



**ASSESSMENT OF BRAND PREFERENCE OF  
INTERNATIONAL vs. LOCAL MOBILE PHONE BRANDS  
A SENIOR ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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By: Haileyesus Yosef

ADVISOR: Mr. Drshaye A.

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**BY: HAYLEYESUS YOSEF**

**Approved by Board of Examiners**

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<b>Advisor</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____	_____	_____
<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

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**WOLKITE, ETHIOPIA**

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## **Acronyms**

DDN = Digital Data Networking

ETA = Ethiopian Telecommunication Agency

ETC = Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation

WKU = Wolkite University

## **Abstract**

*The primary objective of this study was to investigate university students, specifically WKU students', brand preference comparing international mobile phone with locally assembled mobile phone brands. Hence, this study tries to answer whether students prefer foreign brands over local brands due to the influence of western culture. In order to find out the brand preference of WKU students, the study considered two factors namely brand equity and consumers attributes. These factors had sub elements which included seven dimensions. To assess the factors influence, a sample size of 123 was selected using convenience sampling technique. The gathered data was analyzed by descriptive analysis. Based on the analysis, students of WKU overwhelmingly prefer international brands over locally assembled mobile phone brands. The analysis revealed that new technology applications, product attributes and price were the major criteria for a mobile phone purchasing decision among the students. In addition, friends or family and the internet were the major sources of information from where students get to know new mobile phone brands. Finally, brand equity dimensions were more influential in students' brand preference than consumer attribute dimensions. In general, international mobile phone manufactures and local mobile assembling companies should focus on building their brand equity.*

**Key words:** *Brand, Brand Preference, Brand Equity, Customer Attributes, Mobile phone brands.*

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

For many firms the brands they own are their most valuable assets and help them to be differentiated from their competitors'. In order to understand the concept of brand preference, it is essential to know what a brand is. The definition of brand according to different scholars throughout time has been broad and varying, some of these definitions are included as an entry to this study.

Further, brand preference is defined as the degree of brand loyalty in which a customer definitely prefers one brand over competitive offerings and was purchase this brand if it is available (Dibb et al, 2006).

Mobile phone service has grown dramatically throughout the world. It has become a necessity in our day to day life activities since their invention in 1980's. Ethiopia, which is no exception to this phenomenon, is rapidly becoming a country with an increasing level of mobile phone users. The number of mobile phone subscribers has gradually increased throughout the years. Ethiopia has gradually increased the number of subscribers from 1 million in 2003 to reach 20 million in 2012 (International Telecommunication Union). As Ethiopians become more experienced with the use of this technology, brand preference was play a great role in their purchasing behavior.

The introduction of telecommunication in Ethiopia dates back to 1894. Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation is the oldest public telecommunications operator in Africa and is the only service provider in Ethiopia. In 1996, the Government established a separate regulatory body, the Ethiopian Telecommunication Agency (ETA) by Proclamation 49/1996, and during the same year, by regulation 10/1996, the Council of Ministers set up the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation abbreviated as ETC (Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation, 2005). On February 8, 2012 Ethiopian Telecommunication was renamed as Ethio telecom with the aim of transforming the telecom industry to a new excellence (Ethio telecom, 2012). One of the steps the service provider took to rebranding itself was to launch a new logo accompanying the name change. Ethio telecom presently provides six distinct services namely:

exchange capacity, local network, fixed telephone subscription & traffic, internet service, Digital data networking (DDN) and mobile service. (Ethio telecom, 2012).

At the introduction of the service, the mobile handsets were dominated by the Ericson brand since subscribers of the service were provided with this brand by the service provider. Therefore, users of this service had few alternatives when it came to selection of mobile phone brands. However in 2003, with the introduction of prepaid mobile service, customers were allowed to buy their own handsets (Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation, 2005). Advances in the mobile technology and the availability of different mobile brands has provided the Ethiopian consumer with a wide variety of choices be it low end brands to prestigious brand of Smartphones. This paved the way for many international brands into the market such as Nokia, Samsung, Motorola and recently Smartphones like iPhone and Samsung galaxy are a common sight among the Ethiopian mobile phone users. Alongside the international brands, locally assembled phones have also emerged to compete for the market share of Ethiopian mobile phone users. These locally assembled mobile phone brands include Techno, SMADL, Tana, and Geotel.

In recent years, cell phones have gained popularity among a wide variety of users in Ethiopia.

The usage of cell phones is particularly spreading among the younger generation (Meredith and Schewe, 2002). Young Ethiopians especially university students favor this technology in their daily activity of communication. Students use their mobile phones to interact with people of similar age group as well as interest by means of texting, phone call, surfing the internet and social media. However, not much is known about students' brand preference when it comes to international manufactured and locally assembled mobile phone brands and there lacks research conducted in this area and hence creating a research gap.

Therefore, this study focuses on young adults' mobile phone brand preference by comparing international brands against domestically assembled mobile phone brands. Students at the university level in wolkite are the population of the study specifically at wolkite University.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Advanced communication and information system technology have reduced distance, thereby making the flow of information around the world easier and accessible. As the world is turning

into a global village, new products from abroad are finding their way into the country. The Ethiopian consumer is now more aware of other cultures, lifestyle and brands due to satellite television and social media. This trend is more visible when it comes to youngsters especially university students. This group of consumers in particular is more aware of the latest technology and follow trendy fashions.

Young consumers are becoming more interested to buying international brands than local brands since the influence by the western world is becoming stronger (Samiee S, 1994). Consumers of developing countries prefer foreign brands, especially from the west, not only of perceived quality but also as indication of social status (Al-Sultaiti et al., 1998). Thus a brand's country of origin serves as prove of product quality and people buy such brands for status enhancing reasons (Al-Sultaiti et al., 1998). Consumers of developing countries also view foreign brands as having superior and excellent quality compared to local brands. So this study intends to examine if this phenomenon also applies to university students in Wolkite University as well.

University students worldwide have similar preference and attitude with values such as independence, self-expression, and openness to new ideas, flexibility as well as enjoyment of life (Meredith and Schewe, 2002). These similarities of values is reinforced by communication technology including the internet with the recent development of social media like Facebook and the availability of western media content via satellite television. Therefore, it is increasingly important to understand the Ethiopian university students' preference of international brands compared to local brands in the case of mobile phones. Thus, this research was attempted to fill the gap of the lack of information regarding students' brand preference in Wolkite University.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

This study has general and specific objectives, which are as follows:

#### **1.3.1. General Objective of the Study**

The primary objective of this study was to compare between international and local brands on the basis of their brand components and how different components of brand equity influences students in choosing a particular brand in Wolkite University.

### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives of the Study**

To achieve the general objective of the study, the following specific objectives was be designed and are as follows:

- To identify the type of mobile brand preferred by the university students in WKU.
- To assess the selection criteria of mobile phone among university students in WKU.
- To identify the influence of advertising and other information sources on university students' brand preference on mobile phones.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

To address the above problem, this study was attempt to answer the following research questions:

- ✓ What type of brand of mobile the university students mostly prefer?
- ✓ What are the selection criteria of mobile phone brands among university students of WKU?
- ✓ Do advertising and other information sources influence university students' preference on mobile phone brands?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study would be important to different individuals and organizations. The significance of the study is listed below:

Finding of the study was useful and important among students and academician as an input for doing similar research in this field in the future. This study would be also useful to both local and foreign mobile phone manufactures and retailers since they could identify the

brand preference of youngsters' specially wolkite university students. The identification of students' preference towards mobile phone brands was assist local companies to develop an effective marketing strategy and to help them compete effectively against foreign brands in the market. This study was also help as a guide to foreign companies who have limited information on university students' mobile phone preference.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

University students' taste and preference keeps on changing day by day so the findings from this study may not be applicable in all cases. Survey should thus be undertaken periodically in order to measure the changing preference of students over time.

Secondly, this study was only cover WKU students' brand preference. Therefore, the findings of this research may not be the reflection of student brand preference for the whole students in wku.

Finally, this study could be further analyzed in terms of different dimensions like brand preference among different ethnicities, gender, income level as well as various factors students choose mobile brands since this is not included in this study.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

One of the major limitations of this study is the sample coverage. The population of the study was be on university students in wolkite that have a mobile phone. Since, this target population is very large only wolkite university regular undergraduate program students was be considered. Taking only WKU students may not represent or reflect the brand preference of all university students in wolkite. However, due to time and financial limitations other university students was not be included in this study.

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

This research l was comprised of the Introduction, Review of Related Literature and Research Design & Methodology.

The first chapter was provide a general introduction of the study including background of the study, statement of the problem, basic research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study and scope of the study. Chapter two was cover the literature relevant to the study. It

was include concepts and theoretical framework as well as brand preference models. Chapter three was elaborate the type and design of the study. It was include research method, sampling technique, data collection method and method of data analysis that was be used in the study. Chapter four was dealt with data analysis and the final chapter was about conclusion and recommendation

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITRATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Concept of Branding**

Brands are not new to marketing. Historically, the concept of brand was first used by the ancient Egyptian brick-makers who drew symbols on bricks for identification (Farquhar, 1990). Other examples of the use of brands were found in Greek and Roman times; at this time, due to illiteracy shopkeepers identified their shops using symbols.

The purpose of brands evolved into a valuable intangible asset and important resource serving the strategic reference point and contributing to greater value and market success (Wong and Merriless, 2007). Brand management is given a high priority and the spectrum of brand has been

broadened beyond marketing communication and the resource-based theory of marketing strategy.

There are many definitions of brand according to different authors to provide their own explanation towards the meaning of brand. These varying definitions are useful for the understanding of the complete picture regarding what a brand is. According to Kotler and Kotler (2012), a brand is a product or service whose dimensions differentiate it in some way or from other products or services designed to satisfy the same needs. These differences may be functional, rational, or tangible. They may also be more symbolic, emotional or intangible related to what the brand represents or means in a more abstract sense (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

A successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added values which match their needs most closely. Furthermore, its success results from being able to sustain those added values in the face of competition (DeChernatory & McDonald, 2003).

In recent years, brands have increased in importance. A distinguishing tool of the companies' products or services is the branding. The theme or combination of themes, that could be associated to brands, such as the trademark, logo, name, identity, image, personality, value and evolving entity, create the brand (De Chernatony and Riley, 1998). In general, marketing is defined as a consumer-based process that permeates organizational functions and processes, and it balances the companies' objectives and customer satisfaction. Branding is a marketing tool perceived to be important for both the company and consumer. Branding is even more essential when it comes to high-technological products, since the need to differentiate ones product from other competitors plays a great role in obtaining greater market share. Mobile telecommunication services are considered the most high-technological products in the market (Alamro and Rowley, 2011). Phenomenal changes, such as the widespread use of mobile phones, increases in the number of mobile subscribers worldwide, the technological development and updated technological generations (2G, 3G, and 4G) require the focus of the market researcher (Reham, 2013). As high-tech products become accessible to mass consumers, there is a general consensus that branding becomes more important (Ward et al., 1999). Further, the advances in technology changes consumer experiences with high-tech products and increases the similarity between

products. Consequently, high-tech products face fierce competition and suffer from commoditization (Temporal and Lee, 2001).

## **2.2 Brand Preference**

Brand preference features in all of the major texts on brands and brand strategy. It has also been considered by different authors; however, there is a lack of consensus on the definition of brand preference among these authors. In marketing literature, there are numerous definitions for brand preference. D'Souza and Rao (1995), define brand preference as the consumer's predispositions toward a brand that varies depending on the salient beliefs that are activated at a given time. According to Wu, (2001) the preferred brand is the chosen brand among several brands of the same quality. In addition Hellier et al., (2003) define it as the extent to which a consumer favors one brand over another. These authors agree that brand preference is created from consumers' differentiation and comparisons between various alternatives of brands considered by them. While, Anselmsson et al., (2008) defines brand preference as the sum of unique assets captured by the consumers and measured by the brand strength experienced by the consumer. Further, Chang and Liu, (2009) defined this concept as the consumer's biasness toward a certain brand.

## **2.3 Brand Equity**

There are many definitions of brand equity written by different authors. According to Kapfere (2008) brand equity is customer based and it focuses exclusively on the relationship customers have with the brand from total indifference to attachment, loyalty and willingness to buy and rebuy based on beliefs of superiority and evoked emotions.

In addition, Kotler and Keller (2012) stated that brand equity is the customer's subjective and intangible assessment of the brand, beyond its objectively perceived value. Similarly, Kotler et al., (2009), define brand equity as the positive outcome that the customers show to the product or service. Moreover, brand equity is the set of associations and behavior on the part of a brand's customers, channel members and Parent Corporation that permits the brand to earn greater volume or greater margins than it could without the brand name (Kapfere, 2008)

Brand equity is among the few strategic assets available to companies that provide a long-lasting competitive advantage (Aaker, 1991). Brand equity constitutes the assets and the liabilities that is link to a particular brand, like name or logo. It comprises of brand loyalty, brand awareness,

brand association, brand assets and perceived quality. Creating strong, favorable and unique brand association is a real challenge for markets but it is essential in building strong brand. Strong brands typically have firmly established strong, favorable and unique brand association with customer (Aaker, 1991).

According to Aaker (1996), brand equity is a set of asset and legal responsibility connected to the brand's name and figure that add to or take away from the value presented by the product or service to a company and/or that company's customers. Aaker (1996) has grouped and identified the main assets as the following: brand awareness, brand image, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand association.

## **2.4 Consumer Behavior**

The American Marketing Association (2014), defines consumer behavior as the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behavior, and the environment by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives. In other words, consumer behavior involves the thoughts and feelings people experience and the actions they perform in consumption processes. It also includes all the things in the environment that influence these thoughts, feelings, and actions. These include comments from other consumers, advertisements, price information, packaging, product appearance, blogs, and many others.

Understanding the behavior of consumers before they made purchase decision was help for product manufacturers and service providers to develop strategies in line with customers' actions. Particularly knowing what makes customers to prefer between brands was make the manufacturer to adapt strategies based on the influential factors. Unable to analyze the antecedents hinder companies from being competitive. Hence, understanding the behavior of consumers specially their brand preference has to be a critical issue and concern for strategic developers.

### **2.4.1 Consumer Buying Decision Process**

Consumer buying decision process consists of a series of processes or steps, beginning with a felt need or want arising from either internal or external services and terminating with a confirmation of the decision. The need may be an urgent or compelling one, demanding immediate

satisfaction; or it may be one for which the satisfaction could be delayed or postponed. In any event a tension is created which sooner or later must be quit. In order to further understand the decision making process study has taken the consumer buying decision making process model from David Jobber (2007).



figure 2.1: consumer decision making process,

Jobber D. (2007)

## 2.5 Country of Origin

Over the last 30 years, international trade and the development of the global market have grown considerably. Companies and international marketers are also searching for more opportunities in the global market and multinational firms, which causes international competition among companies (A. Ahmed. et al, 2007). From a marketing point of view, international companies that are operating in highly competitive domestic and foreign markets need to understand consumers' perceptions and evaluations of foreign-made products. According to Al-Sulaiti and Baker (1998), among the many factors that are believed to influence consumer perceptions of products in an age of international competition is a country of origin (COO) effect. Kinra (2006) asserts that COO is considered an important differentiating factor in consumer attitudes to foreign and local brand names.

Different researchers have defined the term country of origin in different ways. Country of origin effect could be defined as any influence that the country of manufacture has on a consumer's positive or negative perception of a product (Cateora & Graham, 1999). Roth and Romeo (1992), defined country of origin as consumers' perception of products of a particular country, based on their previous perceptions of that country's production and marketing strengths and weaknesses. The further added, a country's image arises from a series of aspects that qualify a nation in terms

of its production profile. Such aspects include innovative approach (superior, cutting edge technology); design (style, elegance, balance); prestige (exclusiveness, status of the national brands); and workmanship (reliability, durability, quality of national manufacturers) (Hamzaoui E., 2011).

Although some studies have questioned the importance of country of origin for much consumer decision making, recent research has demonstrated that the country of origin has a substantial effect on attitudes toward products and the likelihood of purchasing these products, often demonstrating effects that are as strong or stronger than those of brand name, price, or quality (Ahmed and d'Astous, 1996 and Okechuku, 1994). Level of education is considered to be significant demographic variable (Al-Sulaiti and Baker, 1998) influencing country of origin effect (Paswan and Sharma, 2004).

### **2.5.1 Country of Origin and Foreign Versus Local Brands**

Nowadays, more companies are competing on the global market and these companies manufacture their products worldwide and the location where they manufacture the products might affect the perception of the consumer on the quality of the product based on the country where the product is produced. Favorable or unfavorable perceptions of a country associated with a product lead to a corresponding favorable or unfavorable evaluations of the product originating from that country.

Favorable country perceptions are known to lead to favorable perceptions of associated attributes such as product quality indicating thereby, that consumer evaluations are governed by influences other than the quality of the product (Peterson and Jolibert, 1995). In this context, COO effect refers to the extent to which the place of manufacture influences consumers' product evaluations. COO has furthermore, been used as a foremost and primary cue by consumers in evaluating new products under several conditions, depending on their expertise (Maheswaran, 1994), with minimal consideration given to other product related attributes. As a primary cue, therefore, it has been found to reflect consumers' general perceptions about the quality of products made in a foreign country, along with the nature of people from that country (Iyer and Kalita, 1997). It has also been demonstrated that COO, when known to consumers, influences their evaluation not merely of generic product categories, but also of specific brands (Johansson and Nebenzahl, 1986).

## **2.6 Factors Affecting Mobile Phone Brand Preference**

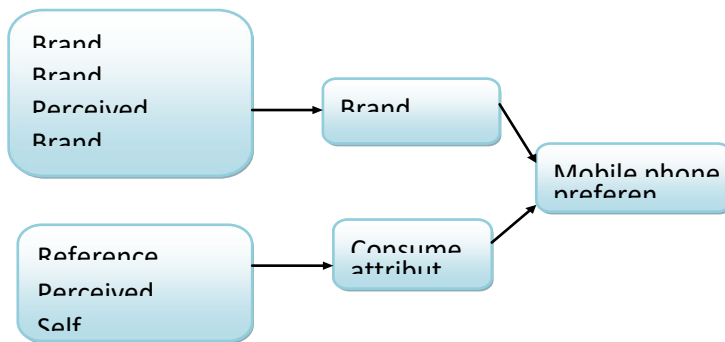
A variety of studies conducted by many authors have emphasized on different factors that influence consumers in forming their own brand preference towards mobile phone brands.

Maha Al-azzawi and Mac Anthony (2012), studied students' brand preference between Apple and Samsung Smartphone with a sample size of 214 students from the University of Mälardalen Högskolan in Sweden. Through quantitative research approach, they found that price, brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand identity and satisfaction are the most important factors affecting Smartphone brand preference. In conclusion, they stated that each of the brand equity and identity dimensions of Apple Smartphone when compared to Samsung brand equity and identity dimensions reveals that Apple has relatively high strong brand equity and brand identity than Samsung.

Perceived quality in these findings consists of durability and functionality. In order to form perceptions on quality, awareness of the brand is a prerequisite and thereafter, clear associations linked to the brand. Brand awareness, brand associations and perceived quality are the result of the prior formed brand perceptions. The findings implicate that the main building blocks of brand perceptions within this market are what others in the respondents' surroundings think and discuss about the Smartphone and not the Smartphone brand itself, and to a lesser extent the influence of advertising.

## **2.7 Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to assess the brand preference of Wolkite University students of mobile phone brands by comparing international brands with local brands. Based on the above related literature review and concepts the conceptual frame work for this study is developed.



**Figure 2.2:** Conceptual framework of the study (A modified model of Alamro and Rowley, 2011)

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Description of the study area**

The study area of this study was focus on Wolkite University, which is found 150km far from Addis Ababa capital city of Ethiopia.wku was founded in 2004 E.C

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design that was be applied for this study is a descriptive research design. In order to develop snapshot of a particular situation, descriptive research was be used (Mcnabb, 2002)

### **3.3 Data Type and Source**

Both primary and secondary source of data was be used in this study. Primary data was be collected by the administration of close ended questionnaires to the identified respondents. Secondary data relevant to this study was be collected from publications including journals, books, researches and various materials. This secondary data was also used to construct the basic framework of the study.

### **3.4 Target Population**

The target population of this study comprises of university students in wolkite that have a mobile phone. However, this target population is found to be very large so, the study focuses on wolkite university regular undergraduate program students only.

### **3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

The total size of the students in Wolkite University regular ungraduated program is 14000 so the researcher was select the sample by using simple random sampling technique. Therefore the researcher was use 123 students as sample to conduct this study. . To do a good research, the researcher used simple random sampling because it gave equal chance for every respondent and avoids bias. The researcher used Yamane' (1967) formula to calculate sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

**S=sample, N=total population, e=error margin**

$$S=14000 \sqrt{1+14000(0.0081)^2}=123$$

### **3.6 Data Collection**

One of the most important research instruments for collecting primary data is the questionnaire, which was be employed for the purpose of this study. Structured close ended questionnaires was be distributed to WKU regular undergraduate program students.

### **3.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The methodology that was be used to analyze the study is structured questionnaire was be used.

The collected data was be presented in a useful and organized manner suitable for descriptive analysis. The analysis was help to determine frequencies and percentages of the responses and was also help to evaluate the brand preference of international vs. Local mobile phone brands WKU students. The results was be presented using tables and different kinds of graphs in order to convey the intended meaning and to be convenient for interpreting the finding of the research.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the collected data from the students of Wolkite University are summarized and analyzed in order to realize the ultimate objective of the study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the mobile phone brand preference of university students between international brands and locally assembled mobile phone. Accordingly, the demographic profile of the respondents, brands of mobile phone they currently possess, the criteria of their selection of mobile brands, source of information of new mobile brand and other related topics are discussed. At last, summary of the findings are presented.

### 4.2 General Information of Respondents'

The first part of the questionnaire consists of the demographic characteristics of respondents that requested a limited amount of information related to personal and demographic. Accordingly, the following variables about the respondents were summarized and described in the subsequent table. These variables includes; gender, age, department, years of study and ownership of mobile phone.

From the total of the respondents male students constitute the highest percentage (62%) of respondents while the female constituted 38% of the respondents. The age group 20 – 25 which account for 62% of the total study sample constitutes the largest percentage followed by age group 25 – 30 consisting of 30% while the age group below 20 is the least with 8% of the respondents. The study shows that 30% of the respondents were Marketing Management students and are the largest group in terms of department. Students from Accounting and Business Administration and Information System (BAIS) account for 25% and 22% of the total respondents respectively. The study also shows that 61% of the students were third year students while 29% and 11% were second year and first year students respectively. When it comes to mobile phone ownership, 100% of the respondents have answered that they own a mobile phone at the time of the survey. Table 4.1 summarizes the profile of the respondents below.

**Table 4.1: Profile of Respondents'**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	90	61.6
	Female	33	38.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age</b>	below 20	10	7.9
	20 - 25	44	62.0
	25 - 30	69	30.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Department</b>	ACC	25	24.5
	ASM	15	5.2
	BAIS	5	22.3
	FNDE	10	7.9
	MM	46	29.7
	PSM	5	6.1
	Mgt	7	9
	HRM	6	3.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Years of study in AAUSC</b>	First year	24	10.5
	Second year	66	28.8
	Third year	33	60.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Do you own a mobile phone?</b>	Yes	123	100.0

*Source: survey result, 2011*

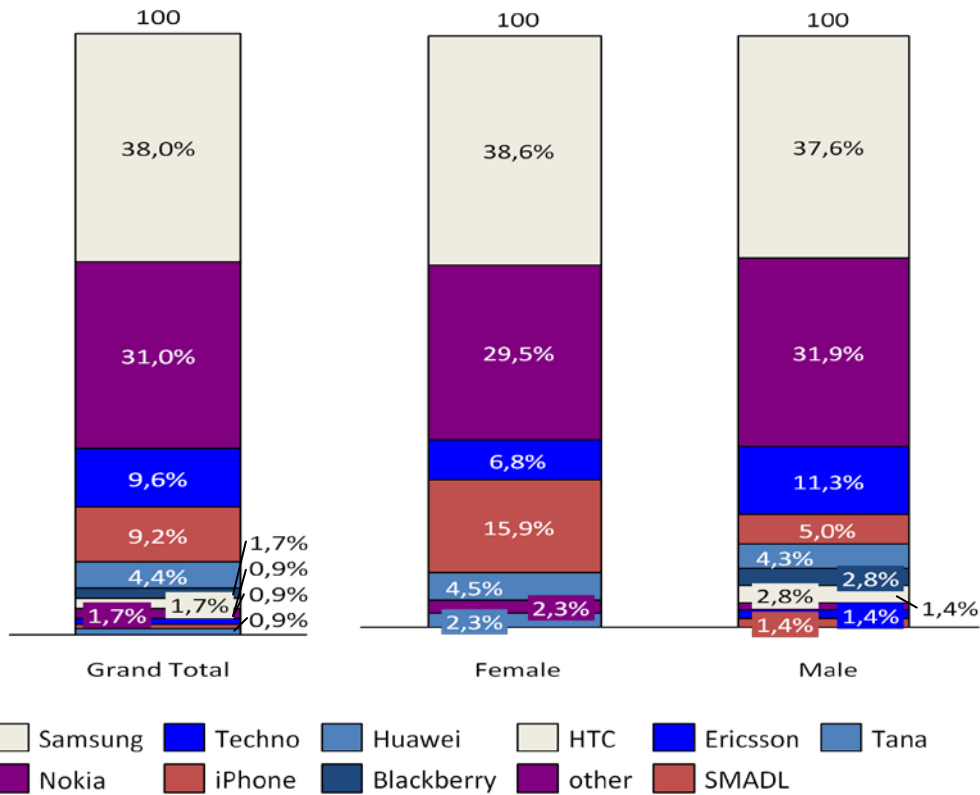
### **4.3 Basic Information on Mobile Phones**

This section summarizes basic information on the students' mobile phone, which include the brands of mobile phone they currently own, their ranking of the criteria for

selecting a mobile phone and the source from which they get to know about new mobile phones.

### 4.3.1 Current Mobile Phone Brands of Respondents

Figure 4.1 below, illustrates the current mobile phone brand owned by the respondents and the ownership of the brands with respect to gender.



**Figure 4.1:** Current mobile phone brand of respondents

**Source:** survey result, 2011

As per figure 4.1, when asked the brand of their current mobile phone respondents answered Samsung (38%), Nokia (31%) and Techno (9.6%) were the top three bands the respondents currently own. In addition, SMADL (0.9%), Tana (0.9%) and Ericsson (0.9%) were found to be the least three favored brands owned by the respondents. When comparing ownership of the top three brands with respect to gender: Samsung brand is slightly higher in the female category, while Nokia is

slightly popular with the male gender. The Tana mobile brand however shows a greater ownership among the male category. The survey also shows that the majority of the respondents own international mobile phone brands accounting for 88.6% while only 11.4% own locally assembled mobile phone brands. This indicates that the majority of the students in WKU own and favor international mobile brands compared to locally assembled mobile phone brands. This also shows that locally assembled mobile phone brands have not penetrated this segment market which is mainly dominated by international brands.

### 4.3.2 Ranking of the Criteria for Selecting a Mobile Phone

One of the research questions the study tried to answer was the selection criteria of mobile phone brands among university students in WKU. Accordingly, the respondents were asked to rank from a list of factors they viewed as important when deciding to purchase a mobile phone. The lists of factors included were namely: new technology applications (browser, social media applications...), price, and product attributes (durability, size, memory capacity, design, battery life...), ease of use, country of origin (made in), recommendation and advertising. Table 4.2 illustrates the ranking of the factors below.

**Table 4.2: Ranking of the selection criteria for mobile phone**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
New Technological applications	20	48.03%	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
Product attributes	30	22.71%	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>
Price	40	17.47%	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>
Country of origin	10	6.99%	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>
Ease of Use	9	2.62%	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>
Advertising	8	1.75%	<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>
Recommendation	6	0.44%	<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Source: survey result, 2011**

Table 4.3, shows the frequency of the most important factors mentioned by the respondents when asked to rank the most important criteria which affects their decision to purchase a mobile phone. Accordingly, new technology applications (browser, social media applications...), product attributes (durability, size, memory capacity, design, battery life...) and price were ranked the top three criteria and accounting for 48.03%, 22.71% and 17.47% respectively. Ease of use, advertising and recommendation were found to be the least important factors accounting for 2.62%, 1.75% and 0.44% of the total respondents. The rankings of the most important factors by this segment market are very essential and beneficial to local mobile phone makers, since they can use this information to develop products that suite university students.

The findings stated above are consistent with other researchers Ramesh Rijal (2013) and Solomon Alene (2013). Ramesh Rijal (2013) came to a conclusion that, Technical criteria (reliability, durability, performance) and Economic Criteria (price) played a very important role in brand preference.

**4.3.3 Source of Information about New Mobile Phones**

Finally, the respondents were asked their source of information about new mobile phones. This was one of the research questions that were important to the study, dealing with the source of information that university students get to know a new released mobile phone. The sources of information from which the respondents were asked to choose from included: technology related programs on TV or Radio, advertising, friends or family, news and the internet. Table 4.3 shows the respondents source of information regarding new mobile phones.

**Table 4.4: Source of information about new mobile phones**

**What is the main source from which you get to know about new mobile phones?**

Alternatives		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Technology related programs (TV, Radio)	43	18.8
	Advertising	42	18.3
	Friends/Family	15	41.9
		10	1.7

News	13	19.2
Internet	123	100.0
Total		

*Source: survey result, 2011*

Table 4.4, illustrates that 41.9% and 19.2% of the respondents indicated that friends or family and the internet are their main source of information when it comes to information about new mobile phones. Technology related programs on TV and radio accounted for 18.8% while advertising consisted of 18.3% of the respondents' source of information. News as a source of information regarding new mobile phones was only mentioned by 1.7% of the respondents. Therefore, the most influential source of information regarding new mobile phones were family/friends and the internet.

The findings of the study was consistent with the research of Solomon Alene (2013), which stated that internet and friends were the main sources of information about branded mobile phones. The study concluded that new technological features, product attributes and price as the most important factors influencing the behavior of consumers in their mobile phone choice. The study also stated that brand familiarity, advertising and recommendation from others as the least important factors in affecting consumer's choice in selecting mobile phones.

#### **4.4 Factors Affecting Mobile Phone Brand Preference**

In order to analyze WKU students' brand preference on mobile phone by comparing international brands with locally assembled mobile phones, two factors were used namely brand equity and customers attribute. There were 25 items divided under brand equity and customers attribute. Therefore, the analysis results are presented in two parts. The first part deals with WKU students' results of brand equity dimensions which include: brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand association. The second part includes customer attribute dimensions that include; reference group, self-image and perceived risk. These variables are presented comparing international brands with locally assembled mobile phone brands. In order to compare students brand preference descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation is used. The mean indicates to what extent the sample group averagely agrees or disagrees with the different statements. The higher the mean the more the

respondents agree with the statement while the lower the mean the more the respondents disagree with the statement. In addition, standard deviation shows the variability of an observed response.

#### 4.4.1 Brand Awareness

**Table 4.5: Responses on Brand Awareness**

Item	No of Respondents										Total	
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I know the symbol or logo of the mobile device from brand “X”	-	-	-	-	4	3.3	64	52	55	44.7	123	100
Some features of brand “X” come to my mind quickly	-	-	-	-	3	2.4	75	61	45	36.6	123	100
I can recognize the brand “X” quickly among other competing brands	-	-	3	2.4	5	4	100	81.3	15	12.2	123	100
I am familiar with the brand “X”	-	-	10	8.1	8	6.5	80	65	25	20.3	123	100

**Source: Own survey, 2011**

As table 4.5 revealed concerning brand awareness 96.7% respondents were positive in that they have the awareness about the symbol or logo of their mobile device. 97.6% of the respondents also replied that their mobile phone brand features come to their mind quickly. 93.5% of the respondents can quickly recognize their mobile phone brand among other competing brands. 85.3% of respondents answer indicates that they are familiar with their brands. This shows that

the majority of research respondents were well aware about their mobile phone brands. Keller (2004) defines brand awareness as the customers' ability to recall and recognize the brand as reflected by their ability to identify the brand under different conditions and to link the brand name, logo, symbol, and so forth to certain associations in memory.

#### 4.42 Brand Loyalty

**Table 4.6: Responses on Brand Loyalty**

Item	No of Respondents										Total	
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I consider myself to be loyal to mobile phone from brand "X"	5	4	16	13	8	6.5	67	54.5	27	22	123	100
When buying a mobile phone, quickly brand "X" would be my first choice	21	17	25	20.3	20	16.3	30	24.4	27	22	123	100
I will keep on buying mobile phone from brand "X" even if the other brands has the same Functionality	8	6.5	18	14.7	13	10.5	45	36.6	39	31.7	123	100

I am still willing to buy mobile phone from brand “X” even if its price is a little higher than that of its competitor	26	21 .1	37	30. 1	32	26	25	20. 3	3	2.4	123	100
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**Source: Own Survey, 2011**

As Table 4.6 revealed, from the total respondents 76.5% of them consider themselves as loyal to their mobile phone brand, 17% of respondents were not loyal for their mobile phone brands while the remaining 6.5% of respondents were neutral.

As Table 4.6 showed 46.4% respondents said that when they buy new phone they quickly prefer their favorite brand, 37.3% of them replied they do not prefer their brand quickly when they buy new phone and 16.3 were opted to be neutral on this issue.

Table 4.6 indicated that out of the whole respondents, 68.3% of the respondents keep on buying mobile phone from specific brand even if the other brands has the same functionality, 21.2% of them were not prefer to buy a specific brand if it has the same functionality with other brands whereas 10.5% respondents were neutral.

As table 4.6 demonstrated, 51.2% of the respondents were not interested in buying a specific phone brand if its price is little higher than its competitors, 22.7% were prefer to buy their favorite brand even if its price is little higher than other phone brands and the remaining 26% were neutral.

#### 4.4.3 Perceived Quality

**Table 4.7: Responses on Perceived Quality**

Item	No of Respondents										Total	
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%

I trust the quality of products from brand “X”	-	-	11	9	7	5.7	80	65	25	20.3	123	100
Products from brand “X” offer excellent features	-	-	6	4.9	36	29.3	48	39	33	26.8	123	100
I think mobile phones from brand “X” have a reputation of high quality	-	-	5	4.1	7	5.7	81	65.9	30	24.4	123	100
Mobile phones from brand “X” are very durable products	-	-	4	3.2	10	8.1	82	66.7	33	26.8	123	100

**Source: Own Survey, 2011**

As it indicated in Table 4.7, 85.3 respondents trust the quality of products provided by their preferable phone brands and the remaining 9% and 5.7% of them do not trust the quality of products from their favorite brands and were neutral respectively.

With regard to the excellence of their preferable brand products features, 65.8% of respondents were positive, 29.3% of them were neutral and the remaining respondents were not believe in the excellence of their favorite brand products features. Concerning on the respondents attitude towards their mobile phone brand reputation 90.3% of them were believe their mobile phone brands have reputation. As Table 4.7 revealed, 93.5% of respondents think their mobile brand has very durable products.

#### 4.4.4 Brand Association

**Table 4.8: Responses Brand Association**

Item	No of Respondents										Total	
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%

I think international mobile phone brands are of high quality and superior compared to local brands ”	-	-	-	-	6	4.9	51	41.5	66	53.6	123	100
I associate the country of origin of the mobile phone from brand “X” with high quality	-	-	9	7.3	14	11.3	74	60.2	26	21.1	123	100

**Source: Own Survey, 2011**

As it showed in the Table 4.8, 95.1% of the research respondents believe that international phone brands are high quality and superior compared to local phone brands.

As table 4.8 indicated out of the total respondents 81.3% of them were associate their mobile phone brand with its origin country.

#### 4.4.5 Reference Group

**Table 4.9: Responses on Preference Group**

Item	No of Respondents										Total	
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
By buying mobile phone brands as my friends, I achieve a sense of belonging	-	-	9	7.3	14	11.3	74	60.2	26	21.1	123	100
I prefer or buy mobile phone brands when I am sure my	-	-	40	32.5	15	12.2	46	37.3	22	17.9	123	100

friends like that												
I buy the mobile phone brands that people expect me to buy	-	-	50	40.7	20	16.3	30	24.4	23	18.6	123	100
If I want to be like someone, I try to buy same brands that they buy	-	-	7	5.7	21	17.1	42	34.1	53	43.1	123	100

**Source: Own Survey, 2011**

As Table 4.9 revealed, 81.3% of the respondents replied that by buying mobile phone brands as their friends, they achieve a sense of belonging while the rest of the respondents were negative and neutral on this issue.

From the total respondents, 55.2% of respondents prefer or buy mobile phone brands when they are sure that their friends like that brand, 32.5% of them were do not prefer buy mobile phone brands because their friends like that brand and the remaining 12.3% of the respondents were prefer to stay neutral on this issue.

As Table 4.9 demonstrated, 43% of respondents buy mobile phone brands that other people expected to see on them while 40.7% of them do not buy phone brands because others expected from them. As it revealed in Table 4.9, 77.2% of the respondents answered that they buy the same phone brands if they want to be them.

#### 4.4.6 Self-Image

**Table 4.10: Responses on Self Image**

Item	No of Respondents					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I prefer mobile phone from brand “X”, which increase my status and esteem	-	-	5	4	23	18.7	45	36.6	50	40.6	123	100
Mobile phone from brand “X” says a lot about the kind of person I am or want to be	20	16.3	33	26.8	28	22.8	42	34.1	-	-	123	100
I feel proud to own mobile phone from brand “X”	27	22	12	9.8	34	27.6	50	40.6	-	-	123	100
I like and prefer mobile phone from brand “X” because it suits my personality	-	-	17	13.8	12	9.8	63	51.2	31	25.2	123	100

**Source: Own Survey, 2011**

As Table 4.10 demonstrated, out of the whole respondents 77.2% of them were prefer mobile phone brand which increase their status and self-esteem where as 18.7% of the respondents were neutral and the remaining were not prefer brands which increase their status.

As it showed in Table 4.10, 43.1% of the respondents were not agree on the idea that the phone brand from specific brand is not expressed what person they are what they want to be while 34% of them were positive on the idea and the rest of the respondents prefer to stay neutral.

From the total respondents 40.6 %of them responded that they are proud on the phone brand which they own whereas 31.8% of the respondents do not proud on the phone brand they own. And the remaining respondents opted to be neutral.

With regard of preference of respondents by compatibility of phone brands with their personalities 76.4% of respondents were agreed while 13.8% of them were disagreed.

#### 4.4.7 Perceived Risk

**Table 4.11: Responses on Perceived Risk**

Item	No of Respondents										Total	
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
The financial risk I will incur if I buy mobile phone from brand “X” is very low	10	8.1	16	13	35	28.4	62	50.4	-	-	123	100
The performance risk from using mobile phone from brand “X” is very low	-	-	26	21.1	23	18.7	74	60.2	-	-	123	100
By buying mobile phone from brand “X” I will be accepted by my peers, reducing social risk	30	24.4	40	32.5	30	24.4	23	18.7	-	-	123	100

**Source: Own Survey, 2011**

In regard with the financial risk Table 4.11 showed, 50.4% of the respondents feels they will incur very low risk from their phone brand while 21.1% of the respondents believe they will not incur low financial risk from their phone brand and the rest 28.4% of them were neutral.

As Table 4.11 revealed, 60.2% of respondents were agreed in that they will face low performance risk from their phone brand, 21.1% of them said they performance risk they face from their phone brand is not very low.

Table 4.11 showed that, 56.9% of respondents not believe their phone brand is not reduced their social risk, 18.7% of the were responded their phone brand reduced their social risk while the rest respondents were neutral.

#### 4.4.7 Overall brand preference

**Table 4.12: Responses on Overall Brand Preference**

Item	No of Respondents										Total	
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I prefer International mobile phone brands compared to locally assembled mobile phone brands	-	-	-	-	5	4	68	55.3	50	40.6	123	100

**Source: Own Survey, 2011**

As Table 4.12 indicated, 96.1% of the respondents prefer international mobile phone brands over locally assembled mobile phone brands.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the conclusion and recommendation of the study is presented. The aim of this chapter is to review the problem of the research and conclude the findings with regards to the objectives of the study. Recommendation that focuses on how the problem identified could be addressed is also included in this chapter.

#### **5.2 Conclusion**

In general as per the findings of the study, it can be concluded that students of WKU overwhelmingly prefer international brands over locally assembled mobile phone brands. New technology applications, product attributes and price are the major criteria for a mobile phone purchasing decision. In addition, friends or family and the internet are the major sources of information from where students get to know new mobile phone brands. Finally, brand equity dimensions are more influential in students' brand preference than consumer attribute dimensions

#### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions made, the following possible recommendations are given.

- Local mobile assembling companies as well as foreign companies should focus on the decision criteria of students as a guide to develop mobile phone products to tap into this market segment. These include new technology applications (browser, social media applications...), product attributes (durability, size, memory capacity, design, battery life...) and price.

- Understanding what the university student market segment needs and wants should be the main primary activity for companies in the mobile phone industry. Mobile phone companies that are currently serving and those companies that want to enter and serve this segment must provide mobile phone brands that are perceived to be of high quality.
  
- Ones they have established themselves in the industry must educate or create brand awareness within this segment. They should also focus on the mobile phone features so as to incorporate new technological applications such as connection to social media like Facebook, Twitter and other instant messaging applications, since this segment is technologically savvy and more connected on the internet.
  
- Local mobile phone assembling companies should concentrate on creating brand awareness among university students. Local companies should embark on intensive campaign to create stronger brand awareness and brand image.
  
- Companies need to both advertise, and also to take active measures to ensure that word of mouth (WOM) and other forms of uncontrolled communication concerning their bands are positive since. WOM, along with advertising and other forms of publicity, is a core variable in building brand image. Word of mouth has high credibility which leads to brand preference and plausibly has a greater net overall effect on sales than advertising.
  
- Local companies could also build their brand equity by investing more on research and development. Based on their research and development into the best approaches and lessons of on international brands they could develop effective strategies and innovative products to build well know preferred brands.

- Local companies could also try to establish patent relationships to manufacture patented international mobile phone brands. Its benefit is two folds; since brand preference for international mobile phone brands are very high among university students, local companies could leverage this preference and start assembling international brand locally. Secondly, this is also advantageous for international brand manufactures to establish partnership with local companies to manufacture international mobile phone brands at a low cost.
  
- International mobile phone manufacturers should be able to leverage their brand equity they have in this market segment by establishing their own manufacturing plants and aggressively tapping into this growing segment.

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## **APPEENDIX**

**Wolkite University**

**College of business and economics**

**Department of marketing management**

**Questionnaires to be filled by customers**

**Dear respondent,**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to conduct a research regarding **Brand preference of wku students: International vs. Local mobile phone brands** for the partial fulfillment of degree in marketing management from Wolkite University. Since your response is important to this research, I kindly request you to respond each question genuinely and timely. And I would like to confirm you that the information you provide does not affect you in any case and will be kept in secrete.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!!

**Note:**

No need to write name

Give your answer by placing a tick mark in the box.

**Instruction: Please mark your answer with a tick (✓) in the space provided.**

**PART 1: General information of students'**

1. gender

Male  Female

2. Age

18  19-23  24-28  above 29

3, Years of study in WKU

First year  Second year  Third year

**PART 2: Basic information on mobile phone**

1. Do you own a mobile phone? Yes  No

**If you have answered 'No' for question No. 5 above, this is the end of the questionnaire for you. Once again, many thanks for your support!**

2. What is the brand of your current mobile phone?

**International brands**

**locally assembled brands**

NOKIA

ITEL

SAMSUNG

SMADL

IPHONE

TANA

HUAWEI

GEOTEL

HTC

X TIGI

LG

OKING

ERICSON

TECNO

Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

3. Rate the following criteria for selecting a mobile phone from 1 to 7 in order of importance.

Criteria	Rank
New Technological applications (browsers, social media apps...)	
Price	
Product attributes (durability, size, memory capacity, design, battery life...)	
Ease of Use	
Country of origin (made in)	
Recommendation	
Advertising	

4. What is the main source from which you get to know about new mobile phones? Technology related programs (TV, Radio etc)

- Advertising  
 Friends/Family  
 News  
 Internet  
 Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2: The statements below are designed so that they give information on which factors affect brand preference. The statements drawn (X) are referring to the brand you have selected in question 2 above.**

**Please use tick (✓) mark in the answer boxes that reflect your rating.**

Brand Awareness	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I know the symbol or logo of the mobile device from brand “X”					
Some features of brand “X” come to my mind quickly					

I can recognize the brand “X” quickly among other competing brands					
I am familiar with the brand “X”					
<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>
I consider myself to be loyal to mobile phone from brand “X”					
When buying a mobile phone,					

brand “X” would be my first choice					
I will keep on buying mobile phone from brand “X” even if the other brands has the same functionality					
I am still willing to buy mobile phone from brand “X” even if its price is a little higher than that of its competitor					
<b>Perceived quality</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>
I trust the quality of products from brand “X”					
Products from brand “X” offer excellent features					
I think mobile phones from brand “X” have a reputation of high quality					
Mobile phones from brand “X” are very durable products					
<b>Brand Association</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>
I think international mobile phone brands are of high quality and superior compared to local brands					

I associate the country of origin of the mobile phone from brand “X” with high quality					
<b>Reference group</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>
By buying mobile phone brands as my friends, I achieve a sense of belonging					
I prefer or buy mobile phone brands when I am sure my friends like that					
I buy the mobile phone brands that people expect me to buy					
If I want to be like someone, I try to buy same brands that they buy					
<b>Self Image</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>
I prefer mobile phone from brand “X”, which increase my status and esteem					
Mobile phone from brand “X” says a lot about the kind of person I am or want to be					
I feel proud to own mobile phone from brand “X”					
I like and prefer mobile phone from brand “X” because it suits my personality					

<b>Perceived Risk</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>
The financial risk I will incur if I buy mobile phone from brand “X” is very low					
The performance risk from using mobile phone from brand “X” is very low					
By buying mobile phone from brand “X” I will be accepted by my peers, reducing social risk					
<b>Overall brand preference</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>
I prefer International mobile phone brands compared to locally assembled mobile phone brands					

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COMMITMENT TO FINISH IT.**