

Brand Management and Consumers' Patronage of iPhone Among Users in Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria

Erikav, Gurenen Asher

School of Post-Graduate Studies University of Cross River State.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100800361>

Received: 21 August 2026; Accepted: 26 August 2026; Published: 05 September 2026

ABSTRACT

The study "Brand management and consumers' patronage of iPhone among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria" examined the overall influence of brand management on consumers' patronage of iPhone focusing specifically on users in tertiary institutions with Cross River State. Four research objectives translated into four research questions were formulated for the study. Literature review covered conceptual review, empirical reviews and theoretical framework. The study was theoretically grounded on the Technology Acceptance Model, the Brand Awareness and Loyalty Theory, and Uses and Gratifications Theory. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The Questionnaire designed with 20 closed ended items set in line with the four-point Likert Scale was used for data collection. Multi-Stage sampling technique involving cluster sampling, random sampling through ballot method, purposive sampling, and convenient sampling was used for the study. A sample size of 384 respondents was drawn using Cochran' formula who attended to the question. Data gathered were presented in frequency tables and analysed using simple percentage and weighted mean. The major findings were that brand management strategies such as consistent branding, promotional activities and advertising etc. influence consumers' patronage of iPhone. Also, factors such as brand awareness, product quality, price, brand image, brand experience, continuous innovation, product design, social influence, self-expression, hedonism, etc. significantly influence consumers' patronage of the iPhone brand. Brand knowledge was equally found to wield significant influence on consumers' purchase decision making toward iPhone. And finally brand attributes such as product quality, durability, uniqueness, design and aesthetic appeal, product innovation, customers' satisfaction, brand trust, etc. influence consumers' loyalty to iPhone brand. It was concluded that consistent branding, advertising, continuous brand innovation, and other promotional activities tend to create brand awareness and reinforce product quality, brand image, brand equity etc. which significantly influence the purchase decision making of the consumers as well as their loyalty to a specific brand of product and service. It was recommended amongst others that, Smartphone manufacturers and marketers should execute localised experiential campaigns, such as student ambassador programmes and educational discounts, to boost engagement with premium products. Marketing communications must emphasize durable, high-quality, and innovative features to overcome price objections, build trust, and drive consistent brand patronage among students.

Keywords: Brand, Brand Management, Brand Knowledge, Consumer, Consumer Buying Behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation, economic interdependency, fight for consumers' patronage and loyalty as well as market dominance on the global economic stage, the struggle for survival and continuous existence among business organisations characterised today's business environment. Giant companies fight to maintain their dominant business position while the less powerful ones struggle to occupy recognisable position both in the market and in the minds of consumers. This has orchestrated the stiff competition experienced in the market both at the local and global stage. To fight this competition, manufacturing companies resort to creating, managing and sustaining strong brand name that could not only distinguish them and their products and services from other competing brands but also wield significant impact on consumers' buying behaviour. Manufacturing companies take branding as one of the powerful tools to fight competition in the market. They invest hugely in brand management.

In support of the above, Ramayah et al (2024) submit that in today's competitive market environment, manufacturing companies invest hugely in brand management in order to shape how consumers perceive their products and services. The process of building brand otherwise known as branding or brand management becomes indispensable. Swapna and Nathi (2025) support this by saying that, in this highly saturated market, where multiple brands often compete in the same category with minimal product differentiation, companies rely on creating a powerful brand that could stand out and capture consumers' attention. This implies that companies use brand to distinguish their products and services from those of their competitors as well as grasp consumers' attention in order to win not only their patronage but also their loyalty.

Anyadighibe et al (2023) assert that brand management goes beyond the immediate management of the company's name. it transcends down to ensuring that such name has powerful influence on consumers by holding their attention, getting them emotionally connected to the brand and its product, as well as ensuring that such brand is distinguished from other competing brands with similar features. Similarly, Mojunder (2023) submits that brand management plays a critical role in building strong and lasting connections between a company and its customers. Top world class brand such as NIKE, ADIDAS, GUCCI, PUMA, JAGUAR, TOYOTA, etc. invest hugely in the management of their brand.

In the telecommunication industry, the iPhone through extensive brand management, has carved out a niche for itself making it to be among the top class recognizable brand of smartphones that is widely associated with high product quality, innovation, premium design, reliability, and a unique ecosystem that integrates hardware and software. Through consistent brand management strategies, Apple has successfully built a strong brand identity and cultivated a loyal customer base for the iPhone brand through which many consumers demonstrate strong emotional attachment to brand and often preferring it over competing brands despite the relatively high price involved in purchasing it. Ramayah et al (2024) reaffirm that Apple Inc. has been building its brand image in order to guide consumers into buying Apple products. It utilizes the influence by media to compete with other smartphone vendors on the market. It also built various types of online platforms via the integration of hardware and software. These are aimed at influencing consumers' patronage.

Consumers' patronage refers to the tendency of consumers to repeatedly purchase or support a particular brand or product due to their positive perceptions, satisfaction, or trust developed over time. Researches on consumer behaviour have shown amongst others that brand attributes such as prestige, reliability, and reputation play significant roles in influencing consumers' purchase decisions, particularly among young consumers and students, hence the need to study consumers' patronage of iPhones among users in tertiary institutions.

Cross River State, which hosts several tertiary institutions such as the University of Calabar, University of Cross River State, the University of Education and Entrepreneurship, Akamkpa, and various colleges of education, is chosen for this study because of the presence of a large population of young smartphone users who display their purchase repurchase behaviour, brand preference, and loyalty towards each latest brand of iPhone that is launched. Understanding the factors that drive users' preference for the iPhone brand can therefore, provide valuable insights for marketers, researchers, and technology companies seeking to understand brand loyalty in the smartphone industry.

This study therefore, sought to ascertain the relationship between brand management and consumers' patronage of the iPhone among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The study will specifically ascertained the influence of brand management strategies, brand knowledge, and brand attributes on consumers' preference and continued patronage of the iPhone brand among students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Statement of the Problem

The continuous manufacturing of various brands of phones by different manufacturers has created another problem. It has brought about stiff competition in the market for consumers' patronage. This has made branding a necessary step for producers to stay afloat the market competition. This means that with this market competition brought about as a result of production of numerous brands of phones, effective brand management has become a crucial factor influencing consumers' purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. iPhone seems to occupy a recognisable and highly reputable position in the market and in the minds of the consumers as compare to other

brands of smartphones. However, while iPhone enjoys a prestigious brand image, the extent which brand management actually influence consumers' patronage of iPhone particularly among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, has been given less attention.

Many studies have been carried out on consumers' patronage of smartphones but most of these studies did not focus on users in tertiary institutions in Cross Rivers State. This has created a gap in understanding how brand management affect users' decisions to purchase and continue using iPhones in tertiary institutions in Cross River State that this study intends to fill. The problem of this study therefore, hinged on the question: to what extent does brand management, through its strategies and brand knowledge dimensions, influence consumers' patronage and loyalty to iPhone among students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, despite the relatively high cost of the product? This and other questions were answered in the study.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study was to examine brand management and consumers' patronage of iPhone among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Identify iPhone brand management strategies that influence consumers' patronage among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.
- ii. Find out factors that influence consumers' patronage of the iPhone brand among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.
- iii. Examine how brand knowledge influences consumers' purchase decision making toward iPhone among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.
- iv. Find out attributes of the iPhone brand that influence consumers' loyalty among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Research Questions

Four research questions that guided the study were:

- i. What are iPhone brand management strategies that influence consumers' patronage among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?
- ii. What are the factors that influence consumers' patronage of the iPhone brand among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?
- iii. How does brand knowledge influence consumers' purchase decision making of iPhone among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?
- iv. What attributes of the iPhone brand influence consumers' loyalty among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?

Significance of the Study

The study is considered to be of great significance to iPhone brand in understanding the best brand management strategies that wield significant influence on consumers' patronage and loyalty to their brand. The management of the iPhone brand as such, can leverage on this by reinforcing the use of such strategies in order to remain prominent and relevant in the mobile communication market. Other brands of smartphones can equally benefit from this study by adopting similar brand management strategies to fight for consumers' patronage and loyalty. The study has added to the body of literature on brand management and consumers buying behaviour of products and services. The consumers can also understand the tricks of brand management which they will be guided on how to make informed purchase decision when buying smartphones.

Review of Concepts: Brand/Brand Management Strategies

The concept brand has been defined in different ways. For example, the American Marketing Association, as cited by Kumar (2025, p.1), defined brand as "a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or services as distinct from those of other sellers." This definition covers one of the basic

essence of brand which is to identify as well as distinguish goods and services of one seller from that of another seller. This made Jaja and Ibama (2024) to consider brand an identity that distinguishes one product from the other. It helps to connect a company and its products and services with the consumers on a personal level.

Brands according to Anyadighibe et al (2023) are denoted by their unique names, logos, packaging and associated images, that make up a brand's identity which represents the brand's values and signal them to potential customers. This means that brands are designed to serve as symbol of identity to a company and also, to add value to the consumers about the products and services that are associated with such brand. By function Keller (2025) avers that brands provide identification, reduce search costs, and create expectations of quality. A brand therefore, is what defines, distinguish, identifies, and differentiate a company and its products from that of another competing company and its products with the aim of making such product stands out in order to win consumers' patronage and loyalty.

Brand as an identity is carved by a company, managed and sustained in order to win consumers' patronage and loyalty. The processes that are involved in carving/creating, maintaining, and sustaining brand otherwise refers to as branding becomes indispensable in the fight for consumers' patronage. Branding according to Ashford (2024) has to do with discovering things that make a firm unique and differentiating it from its competitors. To Kumar (2025, p.7) "branding is the process of creating a unique identity for a product or service in the minds of consumers." Omamuzo et al (2023) view branding as the process of giving meaning to a particular organisation, product or service by creating and shaping the mindset of consumers. It is clear from these different perspectives of branding that through branding companies communicate more deeply with customers, employees and the general public about their products and services thereby, impacting on their patronage.

Yadav and Agarwal (2024) reinforce that branding serves as a process, a tool, a strategy that helps companies in building long-term relationships with consumers by understanding their needs and desires, ensuring that the brand can meet their mutual aspirations. Ramayah et al (2024) opine that branding transcends the visual and linguistic aspects of a company's identity. It is all about creating a deep and lasting emotional and psychological connection between consumers and the company and its products which goes beyond mere transactions to fostering loyalty, and influencing consumer choices.

The process of creating, managing, and sustaining a brand is what is termed brand management. Kumar (2025, p.1) holds that, "brand management encompasses the process of creating, maintaining, enhancing, and protecting a brand in order to secure customer loyalty and long-term profitability." This means that brand management is a long term strategy that aims at keeping a brand relevant in the market for a long period of time as long as the business continues to exist and operate. It integrates marketing, strategic positioning, psychology, and cultural relevance to create compelling value propositions. To Tuten (2023), brand management refers to the strategic process of creating, maintaining, and enhancing a brand's identity, value, and perception in the minds of consumers in order to win their patronage and loyalty to a specific brand. It involves activities such as brand positioning, brand communication, and customer relationship management. The relevance of brand management to business organisations as such cannot be overemphasised because through such process business organisations remain relevant in the market and minds of consumers.

Brand Management Strategies

Brand management is considered a process because it involves numerous activities that are deliberate, planned, goal-oriented, strategic, and it is a continuous process. Vivek (2025) identified the following five branding strategies that guide the overall process of brand management:

Brand identity: This refers to the visible elements of a brand such as logo, color, typography, etc. that together shape its recognition. Such visual elements when beautifully combined influence consumers' patronage. Brand identity relies on visuals, logo, design, typography. These are visual aspects of a brand that create and engrave mental and resonating pictures in the mind of consumers.

Emotional branding: This according to Vivek (2025) aims at creating deep emotional connections between the brand and the consumer. Suman and Mansi (2014) note that it is the choice to represent a larger feeling which is

not necessarily connected with the product or consumption of the product. Through emotional branding a product is connected to the consumer at emotional level.

Brand personality and psychological bonding: Suman and Mansi (2014) refer to this type of branding strategy as individual branding. Vivek (2025) citing Aaker's Brand Personality Framework (1997) outlines five dimensions of brand personality which are sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Consumers often associate themselves with brands that reflect their personality traits, a phenomenon known as self-congruity.

Experiential branding and sensory influence: This involves engaging multiple senses through packaging, in-store experiences, and product design. Apple, for example, in branding the iPhone, integrates durability, portability, sharp and clear camera, efficient internet accessibility, which is aimed at influencing both purchase intention, retention, and loyalty to the brand.

Digital branding and online behaviour: With the rise of digital platforms, branding now extends to social media, influencer marketing, and personalised content, which according to Statista (2023), is implemented through social media, influencers, content and it influences awareness, peer perception, and online engagement.

Brand positioning: Brand positioning is a process that specifies where the products or services are going to be placed in the target market that the business is going to be active. Yakup and Hatice (2016) is This is the act of designing the company's offer and image so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target consumer's mind.

Brand extension: This is the effort of using the successful brand name for launching the newly produced products. It is seen as the source of strategic expansion in terms of businesses.

Vivek (2025) concludes that branding strategies are a fundamental drivers of consumer buying behaviour. From creating identity to evoking emotions, from building brand personality to delivering immersive experiences, branding operates at multiple psychological levels to shape perceptions and the entire buying behaviour of consumers. This means that branding activities shape consumers' perception of the brand as well as influence their buying behaviour resulting to brand loyalty. Influencing consumers buying behaviour therefore, is the focal of brand management.

Consumer Buying Behaviour

Products and services are meant to reach and satisfy the needs of the final consumers who complete the production circle. In the regard, Nyong et al (2025) see a consumer as someone who identifies a need and is constantly seeking out and manipulating information in order to make choices between consumer goods and services. This definition points out that, a consumer is always seeking information that will help him/her get what could satisfy his/her needs. Consumers buying behaviour therefore, is the study of people, groups, or organisations and the methods they employ to choose, get, and discard commodities, opinions, or experiences in order to meet demands, as well as the impacts these techniques have on the consumer and society (Omamuzo et al, 2023). It attempts to understand the decision-making processes of buyers, both individually and in groups. Ahmad and Abdulkareem (2022) assert that consumer behaviour examines how emotions, perception, attitudes and preferences affect buying behaviour.

Olise et al (2023) conceive of consumer buying behaviour as the selection and consumption of goods and services for the satisfaction of their wants. It is also the sum total of a consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions, and decisions regarding the consumer's behaviour in the marketplace when purchasing a product or service. Harini and Maruthavijayan, (2025) contribute that consumer behaviour encompasses the cognitive and emotional processes, as well as the observable actions, exhibited by individuals while searching for, purchasing, and utilizing a product or service. This makes the consumers an integral part of the business process. The sustenance of every business organisation depends on consumers' patronage hence, business organisations strive to always influence and win consumers' patronage and loyalty. The understanding of consumers' buying behaviour therefore, is key to influencing and winning their patronage.

Factors Influencing Consumers' Patronage

Consumers buying behaviour is determined by or motivated or even triggered by different factors. However, the identification of factors influencing consumer buying behaviour by Ahmad and Abdulkareem (2022) seem encompassing and more suitable for this study. These factors include:

Economic factors: These include economic determinants such as personal income of the consumer, discretionary income, disposable income, family income, and consumer credit. All these contribute in one way or the other in affecting consumer buying behaviour.

Personal factors: These according to Ahmad and Abdulkareem (2022) are individual factors peculiar to the consumer. Harini and Maruthavijayan, (2025) see these as unique aspects specific to an individual that influence their purchasing behaviour. They are unique to a person and influence purchase behaviour (Omamuzo et al 2023). Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) identify determinants under personal factors to include age and life stage, occupation and income, personality and self-concept.

Cultural factors: Culture is the totality of way of life of a group of people which border on their language, mode of dressing, religious beliefs, the food they eat, marriage ceremony, economy, etc. The influence of cultural norms, values, beliefs, and rituals on consumer behaviour is substantial. Cultural factors are divided into subculture and social class. Subcultures, has to do with cultures which emerge within broader cultural contexts. These are shaped by several elements such as race, religion, nationality, and regional identity, and have the potential to impact consumer preferences and behaviours. They exact significant impact on consumer buying behaviour. On the other hand, the purchasing behaviour, retail preferences, and brand perceptions of consumers can be influenced by their social class.

Social factors: Harini and Maruthavijayan, (2025) refer to these factors as external forces exerted by others that influence consumer buying decisions. Omamuzo et al (2023) see them as forces that other people exert and which affect consumers' purchase behaviour. These include reference groups such as family, friends, co-workers, and opinion leaders; social roles such as being a parent, student, or professional; and social norms encompassing the societal expectations and conventions that govern and determine acceptable behaviour and spending patterns. All these social factors tend to influence consumers buying behaviour.

Psychological factors: These factors according to Omamuzo et al (2023), are internal to an individual and generate forces within that influence her/his purchase behaviour. Harini and Maruthavijayan, (2025) consider these factors as internal to an individual that create internal forces that shape their purchasing behaviour. Key elements include motives, perception, learning, attitudes, and personality. Consumers' buying behaviour as such is motivated or influenced by these factors at different levels.

Brand Knowledge/Brand Equity and Consumers Patronage of Products and Services

The concept brand knowledge according to Ehiedu (2022) can be defined as a collection of factors such as brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand association, and brand recognition, or some of these attributes etc. that increase or decrease the value that a product or service offers to a company as well as its customers. There are many dimensions of brand equity identified by different scholars as seen below:

Brand awareness: This describes people's perception and cognitive reaction to a brand. Chen (2024) submits that, brand awareness as the extent to which consumers recognize and recall a brand, plays a critical role in their purchasing decisions. Eboh & Edeme, (2024) citing Aaker (2010) noted that brand awareness is the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a given product category. Anand (2025) notes that brand awareness is a fundamental concept in marketing and consumer behaviour, representing the extent to which a brand is recognised and recalled by consumers. Brand awareness encompasses the knowledge, familiarity, and recognition that consumers have about a particular brand and its offerings. It is the first step in the process of building strong brand associations and creating customer loyalty.

Brand image: This is a critical construct in marketing that significantly influences consumer buying decisions (Oduwa & Oyeyomon, 2023). It encompasses the set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions a consumer holds about

a brand. Udo and Akpan (2024) opine that brand image is the impression of the brand a customer develops in his mind over some time. It is simply an impression or an imprint of the brand developed over some time in the consumer's mindset. Anand (2025) sees brand image as the image of an organisation that represents the current and immediate re-flection, which the stakeholders have of the organization itself. Brand image constitutes the overall impression formed in the consumer's mind about a brand.

Brand personality: This is the association of human characteristics and traits with a brand to which the customer can relate (Aashish, 2021). It comes into existence when humanlike adjectives such as unique, caring, funny, trustworthy, creative, etc. are assigned to a brand. The concept of brand personality is best understood when a brand is imagined to be a person. The most important aspect of brand personality is that it is imperative in differentiating products in consumers' mind.

Brand identity: Jaja and Ibima (2024) see brand identity as the visible element of a brand, such as colour, logo, design that identify and distinguish the brand in customer minds. To Yadav and Agarwal (2024) brand identity encompasses a distinct set of functional and psychological associations that a brand seeks to establish or uphold.

Brand perception: This, according to Ahmed (2024) is the way consumers view and evaluate a brand based on its attributes, reputation, and emotional appeal. Strong brand perception often leads to customer trust and loyalty, influencing purchase decisions. Abioro and Odunlami (2021) see brand perception as the way consumer interprets a brand built on sensory information obtained during interactions with it. In simpler terms, it is the way consumers feel, think, and react to a brand based on their personal experiences with it, which can be positive, negative or neutral.

Brand association: Eboh and Edeme, (2024) submit that brand association is everything relatable in the consumer's mind regarding certain brand. Brand association shows a brand's image of a certain impression in relation to conventions, lifestyles, benefits, product qualities, region, prices, competitors, celebrities, and so on (Aaker, 2010). Oduwa and Oseyomo (2023) see brand associations the mental connections and attributes that consumers link to a brand, including emotional, functional, or symbolic meanings.

Brand Loyalty: This is considered by scholars as another dimension of brand equity. The whole essence of brand management is to enhance consumers' knowledge about the brand in order to influence their buying behaviour so as to bring about purchase repurchase behaviour and brand loyalty. This is the process of the consumer sticking to a specific brand over other competing brands.

The knowledge about a brand significantly influences consumers' patronage. Okpe and Odimara (2025) define customer patronage as the approval or support provided by customers with respect to a particular brand which delivers the foundation for an established and growing market share. Consumers knowledge about brands is believed to influence their patronage of products and services.

Consumers' Purchase Decision Making

Consumers' buying behaviour is believed to be guided in stages. However, this does not mean a before purchase decision is made consumers must pass through all these stage.

This is most noticeable in highly involved products. Kaviya (2022) identified the following five stages of the buying decision making:

Need Recognition: The first state is termed problem recognition. Yadav and Agarwal (2024) refer to it as problem recognition. This implies that the problem recognised here is the need for a product of service which is not available or within the reach of the consumer at that moment. The process begins when the buyer identifies a problem or need through internal or external stimuli. **Information Search:** This is the stage where the consumers search for information about product that could satisfy the identified need (Ahmed & Abdulkareem 2022). Once customers recognise a desire to make a purchase, they begin searching for information about products that could satisfy the identify need.

Evaluation of Alternatives: During this stage, consumers compare different products and brands to make a

decision. They focus on qualities that best meet their needs, often considering factors like price and quality (Blackwell et al., 2011). Babu et al (2025) hold that the evaluation stage is a critical stage in the process of buying.

Purchase Decision: In this phase, consumers prioritize their preferred brands within their set of needs. They may opt to purchase from different brands based on their preferences. Outcome of the evaluation develops likes and dislikes about alternative products or brands in consumers.

Post-purchase Evaluation: After making a purchase, consumers may reflect on their decision and consider if they could have chosen differently. This evaluation may influence future buying behaviour. Babu et al (2025) stressed that post-purchase behavior of consumer is more important as far as marketer is concerned. Consumer gets brand preference only when that brand lives up to their expectation. This brand preference naturally repeats sales of marketer. A satisfied buyer is a silent advertisement. Business organisations strive to support the decision making at each of these stages in order to win consumers' patronage.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Ajayi (2024) examined the determinants of brand preference among young consumers in Ekiti State and Lagos state. The overall objective of the study was to find out those factors that determine consumers' patronage of mobile phones in the two selected states. With a sample size of 382 drawn from the population the study, data were gathered and presented in frequency tables. With the use of simple regression analysis, the results showed that brand popularity has a positive relationship with mobile phone brand preference in Ekiti State and Lagos State.

In another study Balaji et al (2025) explored consumer perception and satisfaction regarding the iPhone, analysing factors such as price sensitivity, after-sales service, brand prestige, and design and found significant associations between gender and perceptions of iPhone pricing, after-sales service, and its status-symbol effect. The research also highlighted the critical role of brand image and design in consumer satisfaction.

Ghimire and Karki (2022) examined brand loyalty among mobile users. The study explored factors that influence brand loyalty among young mobile phone users and found that perceived brand quality, customer satisfaction, brand image, brand experience, and found that social media marketing have significant positive connections with brand loyalty. Regression analysis, on the other hand, showed that only perceived brand quality, customer satisfaction, and brand experience have a significant impact on brand loyalty.

Soviyanti and Nofrizal. (2024) in their study examined factors influencing brand love and willingness to pay among iPhone consumers in Indonesia and found that positive factors driving iPhone customers' brand love come from perceived quality, social status, and self-expression. Meanwhile, the factors driving willingness to pay are brand love, perceived quality, social status, and self-expression. However, hedonism does not have a positive impact on brand love and willingness to pay. The research results suggest that the hedonic experience of the product may not be the main factor influencing consumers in the context of premium products such as the iPhone.

Attih (2021) determined the relationship between brand equity and buying behaviour of smartphones among students of the Department of Marketing, Akwa State University, Nigeria, and found significant positive relationship between brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty and buying behaviour of smartphones among students of the Department of Marketing, Akwa Ibom State University.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Brand Awareness and Loyalty Theory, and the Uses and Gratifications Theory.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was introduced by Fred D. Davis in 1986, is an adaptation of TRA that

was made specifically for modelling user acceptance of information systems (Siregar, 2020). According to Davis (1989), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains that the sustenance of any technology in the market depends on consumers' acceptance of such technology. Davis (1989) identified basic construct of the TAM which include Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Attitude, Intention, and Actual Use, and, the connections between external variables and the fundamental initial constructs. The model posits that brand-related factors such as brand image, awareness, and perceived quality influence perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which in turn shape students' attitudes, behavioural intentions, and ultimately their patronage behaviour. The application of this model will help in ascertaining if the acceptance of iPhone by consumers in tertiary institutions in Cross River State as reflected in their purchase-repurchase behaviour, brand choice and preference, and overall brand loyalty is influenced by Perceived Usefulness (PU) Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) of iPhone. Although the model is relevant to this study because it expounds on why consumers accept or reject new and innovative technologies it has some weakness or shortcomings that lies beneath. The simplicity of TAM and the lack of understanding of the antecedents of technology acceptance (perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use) were the subject of criticism in prior research. This is the point where the Brand Awareness and Loyalty Theory is brought in to examine those brand activities that are carried in order to engage consumers with a product to influence their buying behaviour toward such product.

Brand Awareness and Loyalty Theory

The Brand Awareness and Loyalty Theory was developed by Yoesoep Edhie Rachmad in 2016 and published in his 2023 book "Sunshine Coast Beach Book Publishing, Special Edition." The theory examines the interconnected dynamics between brand awareness and consumer loyalty, highlighting strategies for enhancing both to achieve long-term business success. The Brand Awareness and Loyalty Theory posits that effective brand management must seamlessly integrate strategies for enhancing both awareness and loyalty. Brand awareness is the degree to which consumers are familiar with the qualities or image of a particular brand's goods or services. It serves as the foundation for developing brand loyalty. The application of the theory in the study helped explain how consumers' awareness of the features of iPhone leads to patronage and brand loyalty.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) developed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch in 1973 posits that media users are active participants who select media and technologies to satisfy specific needs and desires. It sees media users as active consumers who select media to satisfy specific needs (Ogbuoshi 2020). The basic tenets of the theory according to Walia (2025) are that, the audience is active and goal-oriented in seeking media.; media use is driven by social and psychological needs; individuals choose media that best satisfy these needs; media compete with other sources of need-gratification; and audiences can articulate their motivations behind consumption. The application of UGT in this study helped in explaining certain needs that students choose iPhone brand to satisfy. It focused on driven needs such as peer recognition, prestige, or belonging and how they influence consumers' choice of iPhone brand. It will also captured Hedonic and Emotional Gratifications whereby iPhone use is tied to self-expression, gaming, photography, and social media engagement. The Uses and Gratifications Theory explained why these gratifications lead to patronage and loyalty to the iPhone brand.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Survey research design was used for the study because it enabled the gathering of primary data from a sample respondents of 384 iPhone users across three tertiary institutions - one from each of the three senatorial districts - randomly selected through balloting.

Area of the Study

The area of study therefore, is Cross River State. Cross River State has several tertiary institutions. However, three of the institutions selected for the study were University of Calabar, University of Cross River State, and Steady Flow College of Education Ikom. The study ascertained how students' patronage of iPhone in these institutions is influenced by the management of the brand.

Population of the Study

The general population of the study comprised of the whole students of the three sampled tertiary institutions in Cross River State. University of Calabar (UNICAL) has total population of 40,645 students; University of Cross River has population of 18,915 students; while the population of Steady Flow College of Education was estimated to be 3,579. The total population as such was put at 63139. The target population however, was specifically, iPhone users in these institution.

Sample/Sample Size

A representative sample of 384 was used for the study. The sample size was drawn using Cochran's formula. The formula was considered because the total number of iPhone users in these institutions was not documented that the researcher could lay hands on. The Cochran's formula is as follows:

$$n_0 = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

- n_0 = required sample size
- z = z-value (standard normal deviation at desired confidence level)
- p = estimate proportion of the population with the attribute
- $q = 1-p$
- e = margin of error (level of precision)

Substitute into the formula:

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot (0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n_0 = \frac{3.8416 \cdot 0.25}{0.0025}$$

$$n_0 = 384.16$$

$$n_0 \approx 384$$

Sampling Technique

Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for the study. First, Cross River State was clustered into three senatorial districts. A tertiary institution was randomly selected in each senatorial district. Two departments were selected in each tertiary institution using purposive sampling. Convenient sampling was finally introduced to reach out to iPhone users in each of the selected departments.

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was designed and used for data collection. The questionnaire contained 20 items on it set in line with the four-points amended Likert Scale format. Each item had four options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) which respondents ticked from.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument for data collection was face-validated by two research experts. The recommendations made by the research experts to ensure clarity and alignment of the items on the instrument with the objectives of the study were addressed. The reliability was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha as follows:

S/N	Variables	N0 of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Decision
1	Brand Management Strategies	12	0.86	Reliable
2	Factors Influencing Brand Patronage	5	0.81	Reliable
3	Brand Knowledge	5	0.84	Reliable
4	Brand Attributes	5	0.83	Reliable
5	Consumers' Patronage	6	0.88	Reliable
	Overall Reliability	33	0.85	Reliable

Source: Researcher's Pilot Survey, 2026.

The table shows that the questionnaire produced Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.81 to 0.88, with the overall reliability coefficient of 0.85 which was above the acceptable benchmark of 0.70. The instrument as such demonstrated a high level of internal consistency. This means that the items on the questionnaire consistently measured the variables of the study, namely brand management and consumers' patronage of iPhone. Consequently, the instrument was considered sufficiently reliable and suitable for administration to the respondents in the main study.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

A total of 384 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents who were users of iPhone in the selected departments of the sampled tertiary institutions in Cross River State. However, nine copies of the questionnaire were not returned while six copies were found with errors that rendered them unsuitable for the study and the analysis. The analysis below therefore, is based on the 369 copies that were found without errors. Data gathered were presented in frequency tables and analysed using frequency counts and weighted mean. The rating scale for the result is presented below:

Decision Rating Scales

Scaling	Level of Agreements
0.00 – 1.49	Strongly Disagreed
1.50 – 2.49	Disagreed
2.50 – 3.49	Agreed
3.50 – 4	Strongly Agreed

Source: Researcher, 2026.

Data Presentation

Three hundred and eighty-four copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents and 369 returned copies were found without error and were used for the analysis. The data gathered were presented in frequency tables and analysed with the use of simple percentage and frequency counts and weighted mean statistics. Table one to table 4 bear respondents' bio-data.

Table 1: Respondents' gender

Sex	Frequency (r)	Percentage (%)
Male	179	48.5%
Female	190	51.5%
Total	369	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2026.

Table 1 on gender of respondents shows that 48.5% of the respondents were male students who use iPhone while the remaining 51.5% were female students who use iPhone.

Table 2: Age of respondents

Age Range	Frequency (r)	Percentage (%)
16 – 20 Years	70	18.9%
21 – 25 Years	110	29.8%
26 – 30 Years	101	27.4%
31 Years and above	88	23.8%
Total	369	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2026.

Table 2 shows that 18.9% of the respondents fell within the age range of 16 and 20 years; 29.8% were between the age of 21 and 25 years; 27.4% were within the age range of 26 and 30 while the remaining 23.8% fell between the age range of 31 and above.

Table 3: Respondents' Institution Affiliate

Name of Institution	Frequency (r)	Percentage (%)
University of Calabar (UNICAL)	235	63.7%
University of Cross River State (UNICROSS)	113	30.7%
Steady Flow College of Education Ikom	21	5.6%
Total	369	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2026.

Based on the proportionate distribution that was used in allocating the 384 copies of the questionnaire, the return rate according to respondents' institution affiliate shows that 63.7% of the respondents were students of UNICAL; 30.7% were students of UNICROSS, while the remaining 5.6% were students Steady Flow College of Education Ikom.

Table 4: Respondents' Level of Study

Level of Study	Frequency (r)	Percentage (%)
100 Level	60	16.3%
200 Level	81	21.9%
300 Level	94	25.5%
400 Level	79	21.4%
Others	55	14.9%
Total	369	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2026.

Table 4 which was on respondents' level of study shows that 16.3% of them were in 100 level; 21.9% were in 200 level; 25.5% were in 300 level; 21.5% were 400 level students; and the remaining 14.9% were in order levels.

Table 5: Brand management strategies and consumers' patronage of iPhone

S/N	Items on brand management strategies and consumers' patronage of iPhone	SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\sum fx$	X	Decision
1	Consistent visual branding strategy influences my decision to purchase an iPhone	219	132	11	7	369	1301	3.52	Strongly Agreed

2	Promotional activities and advertisements of iPhone increase my willingness to patronize the product	233	116	11	9	369	1311	3.55	Strongly Agreed
3	Constant updates on innovations of iPhone products encourage my continued patronage of the brand	227	123	13	6	369	1309	3.54	Strongly Agreed
4	The communication of iPhone through social media influence my patronage	231	121	10	7	369	1314	3.56	Strongly Agreed
5	The premium pricing strategy of iPhone enhances my perception of its value and influences my patronage	218	127	14	10	369	1291	3.49	Agreed
Total	Grand Mean							3.532	
	Decision Rule								Strongly Agreed

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

In Table 5 above, respondents strong agreed with items one to four. This is as a result of the 3.52, 2.55, 3.54, and 3.56 mean score obtained against these items. The mean score of 3.49 shows that respondents also agreed with item five. This result indicates that different brand management strategies such as consistent visual branding, promotional activities and advertising, constant updates on innovations of iPhone product, social media communication of the brand, and the premium pricing strategy has significant influence on consumers' patronage of iPhone.

Table 6: Factors that influence consumers' patronage

S/N	Items on factors influencing consumers' patronage of the iPhone brand	SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\sum fx$	X	Decision
6	Brand awareness and brand trust significantly influence my patronage of iPhone	225	123	12	9	369	1302	3.52	Strongly Agreed
7	The quality and price of iPhone influence my patronage of the iPhone	230	118	14	7	369	1309	3.54	Strongly Agreed
8	iPhone's strong brand image significantly influence my patronage	231	119	11	8	369	1314	3.56	Strongly Agreed
9	Brand experience, satisfaction, and continuous innovation influence my patronage of iPhone	239	111	12	7	369	1320	3.57	Strongly Agreed
10	Social influence, self-expression, and hedonism, influence my patronage of iPhone	240	109	14	6	369	1321	3.58	Strongly Agreed
Total	Grand Mean							3.554	
	Decision Rule								Strongly Agreed

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Data in Table 6 above show that respondents strongly agreed with items six to ten. The weighted mean score of 3.52, 3.54, 3.56, 3.57, and 3.58 in the table confirmed the strong degree of their responses. This implies that different factors such as brand awareness and trust, quality and price of iPhone, strong brand image, brand

experience and satisfaction, social influence, self-expression and hedonism are among the factors that influence consumers' patronage of iPhone.

Table 7: Brand knowledge and consumers' purchase decision making

S/N	Brand knowledge and consumers' purchase decision making toward iPhone	SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\sum fx$	X	Decision
11	knowledge of iPhone features positively influences my purchase decision making	232	114	15	8	369	1308	3.54	Strongly Agreed
12	Information I have about iPhone quality positively influences my buying decision of the iPhone	229	120	13	7	369	1309	3.54	Strongly Agreed
13	Brand association positively influences my buying behaviour toward iPhone	226	124	11	8	369	1308	3.54	Strongly Agreed
14	Knowledge of strong brand identity influences my patronage of iPhone	237	114	12	6	369	1320	3.57	Strongly Agreed
15	knowledge of brand image influence my patronage of iPhone	234	115	15	5	369	1316	3.56	Strongly Agreed
Total	Grand Mean							3.55	
	Decision Rule								Strongly Agreed

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

The above data in Table 7 clearly show that respondents strongly agreed with items eleven to fifteen which bordered on influence of brand knowledge on consumers' purchase decision making toward iPhone. The mean scores of 3.54, 3.54, 3.54, 3.57, and 3.56 presented in the table affirmed their responses. This means that brand knowledge of iPhone features, quality, brand identity, and brand image, exert significant influence on consumers' purchase decision making of iPhone.

Table 8: Brand Attributes and Consumers' Loyalty

S/N	Items on brand attributes and consumers' loyalty to iPhone brand	SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\sum fx$	X	Decision
16	Exceptional camera quality of iPhone influences my loyalty to the brand	234	113	14	8	369	1308	3.54	Strongly Agreed
17	Durability of iPhone drives my loyalty to the brand	230	121	11	7	369	1312	3.55	Strongly Agreed
18	Fast internet connectivity influences my loyalty to iPhone	238	111	14	6	369	1319	3.57	Strongly Agreed
19	iPhone aesthetic design influences my continued loyalty to the brand	228	120	13	8	369	1306	3.53	Strongly Agreed
20	iOS security influences my loyalty iPhone brand	240	110	12	7	369	1321	3.57	Strongly Agreed
Total	Grand Mean							3.552	
	Decision Rule								Strongly Agreed

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Table 8 shows that respondents strongly agreed that brand attributes such as iPhone's exceptional camera quality (3.54), durability (3.55), fast internet connectivity (3.57), aesthetic design (3.53), and iOS security (3.57) exert significant influence on their loyalty to the brand.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question 1: What are iPhone brand management strategies that influence consumers' patronage among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?

The findings in Table 5 reveal a grand mean of 3.53, indicating strong agreement that brand management strategies influence consumers' patronage of iPhone. The highest mean score of 3.56 was recorded for communication of iPhone through social media, while premium pricing had the lowest mean of 3.49, though still indicating agreement. This suggests that consistent visual branding, promotional activities, product innovation, social media communication and premium pricing collectively strengthen consumers' willingness to patronize iPhone. This means that there is a direct link between brand management strategies and consumers' patronage of products. The findings are in line with the findings of Savitha et al (2026) in "a study on brand loyalty towards Apple iPhone" found that Apple's consistent product performance, strong emotional brand connection, and seamless user experience significantly enhance consumers' loyalty, even in the presence of premium pricing. Similarly, Aondowase et al (2025) found that advertisements significantly enhance brand loyalty by fostering emotional connections and encouraging repeat purchases, particularly through frequent and appealing exposure. Also, advertisements strongly shape brand preference, with attractive and consistent campaigns making unfamiliar brands more desirable and influencing perceptions of quality. Onovughakpo and Bayai (2022) found that corporate branding influences mobile subscribers' patronage and loyalty in the Nigeria mobile communication industry.

The finding supports the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which explains that consumers' acceptance of a technology is influenced by their perception of its usefulness and value. It also relates to Brand Awareness and Loyalty Theory, as repeated branding and communication increase brand recognition and encourage continued patronage. From the perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory, consumers actively use social media and advertising information to satisfy needs such as information seeking, product evaluation and self-expression, which can subsequently influence their patronage of iPhone.

Research Question 2: What are the factors that influence consumers' patronage of the iPhone brand among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?

Data gathered on factors influencing consumers' patronage of iPhone brand were presented in Table 6 that covered item six to item ten. The results show that different factors influence consumers' patronage of iPhone. The grand mean score of 3.55 shows that respondents strongly agreed that brand awareness and trust, quality and price, brand image, brand experience, satisfaction, innovation, social influence, self-expression and hedonism influence their patronage of iPhone. The highest mean score of 3.58 was recorded for social influence, self-expression and hedonism, while brand awareness and trust recorded 3.52. The finding indicates that consumers' patronage is influenced by both the functional qualities of iPhone and consumers' psychological and social needs.

The above finding relates to the findings of Devaram and Vidhya (2025) who found that brand image, product quality, and performance are the major factors influencing consumer perception and purchase decisions. They also found that although the price of Apple iPhone is perceived as high, consumers associate it with superior quality and status value. Soviyanti and Nofrizal. (2024) found that positive factors driving iPhone customers' brand love come from perceived quality, social status, and self-expression. Meanwhile, the factors driving willingness to pay are brand love, perceived quality, social status, and self-expression. Bakalo and Amantie (2023) found that both brand awareness and perceived quality positively influence consumers' purchase intentions in the Ethiopian mobile phone market. Similarly, Kukreti and Yadav (2023) demonstrated that brand personality has a significant impact on perceived quality, which in turn affects purchase intentions on e-retailing sites.

The finding is in consistent with TAM because product quality and reputation contribute to users' perceptions of usefulness and performance. When users believe that the iPhone performs efficiently and meets their expectations, they are more likely to adopt and continue using it and this agrees with the basic constructs of

TAM that consumers' patronage of technology is significantly influenced by Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use.

The finding also confirms the basic premise of the Brand Awareness and Loyalty Theory because consumers' patronage of iPhone was said to be influenced by brand awareness and other factors such as product quality, brand reputation, brand trust, price, brand image, etc. Consumers' awareness of these factors strengthen brand equity, patronage and loyalty to a brand. Consumers tend to remain loyal to brands that consistently deliver quality and maintain a positive image. The finding aligns with Uses and Gratifications Theory because consumers derive several gratifications from using iPhones, including social prestige, self-expression, entertainment, and interpersonal communication. These satisfactions motivate consumers' continued patronage iPhone brand. It therefore, means that consumers' perceived usefulness and ease of use and their knowledge of brand attributes with the desire to gratify certain need influence their patronage of specific brands of technology including the iPhone brand.

Research Question 3: How does brand knowledge influence consumers' purchase decision making of iPhone among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?

The question sought to find out how consumers' knowledge about iPhone influence their purchase decision making. Data gathered and presented in Table 7 bearing items 11 to item 15 indicate strong positive influential correlation between brand knowledge and consumers' purchase decision making toward iPhone. It was gathered from the respondents that the knowledge they have about the features of iPhone such as its quality, strong brand identity and brand image positively influence their purchase decision making. This clearly shows that consumers go for the brand of product they have knowledge about. Invariably, this points to the fact that consumers' knowledge about a brand positively influences their purchase decision making, thereby, justifying the efforts of brand owners that focused on educating or feeding consumers with enough information about their brand.

The findings are consistent with the finding in a study by Adeyeri and Adedoyin (2019) that brand management activities which also include marketing activities tend to educate and give consumers information about brand which invariably make them knowledgeable about such brand. Such knowledge referred to as brand equity in the study, subsequently influences consumers' purchase decision making. Similarly, Attih (2021) found significant positive relationship between brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty and buying behaviour of smartphones as this knowledge was found to wield significant influence on the purchase decision making among students of the Department of Marketing, Akwa Ibom State University. Oyenuga et al (2021) equally found that consumers with the knowledge on smartphone are better able to evaluate the benefits and unique features associated with the iPhone brand before making purchase decisions.

The above findings support the Technology Acceptance Model which establishes that information about a technology's usefulness and capabilities can influence acceptance and behavioural intention. It also agrees with the premise of the Brand Awareness and Loyalty Theory that consumers' knowledge of a brand's features, identity and image increases familiarity and subsequently strengthen their preference and loyalty to a brand. This equally strengthens the perspective of the Uses and Gratifications Theory which holds that consumers seek and use information about iPhone to satisfy their need for knowledge and this significantly influence their purchase decision making.

Research Question 4: What attributes of the iPhone brand influence consumers' loyalty among users in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?

Question four sought to find out attributes of the iPhone that influence consumers' loyalty to the brand. Table 8 shows a grand mean of 3.60, indicating that consumers strongly agreed that brand attributes such as iPhone's exceptional camera quality (3.54), durability (3.55), fast internet connectivity (3.57), aesthetic design (3.53), and iOS security (3.57) exert significant influence on their loyalty to the brand. The finding that brand attributes influence consumers' loyalty to iPhone is in line with the finding of Ghimire and Karki (2022) who carried out a study on brand loyalty among mobile users and found perceived brand quality, customer satisfaction, brand image, brand experience, and social media marketing all have significant positive connections with brand loyalty. Bankole and Afolabi (2025) on product innovation and consumer brand loyalty of smartphones in Ekiti

State, Nigeria found that brand innovation and compatibility positively affects customer brand loyalty. Valley (2025) in a study on Customer brand loyalty on Apple products: A case of Kathmandu, found that product quality, brand image, innovative and attractive product features etc. significantly enhance consumers' loyalty to the iPhone brand.

The findings reinforce the basic proposition of the Technology Acceptance Model that favourable perceptions of a technology lead to sustained usage and loyalty. Consumers' favourable perception of the attributes of the iPhone brand such as product quality, reliability, innovative features, camera quality, durability, aesthetic design influence consumers' acceptance and loyalty to the iPhone brand. Also, by extension, the findings support the Brand Awareness and Loyalty Theory which holds that consumers' awareness of brands consumers develop loyalty toward brands that possess favourable, distinctive, and memorable attributes. Brand attributes such as prestige, quality, innovation, durability, and brand reputation create positive brand associations in consumers' minds which strengthen brand awareness and also foster emotional attachment, trust, and commitment to the brand. Consequently, students who perceive the iPhone as possessing superior attributes are more likely to remain loyal to the brand despite the availability of competing smartphone brands. The finding therefore validates the theory's assertion that positive brand attributes contribute significantly to customer loyalty.

The findings also give credence to the UGT which suggests that individuals actively choose media and technologies that satisfy their specific needs and desires. The brand attributes of the iPhone, including advanced communication features, entertainment capabilities, social prestige, ease of access to information, and educational applications, provide various gratifications to users. When these needs are consistently satisfied, users develop a preference for and loyalty to the brand. Thus, the finding supports UGT by demonstrating that consumers' loyalty to the iPhone is influenced by the extent to which the brand's attributes gratify their functional, social, and psychological needs.

CONCLUSION

Brand management as a business strategy is essential in enhancing companies' visibility in the market as well as winning consumers' patronage to their products and services. It plays significant role in influencing consumers' patronage of products and services. Brand management strategies such as advertising, promotional activities, social media campaigns, consistent branding, and continuous product innovation wield significantly influence consumers' purchase decisions. Consumers are equally influenced by product quality, price, brand awareness, product design, social influence, innovation, self-expression, etc. into patronising a particular brand and its products and services. These factors as such, serve as driving forces or motivating factors behind consumers' patronage of iPhone. However, to a significant extent, the effectiveness of these factors in successfully influencing consumer patronage of brand lies in the extent to which consumers possess knowledge about the brand. Adequate understanding of product features and benefits enhances informed purchasing decisions. Strong and reputable brand name as such, contributes immensely to consumers' overall satisfaction by creating emotional attachment, confidence, and a sense of prestige among users. Furthermore, brand attributes such as quality, durability, uniqueness, customer satisfaction, and brand trust were found to significantly influence consumers' loyalty to the iPhone brand. Effective brand management therefore, serves as a key determinant of consumers' patronage, satisfaction, purchase decisions, and loyalty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Base on the findings the following recommendations were made:

- i. Smartphone manufacturers and marketers should execute localised experiential campaigns, such as student ambassador programs and educational discounts, to boost engagement with premium products.
- ii. Marketing communications must emphasise durable, high-quality, and innovative features to overcome price objections, build trust, and drive consistent brand patronage among students.
- iii. Companies should work extensively to ensure there is increased consumers awareness by feeding them with enough information about the brand.

- iv. Production companies/brand owners should prioritise product innovation to guarantee consumers' satisfaction at all time. Concerted effort should be made to strengthen consumers trust in order to encourage long-term patronage, retention and loyalty to the iPhone brand.

REFERENCES

1. Aashish, M., & Jain, V. (2021). A review study on the brand image on the customer's perspective. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*, 27(3), 772–778. <https://doi.org/10.47750/cibg.2021.27.03.108>.
2. Abdulkareem, A. M., & Vasani, S. (2022). Consumer buying behaviour (with reference to insurance buying behaviour). Dar Al-Yousif.
3. Abioro, M.A., Odunlami, S.A. (2021). Implication of product branding on customer's patronage in the Nigerian consumer goods industry. *Journal of Business Excellence and Management*, 11(2), 5-18. <https://doi.org/10.24818/beman/2021.11.2-01>.
4. Ahmad, M. A. & Abdulkareem, S. V. B. (2022). Consumer buying behaviour with reference to insurance buying behaviour. Mumbai: Himalaya Publication House.
5. Ahmed, T. (2024). Factors affecting consumer purchase intention for buying an iPhone: A case study on people of Dhaka City.
6. Ajayi, O. M. (2024), Determinant of brand preference among young consumers of mobile phones in Ekiti State and Lagos State, Nigeria. *British Journal of Management and Marketing Studies*, 7(1), 185-195. <https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMMS-GIPBTST4>.
7. Anand, A. (2025). Brand awareness. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 5(3), 1-26.
8. Anyadighibe, J. A., Ezekiel, M. S., Awara, N. F., & Udeymgbado, L. O. (2023). Brand image and customer patronage of petroleum products in Calabar metropolis. *Nigerian Journal of Management Sciences*, 24(1), 342-350.
9. Aondowase, S. F., Mohammad, S. R., & Akase, T. M. (2025). Influence of mobile phones advertisements on brand loyalty and preference among undergraduate students of Nasarawa State University, Keffi. *Nasarawa Journal of Multimedia and Communication Studies*, 7(2), 362 – 381.
10. Ashford, C. C. (2024). Branding: Models, Theories, practice, and marketing implications. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 14(5), 1150-1162. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i5/21481>.
11. Attih, O. B. (2021). Brand equity and buying behaviour of smartphones among students of Department of Marketing, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria. *International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)*, 3, (3), 320-331.
12. Babu, H., Chandrasekar, K., Rajmohan, K., David, M. A., & Manjula, N. (2025). Consumer behaviour. Pondicherry University, Guru Nanak.
13. Bakalo, A., & Amantie, C. (2023). The impact of brand awareness and brand perceived quality towards purchase intention of mobile phone from customers view in Ethiopia. *Journal of Business and Economic Development*, 8(4), 113–120. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.jbed.20230804.12>
14. Bankole, O. A., & Afolabi, J. A. (2025). Product innovation and customer brand loyalty of smartphones in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Multidisciplinary Education*, 4(2), 117–127. <https://doi.org/10.58806/ijirme.2025.v4i2n02>
15. Bolaji, G. V., Balamurugan, M & Archana, U. (2025). A study on consumer perception towards iPhone among college students with special reference to Coimatore City. *International Journal of Novel Research and Development*, 10(1), 723-732.
16. Chen, S. (2024). The impact of brand awareness on purchase intention. *Highlights in Business, Economics and Management*, (30) 239–246. <https://doi.org/10.54097/88gfk880>.
17. Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3), 319–340.
18. Eboh, M. E., & Edeme, N. C. (2024). Impact of brand equity on consumer buying behaviour in the Nigerian Banking Sector. *World Journal of Entrepreneurial Development Studies*, 9(6), 1 – 22. <https://doi.org/10.56201/wjeds.v9.no6.2024.pg1.22>
19. Ehiedu, V. C. (2022). Analysis of micro prudential determinants of capital adequacy in deposit money banks. *International Journal of Management & Entrepreneurship Research*, 4(11), 398-415.

20. Ghimire, M., & Karki, D. (2022). Brand loyalty among mobile users. *NCC Journal*, 7(1), 1-14.
21. Harini, M. S. & Maruthavijayan, S. (2025). The impact of branding on consumer purchasing behaviour: An examination within the fashion industry. *International Journal of Law Management & Humanities* 8(2), 5373-5385. <https://doi.org/10.10000/IJLMH.119587>
22. Hawkins D.I., & Mothersbaugh R. J (2010). *Consumer behaviour: Building marketing strategy*. McGraw-Hill/Irwin.
23. Jaja, P. H. & Ibama, E. L. (2024). Driving customer patronage through brand identity: The experience of Tbale water firm in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. *Wellspring University Journal of Social and Management Sciences*. 4(1), 149-163.
24. Kaviya, S. (2022). A study on the impact of television advertisement on buying behaviour of customers in FMCG products. M.Sc. Thesis submitted to Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology
25. Kumar, B. R. (2025). *Handbook of brand management*. Association of Global Academician and Researchers (AGAR), Publications. Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu, India.
26. Kumar, M. & Aswath, B. (2025). A study on marketing approaches of smart phone with special reference to iPhone. *International Research Journal of Education and Technology*, 8(4), 1424-1428.
27. Mojumder, A. H., (2023). Brand Management: A Comprehensive Review. *ISAR Journal of Economics and Business Management*, 1(2), 17-19.
28. Nyong, S. R., Okon, E. E., & Erikav, G. A. (2025). Effects of advertising on consumers' patronage of peak milk in Calabar Metropolis. *Journal of Communication and Media Insight*, 1(1), 26 – 33.
29. Oduwa, A. & Oseyomo, P. E. (2023). Brand image on consumer buying decisions in retail shops in University of Benin. *UJM*, 4(2), 35 – 55.
30. Okpe, K. T. & Odimara, C. C. (2025). Market factors affecting consumer goods patronage in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. *Global Research Journal of Business Management*, 5(1), 20-36.
31. Olise M. C., Ekeh A. R., Ojiaku O. C. (2023). Sustainable Marketing Practices and Patronage Behavior of iPhone 13 Smart Phone. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* 7(5), 1473-1482. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.70612>
32. Omamuzo, N. G., Ngwube, A. C., & Osanebi, C. O. (2023). Consumer behaviour in the cosmetic industry in Delta State. *International Journal of Novel Research in Marketing Management and Economics* 10(2), 88-96. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8248718>.
33. Onovughakpo, M. A., & Bayai, I. S. (2022). The influence of corporate branding on consumer purchase preference in the Nigeria mobile communication industry. *Journal of Accounting, Marketing and Management Research*, 9(2), 18 – 23.
34. Siregar, H. D. (2020). The analysis of technology acceptance model (TAM) on use behaviour mobile banking to BCA customers, *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 8(2), 46-55. <http://ijecm.co.uk/>
35. Soviyanti, E., & Nofrizal. (2024). The Factors Influencing Brand Love and Willingness to Pay among iPhone Consumers in Indonesia. *Binus Business Review*, 15(3), 271–285. <https://doi.org/10.21512/bbr.v15i3.10945>
36. Suman, S., & Mansi, K. (2014). Impact of branding strategies on consumer buying behaviour in FMCD Industry. *Journal of Business and Management* 16(1), 126 – 135.
37. Swapna, K. S. & Nathi, H. (2025). The impact of branding and advertising on consumers buying behaviour in the FMCG sector. *International Journal on Science and Technology*, 16(3), 1-6. Website: www.ijstat.org.
38. Udo, R. A., Akpan, S. J., & Imoh, C. U. (2024). Product branding and customer patronage of champion breweries Plc.'s products, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *AKSU Journal of Administration and Corporate Governance*, 4(2), 208-220. <https://doi.org/10.61090/aksujacog.2024.030>.
39. Vivek, K. (2025). Branding strategies and their implementation on buying behaviour: A conceptual review. *EPRA International Journal of Environment Economic, Commerce, and Educational Managemnt*, 12(4), 67 – 70. <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra0414|ISIL.FValue:0.815|SJIF>
40. Yadav, S. & Agarwal, N. (2024). Effects of branding on consumer buying behaviour. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 11(6), 521-530.
41. Yakup, D., & Hatice, V. Y. (2016). Brand and branding strategies. *International Business Research*, 9(5), 48 – 56. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v9n5p48>