you about your smartphone before its purchase?”

Source: Adeleye (2022), author’s survey

The respondents were asked how well they evaluated their alternatives using some statements. Figure 7 reveals that the majority of the respondents think that it is important that they consider all information provided before deciding to purchase their smartphone. As shown in the chart, 80 (55%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, “it was important for me to consider all information provided before deciding to purchase my smartphone’. While 45 (47%) respondents agreed with the statement, 8 (5%) respondents were neutral, 5 (3%) disagreed and 8 (5%) respondents strongly disagreed with it. Regarding the statement, “I had an adequate information about my smartphone before I decided to purchase it,” 68 (47%) respondents strongly agreed, 52 (36%) respondents agreed, 9 (6%) were neutral, 11 (8%) disagreed and 6 (4%) respondents strongly disagreed. 64 (44%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, ‘I put in a great effort in searching about my smartphone before its purchase. 45 (31%) respondents agreed with the statement, 10 (7%) respondents were neutral, 17 (12%) respondents disagreed and 10 (7%) respondents strongly disagreed.

The statement, “I bought my smartphone without any prior information/ knowledge about it,” had only 13 (9%) respondents who strongly agreed with it. 19 (13%) respondents agreed, 6 (4%) were neutral, 34 (23%) disagreed, while 74 (51%) respondents strongly disagreed.

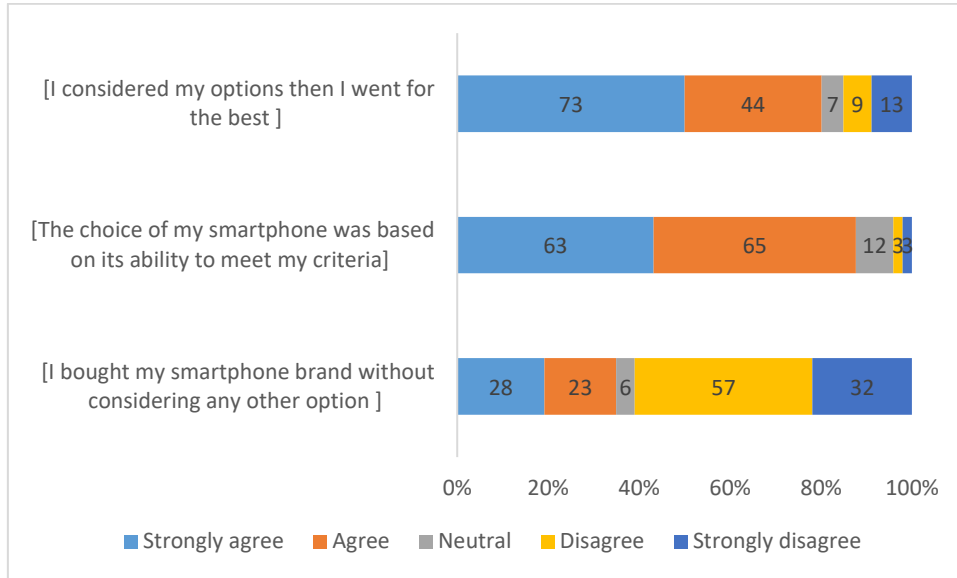


Figure 8. “How well did you evaluate your alternatives?”

Source: Adeleye (2022), author’s survey

The respondents were asked about how well they evaluated their alternatives through some given statements. Figure 8 shows that the majority of the respondents considered their options and then went for the best. As shown in the chart above, while responding to the statement, “I considered my options and then went for the best,” 73 (50%) respondents strongly agreed and 44 (30%) respondents agreed. 7 (5%) respondents were neutral, 9 (6%) disagreed and 13 (9%) strongly disagreed. Responding to the statement “the choice of my smartphone was based on its ability to meet my criteria,” 63 (43%) respondents strongly agreed. 65 (45%) respondents agreed, 12 (8%) were neutral, 3 (2%) respondents disagreed and 3 strongly disagreed with the statement. The statement, “I bought my smartphone brand without considering any other option,” had 28 (19%) respondents who strongly agreed with it. 23 (16%) respondents agreed, 6 (4%), were neutral, 57 (39%) disagreed, and 32 (22%) respondents strongly disagreed.

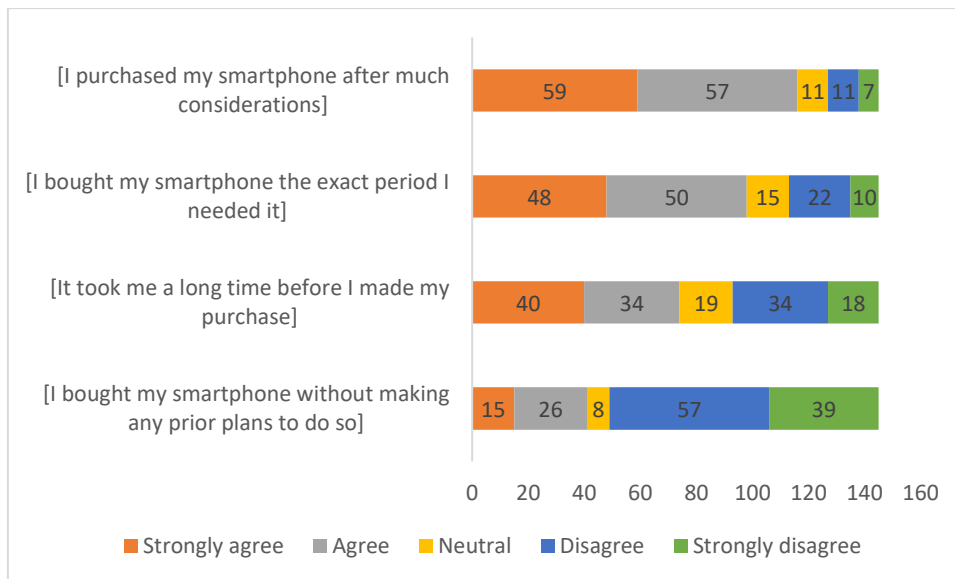


Figure 9. “When did you decide to buy your smartphone?”

Source: Adeleye (2022), author’s survey

The respondents were asked about how long it took them to decide to buy their smartphones. Figure 9 reveals that the majority of the respondents purchased their smartphones after much consideration. As shown in the chart, 59 (41%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, “I purchased my smartphone after much consideration”. While 57 (39%) respondents agreed with the statement, 11 (8%) were neutral, 11 disagreed and 7 (5%) respondents strongly disagreed with it. Regarding the statement, “I bought my smartphone the exact period I needed it,” 48 (33%) respondents strongly agreed, 50 (34%) agreed, 15 (10%) were neutral, 22 (15%) disagreed and 10(7%) respondents strongly disagreed. 40 (28%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, “It took me a long time before I made my purchase,” 34 (23%) respondents agreed with the statement, 19 (13%) were neutral, 34 (23%) disagreed and 18 (12%) respondents strongly disagreed. In the statement, “I bought my smartphone without making prior plans to do so,” 15 (10%) respondents strongly agreed. 26 (18%) respondents agreed, 8 (6%) were neutral, 57 (39%) disagreed and 39 (27%) respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

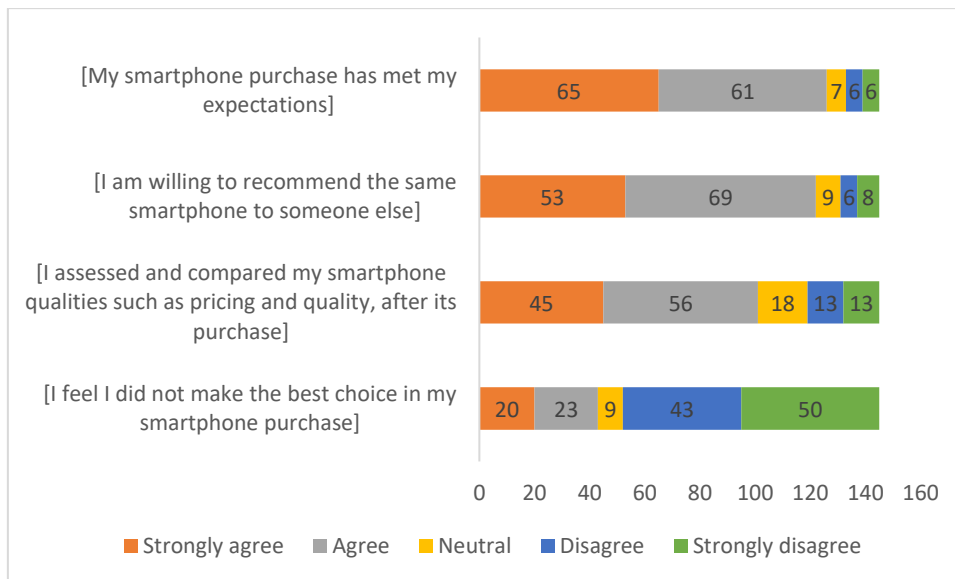


Figure 10. “What was your opinion about your smartphone after its purchase?”
 Source: Adeleye (2022), author’s survey

The respondents were asked how they felt about their smartphones after purchase. Figure 10 shows that 65 (45%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, “my smartphone purchase has met my expectations”. 61 (42%) respondents agreed, 7 (5%) were neutral, 6 disagreed and 6 respondents (4%) strongly disagreed with the statement. As shown in the chart, 53 (37%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, “I am willing to recommend the same smartphone to someone else”. 69 (48%) respondents agreed, 9 (6%) were neutral 6 (4%) disagreed and 8 (5.5%) respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Regarding the statement, “I assessed and compared my smartphone qualities such as price and quality after its purchase,” 45 (31%) respondents strongly agreed. 56 (39%) respondents agreed, 18 (12%) were neutral, 13 disagreed and 13 strongly disagreed with the statement (9%). In the last statement, “I feel I did not make the best decision in my smartphone purchase,” 20 (14%) respondents strongly agreed. 23 (16%) respondents agreed, 9 (6%) were neutral, 43 (30%) disagreed and 50 (34%) respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 1. The result of Spearman’s rho Correlation

			Correlations				
			When did you decide to buy your smartphone?	How informed were you about your smartphone before its purchase?	What was the need behind the purchase of your smartphone?	How well did you evaluate your alternatives?	What was your opinion about your smartphone after its purchase?
Spearman's rho	When did you decide to buy your smartphone?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.525**	.318**	.469**	.285**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
		N	146	146	146	146	146
	How informed were you about your smartphone before its purchase?	Correlation Coefficient	.525**	1.000	.094	.561**	.474**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.	.259	<.001	<.001
		N	146	146	146	146	146
	What was the need behind the purchase of your smartphone?	Correlation Coefficient	.318**	.094	1.000	-.067	.082
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.259	.	.422	.325
		N	146	146	146	146	146
	How well did you evaluate your alternatives?	Correlation Coefficient	.469**	.561**	-.067	1.000	.314**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	.422	.	<.001
		N	146	146	146	146	146
	What was your opinion about your smartphone after its purchase?	Correlation Coefficient	.285**	.474**	.082	.314**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	.325	<.001	.
		N	146	146	146	146	146

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Adeleye (2022), author’s calculations

To understand the strength of the relationships between the variables used, a Spearman’s rho Correlation was carried out. A positive correlation shows that two variables tend to move in synch, which is beneficial. This means that when one variable rises, the other usually follows. A positive correlation is graded on a scale of 0.1 to 1.0 (Ratner, 2009). A weak positive correlation would be between 0.1 and 0.3, a moderate positive correlation between 0.3 and 0.5, and a high positive correlation between 0.5 and 1.0. The higher the positive correlation, the more probable the equities will move in unison(ibid).

Table 1 shows significant positive correlations between all variables, especially between the questions, “how well did you evaluate your alternatives?” and “how informed were you about your smartphone before its purchase?” which have a high positive correlation of 0.561. This means that the more information gathered by the respondents at the information search stage, the more the evaluation of alternatives was. From the result, without going through the information search stage, it was impossible to evaluate alternatives. The result shows that the data is statistically significant with its value being less than 0.01.

Furthermore, there is a high positive correlation of 0.525 between the questions, “how informed were you about your smartphone before its purchase?” and “when did you decide to buy your smartphone?” with a level of significance of 0.01. As explained above, both variables are directly

related to each other. That is, the more information gathered by the respondents towards the purchase of a smartphone, the more delayed the purchase of their smartphones will be. Also, there is a moderate positive correlation of 0.474 between the questions, “how informed were you about your smartphone before its purchase” and “what was your opinion about your smartphone after its purchase”, with a significant level of 0.01. The implication of this result is that respondents who went through the information search stage before making a purchase decision had a positive opinion about the smartphone purchased. This can also be seen in Figure 10. Based on the result, it can be concluded that the consumers aged 50 to 70 years go through the five stages of the purchasing decision process.

3.2. Discussion of findings

This research was carried out to find out about the purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years in buying smartphones in Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, some research questions were asked, and the survey was conducted on the target audience, which was consumers in Nigeria aged 50 to 70 years. The results of the study were derived from the responses received from the survey questionnaires that were administered. To answer the research questions, the researcher designed five-question topics. Each question topic had statements to which the respondents were asked to react to.

The first question topic, “What was the need behind the purchase of your smartphone?” was asked to determine the opinion of consumers aged 50 to 70 years on the problem recognition stage. Here, the researcher gave the following statements: “I bought a smartphone out of my dissatisfaction with my basic mobile phone; I bought a smartphone because people I know have it and I did not want to be left out; I bought a smartphone out of my need for it; I bought a smartphone because my former phone did not work anymore; I did not have any mobile phone before I purchased my smartphone”. The results of the study showed that most of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statements. As a result of this, the researcher concluded that most of the respondents go through the problem recognition stage while purchasing smartphones.

The second question topic, “How informed were you about your smartphone before its purchase?” was asked to determine the views of consumers aged 50 to 70 years about the information search stage. For this, the researcher gave the following statements: “I put in a great

effort in searching about my smartphone before its purchase; I had an adequate amount of information about my smartphone before I decided to purchase it; It was important for me to consider all of the information provided before making a decision to purchase my smartphone; I bought my smartphone without any prior information/knowledge about it.’’ The responses showed that most of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the positive statements and many of them also either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the negative statement. Based on this, the author concluded consumers aged 50 to 70 years go through the information search stage of the consumer purchasing decision process.

The researcher asked the third question topic, ‘‘How well did you evaluate your alternatives?’’ to determine the respondents’ views about the evaluation of alternatives stage of the consumer purchasing decision process. Here, the researcher gave the following statements: ‘‘I bought my smartphone brand without considering any other option; The choice of my smartphone was based on its ability to meet my criteria; I considered my options then I went for the best.’’ Most of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the negative statement and many of them also either strongly agreed or agreed with the positive statements. Based on the responses given by the respondents, the author concluded that consumers aged 50 to 70 years go through the evaluation of alternatives stage.

The fourth question topic, ‘‘When did you decide to buy your smartphone?’’ was asked to determine the respondents’ views about the purchase stage. For this, the researcher gave the following statements: ‘‘I bought my smartphone the exact period I needed it; I bought my smartphone without making any prior plans to do so; I purchased my smartphone after many considerations; It took me a long time before I made my purchase’’. The responses showed that the majority of the respondents purchased their smartphones after many considerations. Based on this, the author concluded that consumers aged 50 to 70 years go through the purchase stage of the consumer purchasing decision process.

The fifth question topic, ‘‘What was your opinion about your smartphone after its purchase?’’ was asked to determine the reaction of consumers about the post-purchase stage. Here, the researcher gave the following statements: ‘‘My smartphone purchase has met my expectations I am willing to recommend the same smartphone to someone else; I feel I did not make the best choice in my smartphone purchase; I assessed and compared my smartphone qualities such as pricing and

quality, after its purchase.’’ The results of the study showed that most of the respondents go through the post-purchase evaluation stage after purchasing their smartphones.

The first research question sought to find out what the purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years in buying smartphones in Nigeria is. Results revealed that most of the consumers in the age group go through the problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation stage of the consumer purchasing decision process. The second research question was to find out the stages of the purchasing decision process that consumers aged 50 to 70 years skip the most when buying smartphones. From the results of the study, the author concluded that most of the consumers aged 50 to 70 years do not skip any stage of the process.

The third research question was to find out which of the stages of the purchasing decision process consumers aged 50 to 70 years find most important when buying smartphones. The results of the study revealed that out of the five stages of the purchasing decision process, consumers aged 50 to 70 years find information search to be most important when buying smartphones. The last research question sought to find out what influences the purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years the most when buying smartphones. The results show that quality is the most important factor that influences the purchasing decision process of the age group the most when buying smartphones.

To understand the strength of the relationships between the variables used and to add to the descriptive analysis, the author carried out a Spearman’s rho Correlation on the data. The correlation table shows that all the variables were positively correlated. It can therefore be concluded that the respondents were involved in all the stages of the consumer decision process when purchasing their smartphones.

3.3. Suggestions

This research has been able to highlight and discuss the consumer purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years in buying smartphones in Nigeria. It has also been able to identify the factor that influences the decision process of the target group in buying smartphones the most. Furthermore, the stage of the decision process that consumers in the 50 to 70 age group skip when

purchasing smartphones as well as the stage of the decision process that the consumers find most important has been revealed in the study.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher gives the following suggestions:

1. Smartphone manufacturers should develop marketing strategies that would allow them to actively participate in every stage of the consumer purchasing decision process. This would help to increase the sustainability of their businesses as well as the purchase of their products by the 50 to 70 age group consumers.
2. Smartphone industries should carefully re-examine their approach to producing, marketing, and distributing smartphones to ensure that their quality receives better attention since smartphone quality has been found to inform the target group's purchasing choices.
3. Emphasis should be laid on how good the quality of the produced smartphones is while marketers make advertising and promotional campaigns.
4. Smartphone manufacturers should ensure that the phone features are more appealing to consumers aged 50 to 70 years since the results of the study revealed that many respondents consider smartphone features while making their purchasing decisions.
5. Frequent surveys should be conducted to discover new technology features that could be incorporated into the smartphones that are being produced.
6. Marketers and producers of smartphones should incorporate more consumers aged 50 to 70 years in the promotion and advertisement of their products instead of featuring only the young adults since it has been discovered that consumers in the 50 to 70 age group put a lot of effort into the information search stage of the decision process.
7. Finally, marketers and producers of smartphones should incorporate more older generation in the promotion and advertisement of their products instead of featuring only the young adults since it has been discovered that consumers aged 50 to 70 years put a lot of effort into the information search stage of the decision process.

CONCLUSION

With the technological divide that exists between the young and the older population in Nigeria, the use of smartphones is more popular among the young than it is among the 50 to 70 age group. As a result, researchers have focused more on the purchase of smartphones by young adults than on consumers aged 50 to 70 years. However, since marketers are required to make educated decisions about consumers, they must research the consumer behaviour of the younger generation as well as that of the older generation. This thesis studies the decision-making process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years who choose to acquire smartphones over basic mobile phones. The aim of the study is to find out the purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years in buying smartphones in Nigeria. The author followed and used a quantitative method to achieve its aim.

The main conclusion from this study's findings was that most of the consumers aged 50 to 70 years in Nigeria go through problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post-purchase evaluation stage when purchasing their smartphones. Likewise, the study showed that consumers aged 50 to 70 years do not skip any decision process stage while purchasing their smartphones. Also, it was established that the factor that mostly influences the choice of smartphones among the 50-70 age group is the quality of the smartphone.

Moreover, from the study, it was concluded that consumers aged 50 to 70 years in Nigeria find information search to be the most important stage out of the five-stage decision process when buying smartphones. This is contrary to the notion that the problem recognition stage is the most important stage of the consumer purchasing decision process. In addition, it was revealed from the study that quality is the most important factor that influences the purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years in buying smartphones in Nigeria. In correlation to these findings, the author suggested that:

1. Mobile smartphone manufacturers should develop marketing strategies that will ensure that they actively participate in every stage of the customer purchasing decision process.
2. Producers should strive to develop better quality smartphones.
3. Marketers should emphasize the aspect of the quality of smartphones in their advertisements and promotional campaigns. This will ensure that customers not only continue buying their products but encourage others to buy them as well.

The author discovered certain limitations of this thesis. Firstly, some of the respondents complained about their lack of internet connection which made it impossible for them to fill out the questionnaire. Therefore, gathering the responses was a bit challenging and slower than envisaged. Also, the research focused only on the traditional five-stage consumer decision process making the study to be a bit narrow.

Finally, since this research focused on the purchasing decision process of consumers aged 50 to 70 years in buying smartphones in Nigeria, subsequent research could provide empirical evidence on the difference between the purchasing decision process of young consumers and older consumers in buying smartphones in Nigeria. Factors that affect the consumer purchasing decision process of different generations could also be investigated to fully understand how to further improve the rate of smartphone purchases in Nigeria.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Online Questionnaire

Consumer Purchasing Decision Process in buying Smartphones in Nigeria

Hello!

I am a student studying International Business Administration, Marketing Major. I am conducting an exploratory research work on Consumer Purchasing Decision Process in Buying Smartphones. I would appreciate your input as a consumer to assist in answering the questionnaire below. Please note that this is mainly for academic research and the outcome will be purely for academic purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

* Required

1. Which brand of smartphone are you using? *

Mark only one oval.

- Apple
- Samsung
- Nokia
- Infinix
- Tecno
- I do not have a smartphone *Skip to question 9*
- Other: _____

General Questions

Appendix 1 continued

2. What was the need behind the purchase of your smartphone? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I bought a smartphone out of my dissatisfaction with my basic mobile phone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I bought a smartphone because people I know have it and I did not want to be left out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I bought a smartphone out of my need for it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I bought a smartphone because my former phone did not work anymore.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did not have any mobile phone before I purchased my smartphone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 1 continued

3. How informed were you about your smartphone before its purchase? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I put in a great effort in searching about my smartphone before its purchase	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had an adequate amount of information about my smartphone before I decided to purchase it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was important for me to consider all of the information provided before making a decision to purchase my smartphone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I bought my smartphone without any prior information/knowledge about it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. How well did you evaluate your alternatives? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I bought my smartphone brand without considering any other option	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The choice of my smartphone was based on its ability to meet my criteria	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I considered my options then I went for the best	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. When did you decide to buy your smartphone? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I bought my smartphone the exact period I needed it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I bought my smartphone without making any prior plans to do so	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I purchased my smartphone after much considerations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It took me a long time before I made my purchase	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. What was your opinion about your smartphone after its purchase? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
My smartphone purchase has met my expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am willing to recommend the same smartphone to someone else	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I did not make the best choice in my smartphone purchase	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I assessed and compared my smartphone qualities such as pricing and quality, after its purchase	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Which of the following influenced your choice of smartphone the most? *

Mark only one oval.

- Price
- Brand
- Features
- Quality
- Durability
- Other: _____

8. Which of the following activities did you find most important? *

Mark only one oval.

- The ability to recognise a need for a smartphone
- Having prior knowledge about the smartphone before purchase
- Considering other types of smartphones before making a choice
- The actual purchase of the smartphone
- Reactions and opinions about the smartphone after purchase

Demographic

9. Gender *

Mark only one oval.

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

10. Age Group *

Mark only one oval.

- 50-54
- 55-59
- 60-64
- 65-69
- 70

11. Education *

Mark only one oval.

- Higher Education
- High school degree
- Less than high school
- No education
- Other

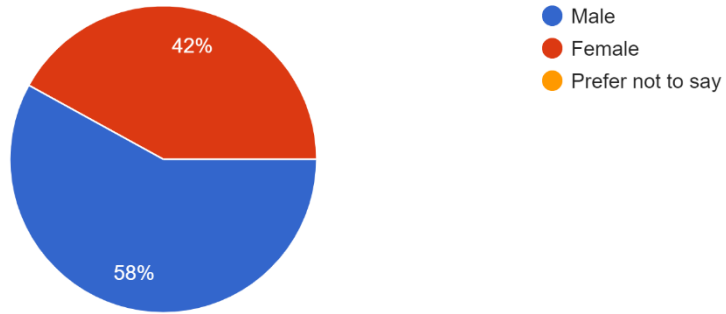
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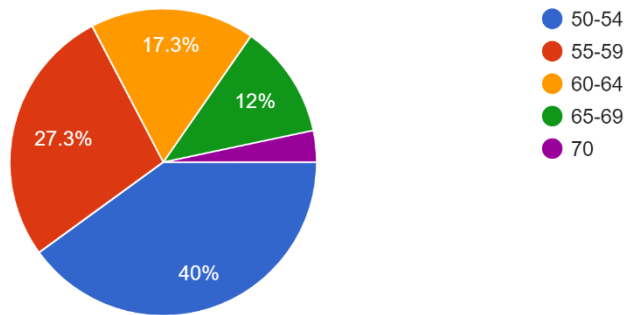
Source: Adeleye (2022), online questionnaire

Appendix 2. Online Survey Results

Gender
150 responses



Age Group
150 responses



Education
150 responses

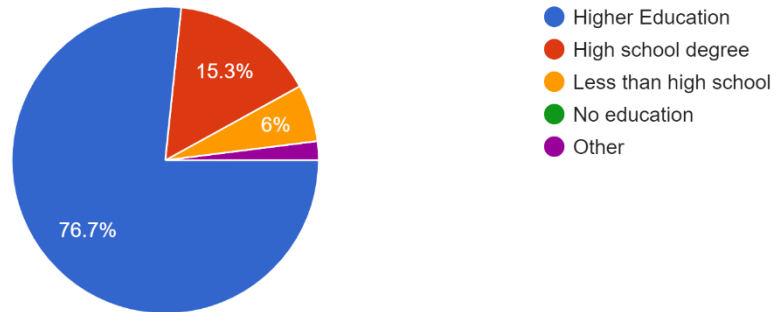


Figure 2 shows the general characteristics of the respondents
Source: Adeleye (2022), author's survey

Which brand of smartphone are you using?
150 responses

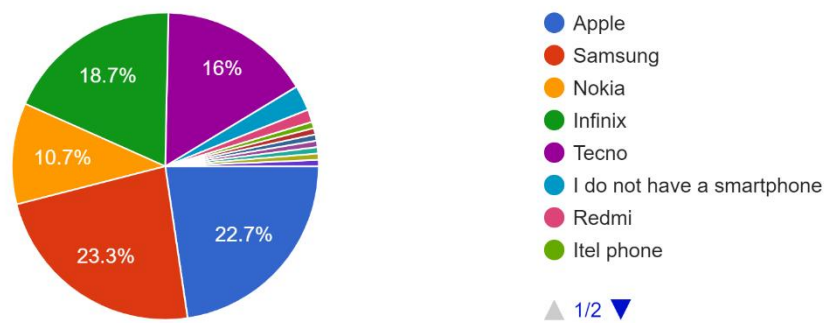


Figure 3 shows the collective data of respondents' brand of phone
Source: Adeleye (2022), author's survey

Appendix 2 continued

Which of the following influenced your choice of smartphone the most?

146 responses



Figure 4 shows the collective data of factors that influenced respondents' choice of smartphone the most

Source: Adeleye (2022), author's survey

Which of the following activities did you find most important?

146 responses

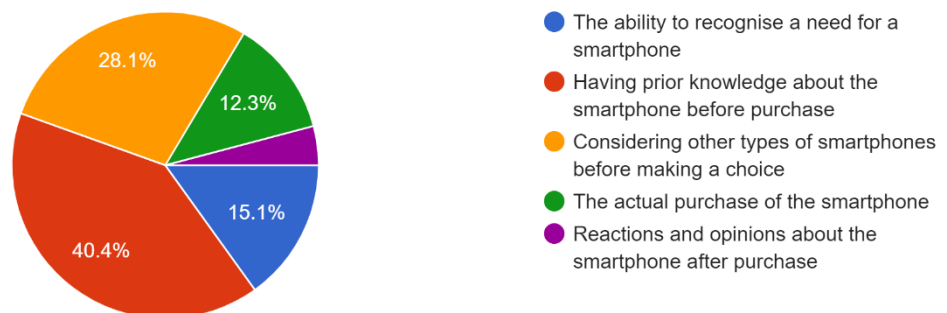


Figure 5 shows the collective data of activities that respondents find most important

Source: Adeleye (2022), author's survey

What was the need behind the purchase of your smartphone?

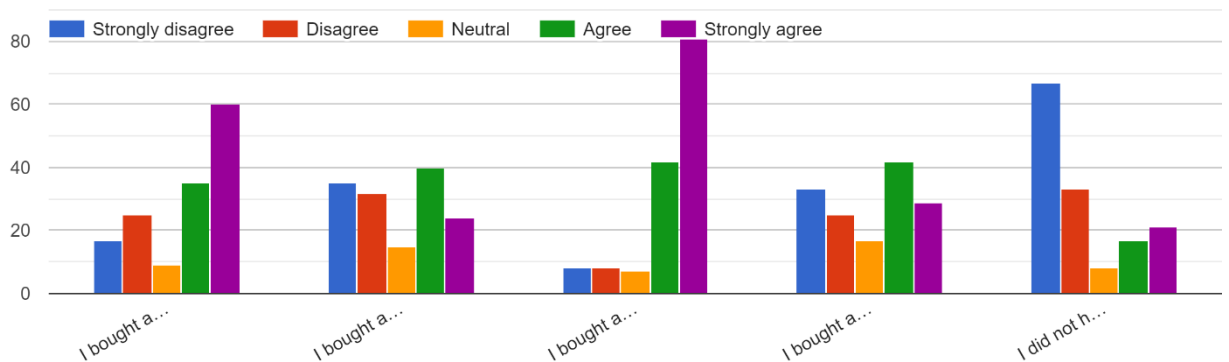


Figure 6 shows the need behind respondents' purchase of their smartphones
Source: Adeleye (2022), author's survey

How informed were you about your smartphone before its purchase?

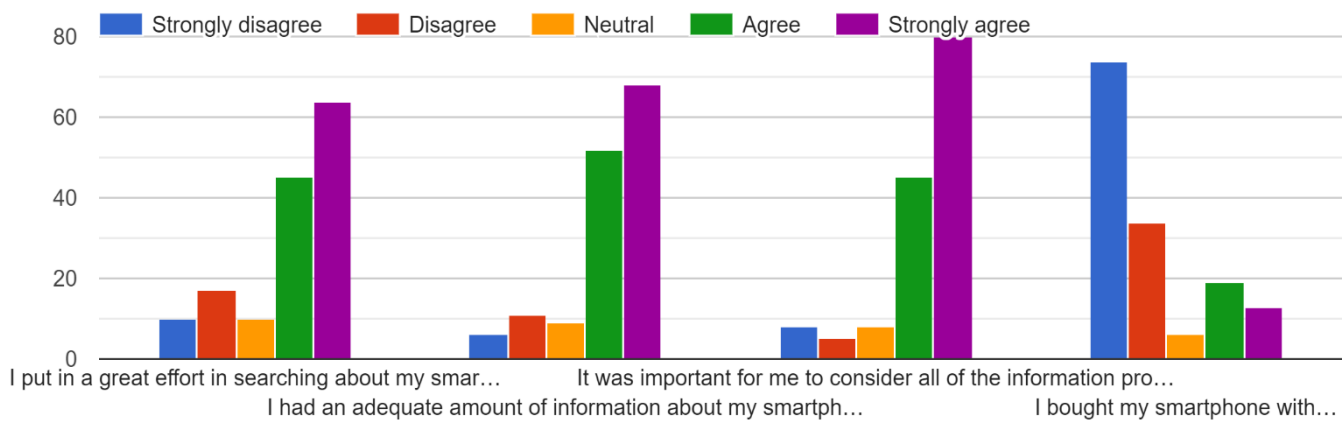


Figure 7 shows how informed respondents were about their smartphones before their purchase
Source: Adeleye (2022), author's survey

How well did you evaluate your alternatives?

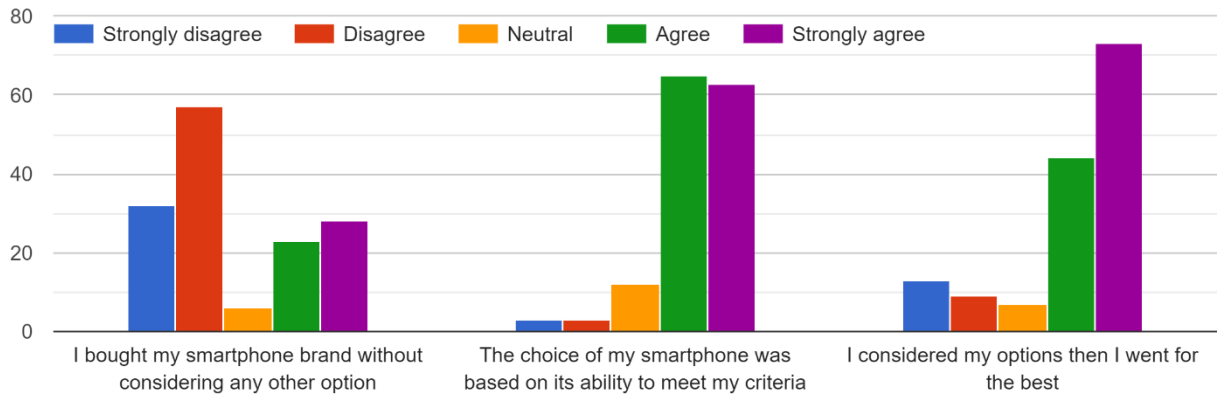


Figure 8 shows how well respondents evaluated their alternatives before their smartphone purchase
Source: Adeleye (2022), author's survey

When did you decide to buy your smartphone?

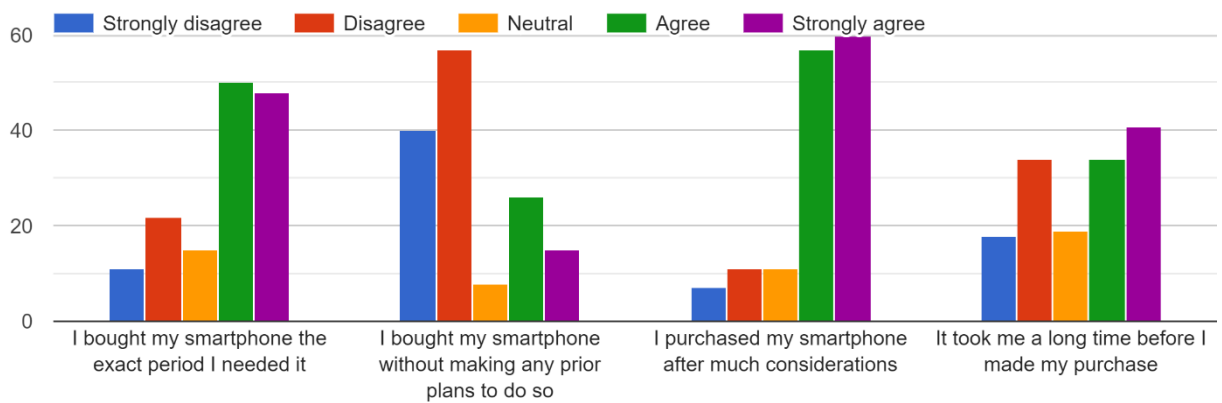


Figure 9 shows how long it took before respondents decided to purchase their smartphones
Source: Adeleye (2022), author's survey

What was your opinion about your smartphone after its purchase?

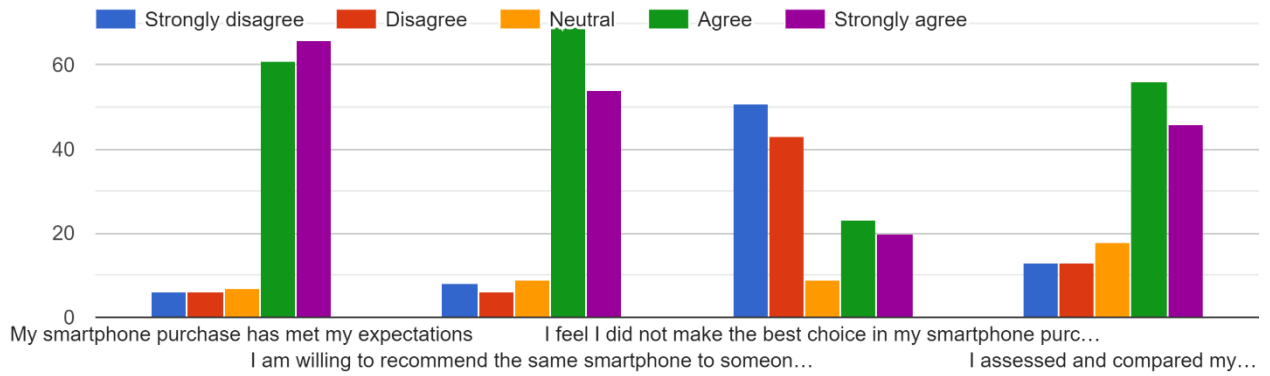


Figure 10 shows respondents' opinions about their smartphones after their purchase
 Source: Adeleye (2022), author's survey

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