Social Lens

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Article

Analyzing Youth's Purchasing Behaviors: A Study on Smartphone Shopping in Bangladesh

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Abstract: The current research investigates the purchasing behavior of young consumers when they are purchasing smartphones in the Bangladeshi local market. The Consumer Decision-Making Model of Engel, and experimental approach was used to analyze responses gathered from a questionnaire and other secondary data sources. The results indicate possible behavioral factors (economic, psychological, technological, cultural, availability and after sales services) affecting people's tendency to choose their preferred product in first-growing economic practices. Mixed methods statistical analysis uncover key factors influencing youth participation in the escalating smartphone market. The findings indicate the impact of consumer trends on the industry landscape and economic dynamics, offering a broader perspective for future sustainability considerations and decision-making processes. The research indicates the influence of social and cultural factors on youth preferences for smartphone brands and features. Policymakers and businesses can use these results to tailor their strategies to meet the evolving needs and desires of the youth market in Bangladesh.

Keywords: youth's purchasing behaviors; smartphone shopping; youth preferences; possible behavioral factors

1. Introduction

Smartphone as a communication medium has attained a central role in people's daily lives, especially due to rapid growth of social media and digital platforms. The smartphone is an indispensable element of contemporary society, and concerns about its effects, primarily on younger generations, are widespread (Tirocchi et al. 2024). People of different ages and generations use cell phones of various companies depending upon their taste and inclinations. Because smartphones use the newest technology with the most practical alternatives, people use them even as minicomputers (Aubhi et al. 2025). Phones are swiftly evolving, functioning as a means of long-distance communication, entertainment, comfort, and convenience for users. Access to the internet, email, social networking, music, video, games, and other functions are all possible with it. Consumers of mobile phones are consistently exposed to a wide range of goods. Each race develops novel goods using various types, models, and technologies and then customizes them to suit the requisites, way of life, and interests of the intended professions or hobbyists (Dahal 2021). There are currently around 7.21 billion smartphones in use worldwide, a number that's higher than the global population because many people own more than one device. Experts estimate that by 2029, smartphone users can reach 6.38 billion. This highlights how deeply smartphones have become a part of our everyday lives (Gill 2025). Samsung headed the global smartphone market in Q1 2025 with 60.5 million units shipped (20% market share), Apple with 55.0 million units (19%), and Xiaomi with 41.8 million units (14%). Vivo and Oppo each captured about 8% of the market share. Total global shipments reached 296.9 million units, reflecting a modest 0.2% year-on-year growth. Xiaomi peaked in the Chinese market for the first time with 19% share, while in India, Vivo led with 22%, ahead of Samsung, Xiaomi, Oppo, and Realme (Canalys 2025). As of April 2025, Xiaomi tops the smartphone market in Bangladesh with an 18.56% share, followed by Samsung at 17.45%, Vivo, Realme, and Oppo hold 11.88%, 10.38%, and 9.4% sequentially. This indicates a competitive market headed by affordable mid-range brands, with Xiaomi's popularity reflecting strong consumer demand for value-driven smartphones (Globalstats 2025). In Bangladesh, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, reliance on digital tools has increased. Most students start using smartphones in grades 7–8 and spend 1–3 hours daily on activities like education, com-

Citation: G.M. Sifat Iqbal, Anika Tabassum and Sharmine Akter Mitoe. 2025. Analyzing Youth's Purchasing Behaviors: A Study on Smartphone Shopping in Bangladesh. *Social Lens 2(2)*, 26-31. https://doi.org/10.69971/sl.2.2.2025.46

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munication, gaming, and social media (Alam et al. 2023). Smartphones are bridging the education gap between urban and rural students. Learning platforms like Shikho now serve over 2.5 million users in Bangladesh. From primary learners in Kurigram to HSC candidates in Chattogram, students can comprehend lessons, reducing their reliance on local coaching centers. This shift towards digital learning can revolutionize accessibility and quality of education in Bangladesh. With the increasing availability of online resources, students from all backgrounds can access high-quality content anytime, anywhere. Almost 53% of Bangladeshi mobile users use their devices for accessing educational content. Besides, artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming how students learn. More than 90% of mobile internet users in Bangladesh are engaged with AI-powered apps for personalized study plans, language learning, and exam preparation (Raha 2025).

The key reason of smartphone adoption and usage in Bangladesh's is its young population, in the age bracket of 15-35 years. Smartphones are now necessary for social media, communication, entertainment, and learning. Many young people now rely on smartphones for digital connectivity and online learning, a trend accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Sarker et al. 2023a). Teens use their devices extensively for various purposes that influence their shopping choices.

Camera quality, battery life, storage capacity, design, price sensitivity, and brand reputation are key factors youth consider while purchasing smartphones. Preferences and purchase intentions are also significantly shaped by social influence from peers and online platforms. Access to smartphones is made easier by the growth of online shopping and digital payment methods, which fit Bangladeshi youth's lifestyles. To meet the changing needs of this demographic, policymakers, tech companies, and smartphone manufacturers should consider these factors. Understanding the buying habits of young people can help develop products and marketing plans that will promote digital inclusion and aid in social and educational progress throughout Bangladesh.

This study aims to explore factors behind Bangladeshi university students choice while purchasing smartphones. It focuses on product features, price, brand reputation, social influence, and payment options like EMI. By understanding these preferences and habits, this research will help businesses, educators, and policymakers better connect with the needs of today's digitally active youth.

2. Materials and Methods

This study used a quantitative, descriptive research method to explore the factors that affect how Bangladeshi youth especially private universities students buy smartphones. This group was chosen because many young people use smartphones, which are very important for getting people to use digital technologies for school and communication. The method can be applied to other situations, showing patterns and relationships between the factors that affect students' decisions to buy smartphones. We used a stratified random sampling technique to ensure a wide range of students from different fields of study, classes, and gender. Using the standard formula for social science research, the sample size was figured out with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. A minimum of 385 people had to respond to similar studies to ensure the results were statistically reliable. Five hundred questionnaires were sent for any possible non-responses. The 82% response rate, higher than the average for survey-based research, was received from 410 real responses.

The primary data was obtained through a well-designed, self-administered questionnaire from Google Forms. This method is quick, cheap, and effective at getting a lot of responses, especially since the target audience is very active online. Age, gender, year in school, subject of study, and monthly allowance questions helped assess buying power and preferences. The part about what makes people buy smartphones included the quality of the camera, the battery life, the speed of the processor, the design, and how much the person is willing to pay. It also included brand image, social pressure from friends and family, the perceived value of the phone for school and entertainment, and how quickly technology changes. Respondents used a five-point Likert scale to indicate their consent with statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

To ensure the content was valid, marketing and consumer behavior experts reviewed the questionnaire, which was also tested with a small group of students. We used their feedback to make the questions' language and structure more precise and relevant. The collected data was analyzed by SPSS. Descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to describe demographic characteristics and responses to essential factors. Cronbach's alpha for reliability analysis used to assess the internal consistency of the Likert-scale items indicated that the constructs measured were reliable. Inferential statistics included multiple regression analysis to examine the relative influence of numerous factors, such as product features, price, brand image, social impact, perceived value, and technological advancement, on students' purchasing decisions. Correlation analysis helped discover correlations among variables (Rahman and Sadia 2022). Validity checks involved factor analysis to assess the dimensionality of the constructs and verify construct validity.

Participation in the study was optional, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. The questionnaire included an introduction outlining the study's goal, promising anonymity, and emphasizing that data would be used strictly for academic research. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were anonymized to safeguard participants' privacy.

3. Results & Discussion

The study shows a correlation between social media advertising and purchase decisions and the visualizations support the interpretation of trends and patterns. The data reveals that most Bangladeshi youth prefer to purchase smartphones from physical stores rather than online platforms.

Cell phones are an integral part of the daily routine of Bangladeshi youth. A considerable cohort of respondents, 94 individuals, indicated using cell phones for 4–5 hours daily, followed by 80 users who engaged with their devices for 3–4 hours and 73 users for 5–6 hours. Only 4 respondents used smartphones for less than 1 hour daily. This increased smartphone use corresponds with the observations of (Alam et al. 2023), who reported that Bangladeshi students allocate substantial time to smartphones for communication, education, and leisure. Most students use cell phones for more than three hours daily. The use pattern indicates a digitally immersed generation in which cell phones are a principal instrument for education, communication, and entertainment.

This suggests that while digital platforms have significant influence, human contact remains a prevailing factor. These results complement previous research (Hossain et al. 2017), highlighting peer impact on buying choices.

Table 1: Daily Smartphone Usage Duration Among Bangladeshi Youth.

Time	Number of Students
4-5 hours	94
3-5 hours	80
5-6 hours	73
6-7 hours	44
2-3 hours	44
7-8 hours	24
1-2 hours	20
8+ hour	18
Less than 1 hour	4

Comprehending the sources from which young customers get information before purchasing cell phones elucidates the decision-making process. Figure 1 illustrates that family and friends are the most trusted sources, including 209 respondents (52%), followed by online reviews with 136 respondents (34%). Advertisements affect a minor segment, with 30 respondents (7.5%), while 26 (6.5%) selected "Others," presumably including YouTube reviews, technology influencers, or in-store visits.

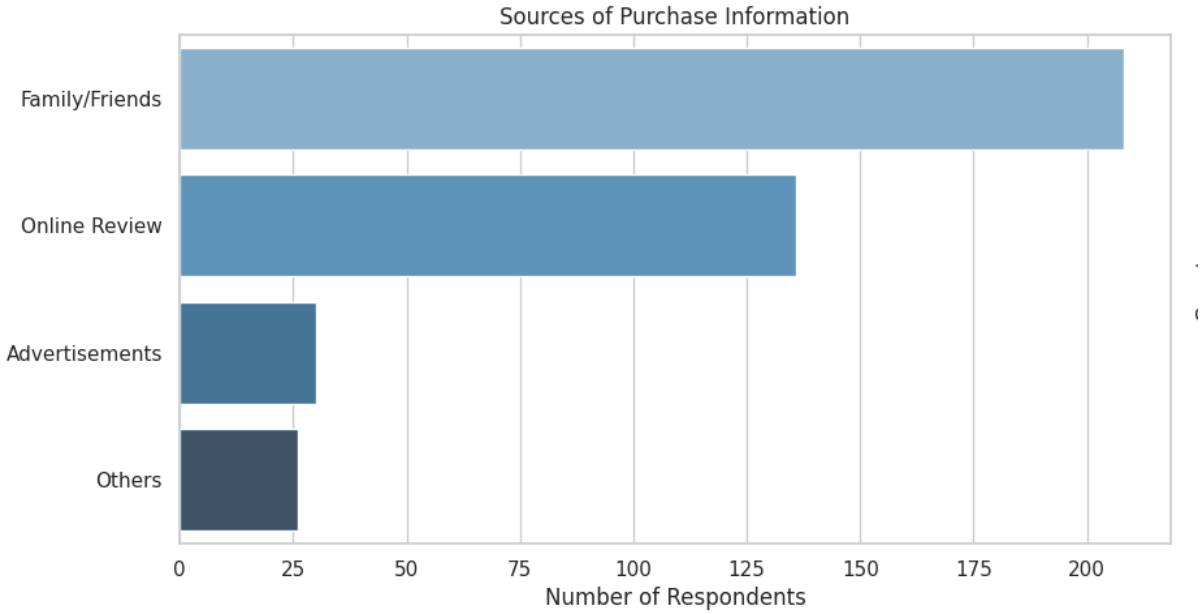


Figure 1. Trusted Sources of Information in Youth Smartphone Purchases.

Influence of commercials on buying behavior was also significant, scored on a 5-point Likert scale. The mean rating among 401 replies was 3.17, with a standard deviation of 1.01, indicating a modest overall effect. Most users indicated their reaction as 3 or 4, suggesting neither strong rejection nor complete support of advertising influence. Figure 2 visualizes this distribution and demonstrates that commercials do not have the most potent effect are substantial in the awareness and decision-making phases. Advertising success may be mediated by other variables such as trust in the brand, experience, and peer opinion.

Respondents listed many primary reasons when questioned about what largely determines their choice to acquire a smartphone. As indicated in Figure 3, specifications (features) topped the list with 171 respondents (42.6%), followed by price with 156 respondents (38.9%). Only 64 respondents (15.9%) named Brand as their top concern, while 10 (2.5%) chose "Others."

This implies that most millennials are logical decision-makers, focused on real attributes such as RAM, camera quality, battery life, and storage space rather than brand image alone. It verifies the observations by (Rakib et al. 2022), who stated that Bangladeshi young prefer feature-rich smartphones even if they belong to comparatively lesser-known companies. Youngsters are tech-aware, focussing the practical aspects of gadgets and frequently evaluating various brands and models before purchasing.

For affordability-related behaviors, respondents were asked whether they ever utilized an EMI (equated monthly installment) program to acquire a smartphone. According to Figure 4, 9.5% (approximately 38 respondents) acknowledged utilizing EMI choices, while 90.5% claimed they had not.

This limited acceptance may be due to lack of information, eligibility hurdles, skepticism of installment systems, or desire for upfront payments. This highlights a potential opportunity for financial service providers and smartphone makers to promote clear and accessible EMI solutions targeted to student requirements. The poll also inquired if EMI alternatives affect their choice of brand.

A tiny proportion responded "yes" or "maybe," pointing at latent interest in this funding technique especially when prices increase, and students need higher-end models.

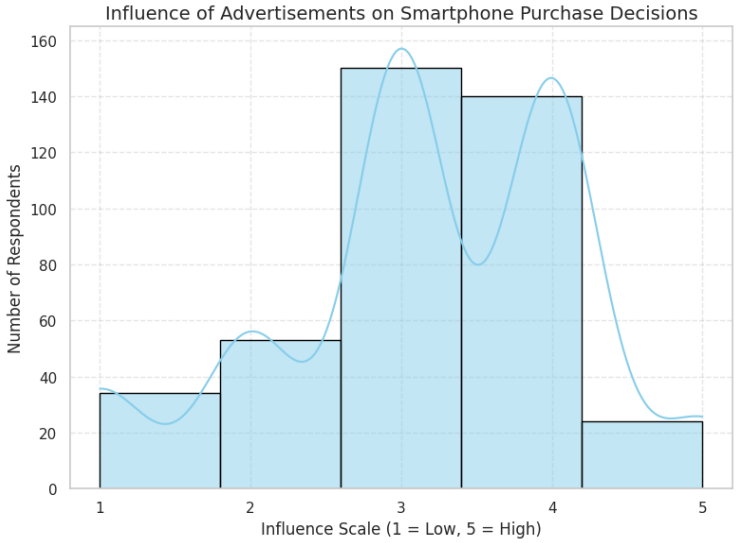


Figure 2. Advertising Influence on Youth Smartphone Buying Behavior.

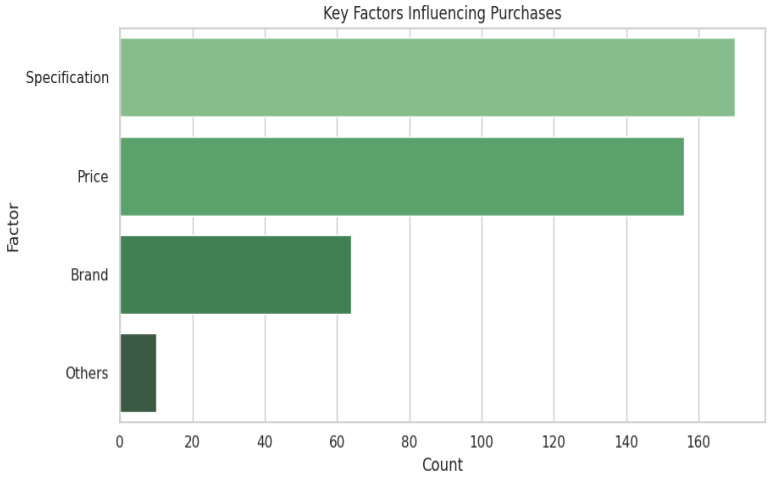


Figure 3. Key Priorities Behind Smartphone Purchase Decisions.

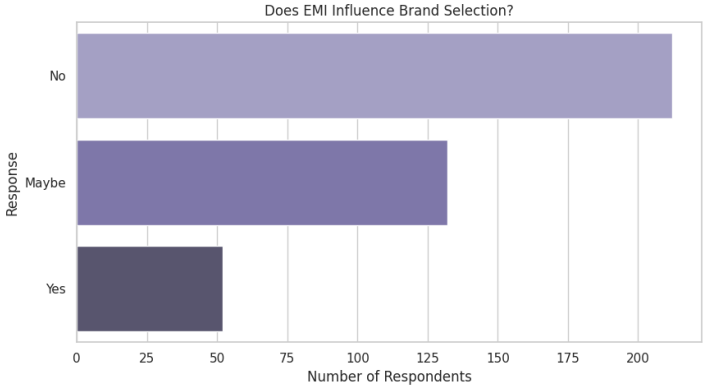


Figure 4. Use of EMI Options by Youth in Smartphone Purchases.

Regarding peer and family impact, average rating was 3.32, with a comparatively low standard deviation of 0.89, suggesting a modest and consistent effect throughout the sample. The histogram reveals that most replies cluster around 3 to 4, corroborating the premise that word-of-mouth and peer validation remain crucial in the digital era. This social impact presumably occurs in combination with internet research, altering user impressions before final judgments are made. Again, this is confirmed by recent

research (Saha et al. 2023), which identified social circles as one of the fundamental determinants of teenage decision-making behavior.

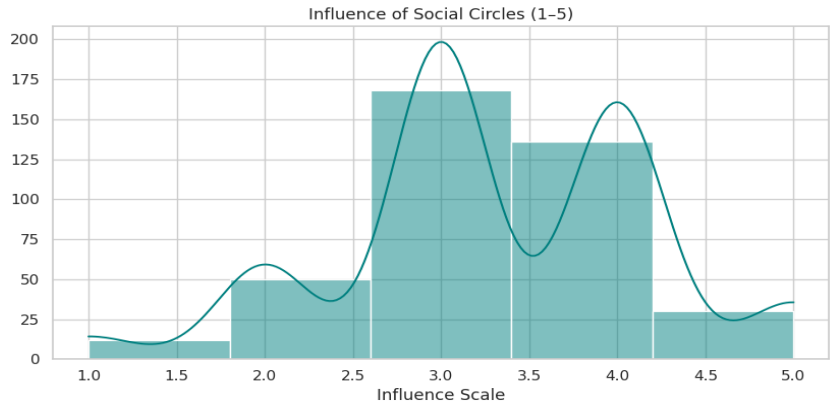


Figure 5. Role of Peer and Family Influence in Youth Purchase Behavior.

The research also assessed significant variables impacting buying behavior as reported by respondents. This aggregate understanding is again illustrated in Figure 6, echoing past results as specifications and price dominate, while brand follows behind. The patterns imply that the Bangladeshi young are generally value-driven, favoring usefulness and cost above prestige or loyalty. Moreover, replies to open-ended questions suggest that issues like bad after-sales service and restricted warranty choices are regularly encountered, further underlining the necessity of feature-rich, dependable, and support-backed goods.

Bangladeshi young demonstrate a pragmatic and technologically educated attitude towards smartphone buying. Peer networks influence them, study internet reviews, and emphasize technical specs and pricing. While commercials and brand names carry some weight, they are secondary to real-world performance and value.

The comparatively modest penetration of EMI shows a mismatch between financial instruments available and consumer requirements or confidence levels, while the notion retains potential for the future. Meanwhile, social circles' modest but persistent influence highlights the hybrid character of current purchase behavior, where digital and human suggestions combine smoothly.

This study offers a clearer picture of how Bangladeshi university students think when buying smartphones. Like previous studies (Rakib et al., 2022; Saha et al., 2023), our results show that most young people focus on practical features like camera quality, battery life, and storage. While online reviews and ads do have some influence, most students still turn to people they know. This matches earlier findings (Hossain et al. 2017; Saha et al. 2023) but also suggests that personal connections continue to matter in a digital world.

While the research design and methodology were strong, several limitations are acknowledged. The sample was limited to private university students, which may not fully represent the larger young population in Bangladesh, including those at public universities or outside the higher education system. Depending on self-reported data may generate response biases. The cross-sectional structure of the survey collects behaviors and opinions at a particular point in time, restricting the capacity to examine changes over time. Despite these limitations, the research provides a thorough framework for analyzing the fundamental factors of smartphone purchasing behavior among Bangladeshi adolescents.

4. Conclusions

Young people in Bangladesh are innovative and practical when buying smartphones. So, companies should focus less on hype and more on offering real value like strong battery life, good cameras, and enough storage. Instead of pushing big brand names, marketing speaks to what matters to students. Since friends and family have such a strong influence, brands can benefit from working with student ambassadors or encouraging real users to share their honest reviews. EMI (monthly payment) plans have potential, but most students aren’t using them likely because they don’t fully understand how they work or they don’t trust them yet. Companies and financial services could work together to offer clear, easy-to-understand EMI options that feel safe and accessible. Even short workshops or social media content about how EMI works could help. Promoting digital and consumer literacy can help students make better tech decisions. Today's youth isn't just chasing brands but looking for innovative, practical, and affordable phones. Meeting them where they are with honesty, value, and relevance will go a long way in connecting with this growing digital generation.

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