



KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
MBA DISCIPLINE AREA

## FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PURCHASE INTENTION OF SMARTPHONE BUYERS

SHUAIB NOUH MOHAMOUD

SUPERVISOR: ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, PINAR IMER

MASTER'S THESIS

ISTANBUL, JUNE, 2017

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PURCHASE INTENTION OF  
SMARTPHONE BUYERS



SHUAIB NOUH MOHAMOUD

Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Science in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Business Administration  
In  
Management

KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY  
2017

I, Shuaib Nouh Mohamoud;

Hereby declare that this Master's Thesis is my own original work and that due references have been appropriately provided on all supporting literature and resources.



SHUAIB NOUH MOHAMOUD


DATE: 01/06/2017

SIGNATURE: 

## ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This work entitled **Factors that influence the purchase intention of smartphone buyers** prepared by Shuaib Nouh Mohamoud has been judged to be successful at the defense exam held on 01/06/2017 and accepted by our jury as Master's degree thesis..

### APPROVED BY:

Assistant Professor, Dr. Pinar Imer (Advisor)	Kadir Has University	
Assitant Professor, Dr. Elif Ekben Selçuk	Kadir Has University	
Assıstant Professor, Dr. Renın Varnalı	Bahçeşehir University	

I certify that the above signatures belong to the faculty members named above.

### DATE OF APPROVAL:

01/06/2017

## ABSTRACT

Mohamoud, Shuaib Nouh. **The impact of susceptibility to interpersonal influence and brand image on purchase intention of smartphone buyers.**

MASTER'S THESIS, Istanbul, 2017.

This study investigated the impact of susceptibility to interpersonal influence and brand image on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers. It explored the actual relationship between these variables. To get information about what prior research had written about it, the study deeply went through the literature review.

Based on the literature, the susceptibility to interpersonal influence consists three types of influences which are: informational influence, utilitarian and value expressive interpersonal influence. The utilitarian and value expressive interpersonal influences are called normative influence as Bearden, (1989) stated in his research.

The empirical part of this study tried to find out the relationship between susceptibility to interpersonal influence and purchase intention as well as the effect of brand image on purchase intention. The study collected information from 150 students at one university. The returned questionnaire response rate was 100%. The questionnaire used as a data collection instrument was adapted from prior research. Based on the result of linear regression analysis, the susceptibility to interpersonal influence does not have a significant effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers. While the study found out that brand image has a significant effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers.

The findings of this paper will be useful for marketing managers of Smartphone companies to take into account the important role of brand image in consumers' purchase intention.

**Keywords:** susceptibility, informational influence, normative influence, brand image, purchase intention.

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my gratitude to anyone who helped me conduct this valuable research which became one of the greatest accomplishments in my life.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Pinar Imer, who provided me remarkable advice and inspiration throughout the thesis period. I thank her for her systematic guidance and support she gave me to train me in the field of research.

Secondly, I am very grateful to TÜBİTAK for their generous financial support they granted me for the whole period of my Master's degree program.

I would like also to thank Dr. Ezgi Merdin, who provided me her precious time for guiding me in some parts of my thesis.

Finally, I extend my profound gratitude to my family, classmates and friends for their motivation and love which kept me energetic and active throughout the time.

## Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Problem statement .....	2
1.2 Objectives of the study .....	3
1.3 Research question .....	3
1.4 Importance of the study .....	3
1.5 Thesis structure .....	4
<b>2. Literature review</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 Smartphone .....	5
2.2 Purchase intention .....	7
2.3 consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence .....	9
2.3.1 Normative influence .....	10
2.3.1.1 Utilitarian influence .....	11
2.3.1.2 Value expressive influence .....	12
2.3.2 Informational influence .....	13
2.4 Brand image .....	15
2.5 Hypotheses Development .....	18
<b>3. Methodology</b> .....	<b>21</b>
3.1 Variables and Measures .....	21
3.2 Sample and Procedure .....	26
<b>4. Analysis and Results</b> .....	<b>27</b>
4.1 Testing of hypotheses .....	30
<b>5. Conclusions</b> .....	<b>34</b>
5.1 Suggestions for further research and limitations of the study .....	37
References .....	38
Appendix A: Questionnaire items (English) .....	42
Appendix B: Translated questionnaire (Turkish) .....	46

**List of tables**

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables ..... 28  
Table 2. Pearson Correlations between the Study Variables ..... 29  
Table 3. Linear regression results..... 33

**List of figures**

Figure 1. Model of the study. .... 9

**List of Abbreviations**

SII      Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Smartphone companies encounter fierce competition in the market over the last years. There are many firms in the industry competing with one another with different strategies to grasp more market share. Despite innovating their products, some companies engage in advertisement endeavors to influence the purchase decisions of consumers. As prior research investigated, the individual's susceptibility to interpersonal influence might determine the purchase intention of the individual (Bearden et al., 1989; Lascu and Zinkhan, 1999).

Consumers are highly affected by their internal drive to create a favorable social image from the outcome of their purchasing behavior (Hume, 2010; Leigh & Gabel, 1992; Shukla, 2010). Therefore, it can be speculated that such consumers may be influenced by normative and informational influences. Conducting research on interpersonal influence in regular consumption has received considerable attention (Bearden et al., 1989; Kropp, Lavack, & Silvera, 2005; Murali et al., 2005).

There are several studies in the literature, most of which examined the dimensions of brand such as brand associations, brand equity and brand awareness (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Yasin et al., 2007). Previous studies did not examine the brand image along with susceptibility to interpersonal influence and their effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers. In this study, both susceptibility to interpersonal influence and brand image effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers were investigated. So, this study distanced itself from prior studies by focusing on both brand image and susceptibility to interpersonal influence and their impact on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers.

## **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Every company is involved in promotional activities. The major strategy that Smartphone companies use to attract their consumers is engaging into relatively costly advertisements. However, such adverts sometimes do not attract a greater number of buyers to any companies. As M. Phil Scholar (2015) suggested present era consumers depend much on brands and tend to develop their personality according to the brands. Similarly, brand image is also considered as opinion and individual confidence in the quality of products produced by organizations and organizational honesty in the products offered to consumers (Aaker, 1997; Cannon, Perreault, & McCarthy, 2009). Successful branding can make consumers aware about the brand and hence increases their purchase intention, which in turn increases the chances of profitability for the organization (Doyle, 1999). Thus, this study investigated the possible relationship between brand image and purchase intention of Smartphone buyers.

Moreover, prior studies have suggested that consumers use luxury consumption as a means to impress significant others (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Tsai, 2005). The issue of interpersonal influence on regular consumption has received considerable attention (Bearden et al., 1989; Kropp, Lavack, & Silvera, 2005; Murali et al., 2005). This paper also examined the impact that susceptibility to interpersonal influence (SII) has on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers and explore how it determines the purchase intention of Smartphone buyers.

The main problem which is investigated and tried to solve in this thesis is “what is the impact of interpersonal influence and brand image on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers, so that smartphone companies are able to attract more potential consumers?”

## **1.2 Importance of the study**

Influencing the purchase intention of consumers became every company's obsession to sell its products. Thus, to ease Smartphone companies in attracting potential consumers, this study tried to detect the impact of brand image and SII might have on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers. The conclusion and recommendation of this study would contribute to marketing policies and plans of these companies.

## **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Study SII and its relation to purchase intention in Smartphone buyers.
2. Study brand image and its relation to purchase intention.
3. Determine how brand image and interpersonal influences simultaneously contribute to

purchase intention in Smartphone buyers.

### **Research question**

- To what extent susceptibility to interpersonal influence and brand image affect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers?

## **1.4 Scope of the study**

The purchase intention of the consumers can be affected by many factors such as personality traits (McGuire 1968), but this study was only focusing on the effect of susceptibility to interpersonal influence and brand image on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers, for the

aim to contribute to marketing plans of Smartphone companies with the help of the result of this study.

### **1.5 Thesis structure**

This paper consists of five chapters; each chapter has its importance to the completion of the goal of the paper.

Chapter 1 describes the background of the study along with the statement of the problem, including objectives and research question of the study as well as the significance and the scope of the study.

Chapter 2 deals with the definition of the variables and discusses the previous research. In this chapter, the study develops hypotheses based on the literature review.

Chapter 3 covers the methodology of the research explaining how research design and the sample of the research are chosen. It also covers the correlation and regression analysis that the study used along with other relevant information about a data collection method.

Chapter 4 discusses the findings of correlation and linear regression analysis. It shows the tables of the analysis as well as the interpretations of the graphs and their meaning. This chapter also reveals the normality tests of the variables both the independent and dependent variables.

Chapter 5 focuses on the discussion of the findings, recommendations and conclusion along with the limitation of the study and suggestion for further research.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **1. Smartphone**

As Falaki, et al. (2010) stated, Smartphone is a combination of a feature cellular phone and a PDA. Normally, the way that can distinguish Smartphone from a basic cellular phone is the fact that it has an operating system which all cellular phones do not employ. Moreover, the Smartphone has the capacity to allow other applications to be installed on it as Kirk (2011) stated.

The Smartphone has a capability which made it possible to run many internet based services such as streaming video, Geo location, e-mail, and social networking to provide a great user experience to its consumers (Kenny & Pon, 2011). Comparing to basic cellular phones, it has tremendous features which allowed it to outsmart previous handheld devices (Chow *et al.*, 2012).

The introduction of the mobile operating systems and powerful internet communications paved the way to the emergence of Smartphone which offers huge services to its users. The tech companies that always think to get a larger market share for their products pioneered the development of this type of device, which impressively attracted the attention of basic phone users. The turning point was the introduction of mobile operating systems such as Android, Apple iOS, Nokia Symbian/Meego, Blackberry's Research in Motion, and Windows Mobile, amongst others that allowed these devices to run third party applications.

The mobile operating system makes possible for the device to offer needed services such as navigation, social networking, internet, enhanced user interaction via touch capabilities, editing, quality camera, high-end gaming and office software's such as PowerPoint, Excel and Word along with cloud storage and high-end computing (Pike, 2011).

Advanced innovations and technologies, including touch capabilities and nanotechnology have helped Smartphone to serve its users at, almost like PC services regardless of its smaller size compared to the PC (Pike, 2011). Regardless the existing technologies present in the market, producers are still forced by their fierce competition to produce even more sophisticated devices; hence the evolution of the Smartphone is ongoing.

The users of Smartphone are quite large in every society living in this era. These members range from young age individuals all the way to older adults, who find it served their daily needs. Obviously, the people who used to use basic mobile phones before the emergence of Smartphone switched their use to the Smartphone. So, the users of this device are increasing at an alarming rate as stated by WDSGlobal (2010). By the end of 2011, Smartphone had taken over the number of feature phones in terms of sales per unit. Glasscock and Wogalter (2006) mentioned in their study that there is an increased focus by mobile producers to market Smartphone for adults and children, which suggests that there are increasingly diversified user groups in terms of age of these devices.

The Smartphone users have increased considerably since the device entered into the market in 2007. As Karja *et al.* (2005) stated, the purposes that users buy Smartphone are different compared to basic mobile phones in terms of use. Communication is only a part of its function, but there are other myriad needs that it satisfies. Therefore, the expansion of user groups is growing at a fast rate.

The brands of Smartphone producers are increasing nowadays. And there are a number of new entrants in the Smartphone industry. Companies start to go into this industry when they have seen its profitability and the huge demand for the device. Although the competition is very

tough among the industry rivals, there are many companies which are still surviving in it. Actually, every brand has its own value and privilege attached to its brand and products. However, the mainstream brands in the industry are: Google, Apple, Nokia, Blackberry, Sony Ericsson, Samsung, LG, HTC, Microsoft, Siemens and Motorola. Every provider has its own strategy for releasing its products. These companies normally release a new version of their device in every eight months. Some providers use their own operating systems, while others depend on other operating systems from other companies (Campbell-Kelly, 2015). The availability of effective, well-functioning operating system allows Smartphone providers to focus on product innovations to pull a greater market share from other competitors in the market. However, the popular Smartphone providers with a significant brand presence in the market are Apple and Samsung.

Attributes of Smartphone vary from being tangible to intangible. The tangible characteristics of the device are touch and feel features that users utilize during their use. On the other hand, intangible attributes could be the implicit ones which the user enjoys such as user experience and brand (Reven, 2012). Ruiz and Tomaseti (2004) combined implicit and explicit attributes into three categories: characteristics, benefits and image. The characteristics are the physical properties which can be touched and seen while benefits relate to the outcome and image relates to identification of the user to a group or how they represent their-image. So a consumer's attraction to a device is driven by any combination of explicit and implicit attributes.

## **2.2 Purchase intention**

Purchase intention is the likelihood that a customer will buy a particular product (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000). When there is a higher willingness to purchase a certain product,

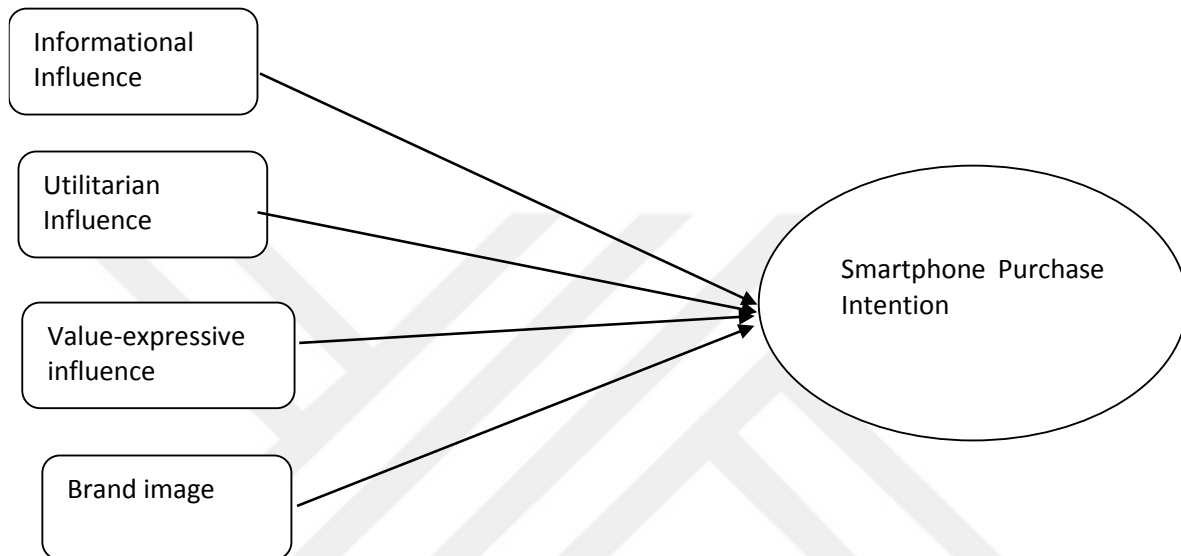
there is a higher probability to buy that product in question, but this does not mean that the individual will actually buy it. In contrast, an individual's lower willingness to buy a certain product does not mean an absolute impossibility that a person will not buy the product (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000). Bagozzi and Burnkrant (1979) defined purchase intention as individual's tendency based on personal behavior to a certain product. Similarly, Spears and Singh (2004) had drawn their own definition in their study of this construct by saying that it is "an individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand". However, purchase intention is determined by a consumer's perceived benefit and value of the product, thus, the more the person perceives that the product has more benefit and value there is more likely to purchase the product (Xua, Summersb, and Bonnie, 2004; Grwal et al., 1998; Dodds et al., 1991; Zeithaml, 1988).

Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1995) outlined a fascinating model of consumer purchase decision making. This model breaks down the consumer purchase decision into five stages: (1) problem recognition, (2) information search, (3) alternative evaluation, (4) purchase decision, and (5) post-purchase behavior.

Minor and Mowen (2001) similarly presented that consumer decision making is a series of processes starting with problems, searching for solutions, evaluating alternatives at hand and then making decisions. Kotler (2003) stated that personal attitudes and unpredictable situations will have a significant impact on purchase intention. Individual attitudes include personal preferences to others and conformity with others' expectations, while unpredictable situations is about the possibility of the consumer to change purchase intention due to other facts such as price changes and the like (Dodds et al., 1991). Consumer purchase intention is termed as a



subjective tendency toward a product and can be a significant indicator to predict consumer behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).



Research model. Fig 1.

### 2.3 Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence

The interpersonal influence on consumption patterns of the communities in the world gained a lot of attention since consumers have significant impact on products markets. Consumer behavior has been researched for many years and many studies have been conducted to unfold the reasons behind consumers' purchasing decisions and what stages they go through before buying a product.

The consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence is a measure of the extent that a consumer is influenced by the behavior of other people regarding his or her choices of consumption decisions (Kropp et al., 2005). There are cultural differences between countries

towards SII, as Kropp et al. (1999) found out, North American smokers are less susceptible to interpersonal influence than nonsmokers. Nevertheless, He also stated in his research that the majority of smokers encounter strong social pressure pushing to quit smoking from friends and family. Therefore, those smokers who are very susceptible to interpersonal influence would decide to quit smoking. Similarly, Rose et al (1998) found that there is positive relationship between susceptibility to interpersonal influence regarding fashion in children and the layout of the clothing. Abram (1994) stated that imagined and real others can have a significant impact on consumer behavior.

However, researchers also tried to confirm if there are dissimilarities among individuals based on their personal traits. They found out that there is a difference across individuals and situations. Some people require to be identified with one's image in the presence of others like the same products and brands and willingness to conform the expectations of others regarding buying decisions (Bearden et al., 1989 P. 474). Bearden et al. (1989) stated two types of susceptibility to interpersonal influences: normative influence and informational influence.

### **2.3.1 Normative influence**

Normative influence reflects the individual's tendency and willingness to conform to reference group expectations for getting a reward or avoid punishments. Normative influences are considered as a perceived social pressure to match and follow the expectations and behavior of others (Ajzen, 2002). This includes the choice to use the thinking and behaviors of others while making buying decisions to the brand they want to buy (Hansen & Lee, 2013). Normative influence is value expressive and utilitarian in nature. Based on this nature, researchers had

divided normative interpersonal influence into two components: utilitarian and value-expressive interpersonal influences (Bearden et al. 1989; 1990).

### **2.3.1.1 Utilitarian interpersonal influence**

This influence can be explained by the so-called 'compliance process' in which an individual is willing to match a specific group's expectation in order to gain verbal praise or to avoid the punishment from the group (Kelman, 1961). A good example of the utilitarian influence is the famous Asch Experiment, in which participants were seen conforming willingly to the group answers, even by changing their original right answers (Rock, 1990). Utilitarian influence is clearly seen in an individual's behavior in accordance with the others' conformity to match their expectations or avoid disapproval from them due to disconformities with their expectations. There is another state in which the individual goes through when he or she is under the influence of others, called compliance. This happens when a person wants to be aligned with the others' acceptance to win a reward or avoid a punishment (Bearden et al., 1989). In this way, the person adopts the values, norms and the behaviors of the group that he or she wants to comply with. Utilitarian influence happens mostly when an individual is present with the influencer. This implies that the person sacrifices his or her rational decisions to the compliance of his reference groups.

Jahoda (1972) stated that when a person tends to buy a product, he or she has tendency to conform the expectations of his or her reference group if he or she:

1. Perceives that they mediate significant rewards or punishments
2. Believes that his or her behavior will be identified or recognized to these others; and

3. Motivated to ensure the reward or to avoid the punishment.

According to Brinberg & Plimpton (1986), utilitarian person is equally influenced regardless of whether the individual's behavior visible to the influencer or not. This implies that the individual always wants to comply with the expectations of the reference group even in the absence of the influencer.

### **2.3.1.2 Value-expressive interpersonal influence**

Value-expressive influence on the other hand happens when individual use norms, values and behaviors of others in his own way on a regular basis. This reference group influence associates with an individual's motive to develop his self-concept. "Such an individual would be expected to associate himself with positive referents and/or disassociate himself from negative referents" (Kelman, 1961). At this stage an individual completely follows the rules and beliefs of his reference group. The motive behind this is to express himself to the society by labeling himself with the products and brands of the groups he wants to belong (Kelman, 1961). This is the reason why marketers use celebrities to advertise their products to convey the message to the people by showing them using their products.

Value-expressiveness works under the process of identification (Park and Lessig, 1977). Identification is different from the compliance in the sense that the individual fully adopts the behavior, norms and attitudes of the influencer or reference group (Park and Lessig, 1977).

As Kelman (1961) stated value-expressive influence is characterized by two different processes. First, an individual requires benefiting from his influencer or reference group to

express himself. In this case, there should be a positive relationship between the need to express one's self and the psychological image linked to the influence or reference group.

Second, the person is influenced by the value-expressive attributes of his group. This does not require consistency between one's self image and the psychological image attached to the reference group. Therefore, an individual responds to the reference group, although acceptance is irrelevant to the group.

In summary, value-expressive influence emerges when an individual fully follows the norms, values and beliefs of the reference group by himself and identifies with the group.

### **2.3.2 Informational influence**

Informational influence measures the person's natural willingness to receive information about the products or brands by searching information from others. This component indicates that the individual tends to get information from others about the products that he or she is going to possess before buying them (Bearden et al., 1989). Some researchers suggested that people get this information in two distinct ways, they may ask others that are familiar with the products in question or they may directly observe these products by themselves (Park & Lessig, 1977). In this way, informational influence affects consumer decision process concerning evaluation of the product, brand selection and final purchase decisions.

As Werner, Sansone, and Brown (2008) stated in their research, informational influence has a significant impact on socially motivated behaviors. For instance, in the rapidly changing fashion trends, an individual would be needed to obtain regular information from different sources to

make well informed choices. In addition, as Suki et al. (2016) mentioned in their study, when consumers want to purchase a product, they would ask their social networking sites' contacts about their opinion towards the products they tend to buy and consider their advice. Moreover, these researchers also found evidence that if consumers do not have enough information or experience with the product, they often ask and seek advice from friends to help choose the best alternative. In this process, they feel comfortable about the product they want to buy because of the fruitful opinions they received from their friends.

Informational influence is based on the desire to make informed decisions and optimize the choice. Kelman (1961) outlined that the person would accept an influence from other members of the society who enhance his or her understanding, experience and ability to cope with the environment which s/he lives in.

Informational influence only works effectively when a person considers the behavior and value of reference group members as an important piece of information and takes it seriously. In this way, the consumer has no information of the product in question that he or she is planning to purchase. Therefore, to compensate this knowledge gap, he or she seeks information by asking or taking recommendation from his or her reference group to buy the item with confidence since others are thinking of it as a decent one.

Especially when a consumer lacks the knowledge of a certain product and the experience of purchasing this item, one may perceive the information and recommendation from his/her reference group as credible and thus accept them with certain confidence (Yang, 2007).

## 2.4 Brand image

Many studies defined the term brand image in myriad ways, but they were closely related definitions. Aaker (1997) defined brand image as an image that can be recalled by the public, which is relevant and easily remembered as well as considered a positive brand. Brand image consists of “functional and symbolic brand beliefs” (Dobni and Zinkhan, 1990). The brand image is also described as the perception of the customer based on reason or rationality which causes the customer to attach more emotions towards a specific brand (Aaker, 1997). Brand image is important because it takes part the consumer’s decision making which finally determines to buy the product or leave it (Dolich, 1969), and in this way, it affects the individual’s buying behavior (Johnson and Puto, 1987; Fishbein, 1967).

Brand image is explained as perception which exists in the minds of customers, so if the brand image makes a good impression in the customer’s mind, the customer will be loyal to that company, unlike others (Hawkins, 2004). The good impression could emerge from the good reputation of the company, trustworthiness, popularity and the fact that the company wants to provide the best quality product or service (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Consumers consider some attributes of a product before making purchase decisions, so Keller (1993) stated that the brand image is the perception of a product which signals to the consumers’ mind about the product. When buyers see the product they want to buy from the name of the company which they are familiar with, they would feel more confident and will have greater tendency to purchase the product. Regarding this, companies always try to enhance their brand associations to consumers’ minds by making regular advertisements. Moreover, brand image consists of a number of attributes, including a description of the selling company of the product

and the symbolic meaning of the brand which has a relevant association for consumers with particular attributes of the product or services (Winarso, 2012).

A brand can be defined with any attribute such as name and symbol that differentiates the seller's goods from those other sellers in the market (Aaker, 1991). These attributes could be a logo or graphic representation or image that initiates memory associations of a target brand (Walsh et al., 2010).

As Smith and Wright (2004) stated in their research, the value of the product has a huge impact on the level of loyalty. They found out that brand image, product quality, viability, and post sales service quality significantly affect repeat sales. Similarly, Punniya Moorthy and Mohan (2007) conducted research to investigate the antecedents of brand loyalty and found out that functional value, price worthiness, emotional value, commitment and repeat purchase have a positive relation with brand loyalty. Considering this fact, marketers in Smartphone industry influence consumers for the purpose of succeeding customer loyalty to their brands. In summary, loyalty had been investigated to have been formed through the following antecedents such as brand trust, commitment, satisfaction, perceived value, image, association, quality and others. .

Many brand related factors have been studied in many studies, these include brand associations, memory, knowledge, awareness and recall. Aaker (1991) Keller (1993) and Yasin et al. (2007) stated that further equity of a brand is largely supported by customer's associations towards the brand, which contribute to a specific brand image. This means, the more the customer buys from a brand, the more this will have strong effects on a customer's mind and the customer easily remembers the brand name and image. Rajah (2002) noted that the strength of brand association is linked to the extent of their relation with the brand node which is in the



memory of the consumer. He further stated that the customer's brand recall proportionally increases with the customer's frequent associations towards the brand. If the customers believe that a particular brand's benefit and attributes suit their needs and wants, they are more likely to favor this particular brand more than other competitors in the market. Rajah (2002) also revealed that brand association has a connection with the scope, which is the uniqueness of the brand should not be shared by other rival brands in the area.

In addition to that, as Keller (1993) stated, brand image reflects associations of a brand such attributes are intangible, abstract benefits and customer attitude at every different product category. This means that the consumer places on brand image an intangible benefit different from other brands in the industry. Keller (1993) described brand image as a concept that customers assume due to abstract reasons and their own personal emotions. Brand associations are the attributes which are deeply seated in the customers' minds related to the brand name, so to make relation positive one, the brand should be associated with something positive which shows a value to the eyes of the consumers.

Keller (1993) classified brand association into three categories that moves away from concrete to abstract, these categories are:

1. Attributes: Keller separated the attributes into non-product related characteristics (packaging, price, user imagery, usage imagery) and product-related characteristics

2. Benefits: it is the functional attributes of the product like real functional part of the product (often linked to physiological needs) and experiential (what it feels like to use the product), and symbolic benefits of the product, how the society members consider this type of product (one example: a need for social approval or self-esteem).

3. Brand attitudes: defined as consumers' overall evaluation of a brand in both attributes and benefits of the brand. So, if one's brand attitude satisfies the consumers' needs and preferences, they are likely to develop a good brand attitude toward that particular brand.

## **2.5 Hypotheses Development**

To make the research more purposeful and objective, the study developed four hypotheses based on literature review.

Bearden et al. (1989), described consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence as individual trait, which he defined as, "the need to identify with or enhance one's image in the opinion of significant others through the acquisition and use of products and brands, the willingness to conform to the expectations of others or seeking information from others" (p. 473). The willingness to buy a product depends on the individual's attitude towards the product as well as the norms and expectations of the society (Jamil and Wong, 2010).

Informational influences impact on individuals' purchase decision processes in terms of product evaluations, brand selections and final purchase decisions (Mourali et al., 2005). For example, a consumer has a tendency to accept information from others about a product particularly when a consumer is to choose from many Smartphone brands in the market in order to make well informed decisions (Mourali et al., 2005). Influences of colleagues, friends and family members are the main factors encouraging huge dependence on Smartphones (Auter, 2007).

Moreover, the normative influence refers to conformity to the expectations of others and taking the norms, beliefs and behaviors of others (Burnkrant and Cousineau, 1975) which implies

that consumers match the expectations of their reference groups to obtain a reward or avoid punishment. According to Lay-Yee et al. (2013), social influence has a significant relationship with the customer purchase decision and it's regarded as major factors behind students' higher dependency on Smartphones.

Deutsch and Gerard (1955) revealed in their research that informational influence is the tendency of consumers to accept others' information specially those they think are knowledgeable with the product they want to purchase.

Furthermore, as Esch et al, (2006) stated in their research, consumers' purchase intention can be influenced significantly by brand image. The strength of a brand and its benefit triggers the willingness of consumers to purchase a product. So as long as the brand image means a lot to the consumer, the purchase intention of the individual increases. The positive relation between brand image and purchase intension depends on the uniqueness, strength and variability of the brand image, which in turn causes the customer to pay a premium price (Faircloth, Capella, & Alford, 2001).

Several studies (e.g Keller, 1993; Rajh, 2002; Aaker, 1991) have found that the relation between brand image and purchase intention is positive and need to be included in marketing plans. Brand name and its image are the significant factors that have direct links to purchase intention (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Erdem et al. (2006) found that collectivist developing markets (Turkey, India and Brazil) are more brand image sensitive in their purchase decisions than individualist markets. Positive brand image leads to higher purchase intentions and repurchase behavior (Wang, 2006). Wang also found out that consumers pay premium price for the products which have higher brand images and recommend for the others to buy.

Based on the above literature, the study has proposed four hypotheses:

**H1:** Informational interpersonal influence has a positive significant effect on the Purchase intention of Smartphone buyers.

**H2:** Utilitarian interpersonal influence has a positive significant effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers.

**H3:** Value expressive interpersonal influence has a positive significant effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers.

**H4:** Brand image has a positive significant effect on the Purchase intention of Smartphone buyers

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter deals with the methodology of the study. The methodology contains the variables and their measures (scales) which made up the questionnaire to test the hypotheses and answer the research question of the study. English and Turkish versions of the questionnaires can be found in the Appendices. Moreover, the translation of the questionnaire items and sample and procedures are explained in this part.

#### **3.1 Variables and Measures**

##### **Dependent variable – Purchase Intention**

According to Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991), purchase intention comes into deliberation when an individual is most likely to purchase a product or service. Predicting consumer behavior is not an easy task for any business as it keeps changing under unknown influences and factors; therefore, its measurement under different situations is difficult (Rizwan et al., 2013).

Many researchers developed different scales for measuring this construct based on the nature of their studies. This study uses four items developed by Esch et al. (2006) to measure purchase intention on 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

1. I would intend to buy Smartphone products.
2. My willingness to buy Smartphone products is high.
3. I am likely to purchase any Smartphone product.
4. I have a high intention to buy Smartphone product.

## **Independent variables**

### **Informational Influence**

Informational influence refers to people's desire to make informed decisions and prioritizing the choice. Kelman (1961) suggested that a person would allow an influence that improves one's knowledge and ability to cope with the environment. Informational influence only works effectively when the individual considers the behavior and value of reference group members as potentially useful information (Kelman, 1961).

The scale items for informational influence adopted from Park and Lessig, 1977. The scale contains five items in five-point Likert-type scale ranged from 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The items are:

1. I would search information about various Smartphone brands and models from an association of professionals or independent group of experts.
2. I seek information from those who work in the Smartphone industry.
3. I will collect Smartphone's information from those friends, neighbors, relatives, or work associates.
4. If I see the Smartphone' brand or model which are used by cellphone R&D people or cell phone retailers, I change my mind.
5. My choice of Smartphone is influenced by other consumers' word of mouth or some evaluation reports from an independent testing agency.

### **Utilitarian influence**

This influence is normative influence as many researchers consider, since the normative influence consists of utilitarian and value expressive influence (Park and Lessig, 1977; Bearden and Etzel, 1982). It is generally regarded as 'compliance process' in which an individual aims to satisfy a certain group's expectation in order to gain a praise or to avoid the punishment from the group (Bearden, 1989; Kelman, 1961).

The scale used to measure this construct also developed by Park and Lessig, 1977. It comprises four items in five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. Utilitarian influence items include:

1. My friends' evaluation and preference will influence my choice.
2. Other people's recommendation may influence my final decision.
3. The preferences of family members can influence my choice of Smartphone.
4. To satisfy the expectations of classmates or fellow work associates, my decision to purchase a Smartphone is influenced by their preferences.

### **Value expressive influence**

This type of influence is regarded as an "identification process" in which individuals are tending to better identify themselves with the society by making themselves similar to the group that they want to belong (Kelman, 1961; Allen, 1965; McGuire, 1968; Bearden et al., (1989). In this stage individuals take behavior, beliefs and norms of their reference group to identify themselves with the group.

Value expressive influence is measured by five Likert-type scale items ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree, derived from Park and Lessig, 1977. The items to measure this construct are as follows:

1. I tend to choose those brands or models that will enhance my image in others' eye.
2. I feel that those who purchase or use the Smartphone of a particular brand or model possess the characteristics which I would like to have.
3. I feel that it would be nice to act like the type of person which advertisements show using the Smartphone of a particular brand or model.
4. I think that the people who purchase the Smartphone of a particular brand or model are sometimes admired or respected by others.
5. Using a Smartphone of a particular brand or model helps me show others who I am, or who I would like to be.

### **Brand image**

Aaker (1991) conceptualized brand image as a set of associations, which are framed in a meaningful way. Keller (1993) defined brand image "as the set of brand associations that consumers retain in their memory about a brand". Past purchasing experiences and familiarity with the brand can generate consumer perception and can enhance their buying decision (Aaker, 1991). The image represents a major part in customer's perception about the overall quality of a product or service (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1998; Yasin, 2007).



Brand image is measured by four items on five-point Likert-type scale derived from (Yemen and Cuba, 2008) ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. Brand image items include:

1. I find out a product's brand determine the quality of the product.
2. When I am buying a new product, the Brand is the first piece of information that I consider.
3. I feel that it is important to look for a famous brand when deciding which product to buy.
4. I refuse to purchase a product without knowing its Brand.

### **Demographics**

The questionnaire included demographic items of age, gender, income, and level of education. Age of participants was displayed in intervals. The scaling of the age was asked in levels covering: 1= 15 -20, 2= 20-25, 3=25-30, and 4=30-above. Gender was coded as 1= male and 2= female. Income of participants covered the intervals of: 1=1000TL- 1500TL, 2= 1500TL-2000TL, 3=2000TL-2500TL and 4=2500-above. Finally, education level was included as categories covering: Bachelor's degree, Master's degree and Ph.D.

### **Translation of the Questionnaire items**

Originally, the questionnaire items were in English. They were translated into Turkish by the researcher's advisor who is Turkish native. The items were translated back again to English by two bilinguals. The unclear items in the Turkish version were corrected and clarified by the thesis advisor. The reason was to make easier for the participants to understand every item of the questionnaire.

## **Sample and Procedures**

The target population was one university. The questionnaire had 22 items, and the time required to fill the questionnaire was between five to eight minutes. Convenience sampling was preferred to probabilistic sampling. Therefore, questionnaires were administered to the participants on the bases of their consent and time availability. It took two weeks to collect the data and it was collected by the researcher in person. The target population was only one university, so, the data collected did not consume much time. 150 questionnaires were distributed and all of them returned representing a 100% response rate.

Every participant responded to the demographics of the questionnaire. Of the 150 respondents who reported their gender information, 54% was male and 46% was female.

The age of 80% of the respondents was in the range of 20-25, 8.7% of them were 25 - 30, 6.7% were 15 - 20 and 4.75% were 30 and above.

The income of the participants was included in intervals in the questionnaire, so income of 55.4% of the respondents was in the range of 1000TL - 1500TL, while 18.7% of the respondents' income was ranged 1500TL-2000TL. The 16.5% of them reported their income as 2500TL and above, while 9.5% of the respondents' income were in the range of 2000TL - 2500TL. The educational level of 84.7% of participants was Bachelor degree, 13.3% were Master's degree and 2% was Ph.D.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & RESULTS**

This section presents the missing value analysis ahead of data analysis and reliability checks. In addition, correlations were run to investigate the relationship between the variables, and regression was run to test the hypotheses and analyze the research question.

##### **Analysis of Missing Values.**

Before starting with the reliability checks, missing values in the data from total sample were checked. There are four step analysis of missing data according the type, extent, randomness of missing data and imputation Hair et al. (2016). Investigating the patterns of missing data, it was concluded that most missing data were very few in number and existed only in one variable, therefore, it was replaced with the mean value of the variable.

##### **Testing for Reliability**

Reliabilities of the study variables are calculated by the Cronbach's alphas for each scale in the data from the sample of 150 participants. The overall reliability scores of the data are above .60 except one scale, whose score fell below the threshold. One item within the informational interpersonal influence scale ("I will collect Smartphone information from those friends, neighbors, relatives or work associates") was removed from the scale because its deletion improved the reliability from .55 to .60, which matches the accepted lower limit of reliability. The reliability score of the scales is shown in the diagonal of Table 2.

## Descriptive Statistics and Correlations between the Study Variables.

Means, standard deviations (SD), range, maximum and minimum values for the study variables are presented in Table 1. All study variables were measured in 5-point Likert type scales, where higher scores represented agreement and lower scores represented disagreement of the respondents with the items.

The purchase intention variable has the highest mean value (3.57). The mean value of brand image is 3.480 which is relatively high compared to other variables' means. This indicates that Smartphone buyers are rather brand conscious. The mean of informational influence (3.136) is above the midpoint, which indicates that Smartphone buyers are likely to be influenced by the information they receive from others. On the other hand, value expressive influence (2.375) and utilitarian influence (2.951) have relatively lower mean values since they are below the midpoint (3). This indicates that Smartphone buyers' purchase decisions are less likely to be influenced by the expectations of others.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Informational influence	150	3.80	1.20	5.00	3.1360	.69526
Utilitarian influence	150	3.75	1.00	4.75	2.9517	.81136
Value expressive influence	150	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.3757	.80198
Brand image	150	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.4800	.85359
Purchase intention	150	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.5700	1.01793
Age*	150	3	1	4	2	0.557
Gender**	150	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.0000	.50100

\* Median is reported for age.

\*\* Mode is reported for gender composition.

Age of the participants was asked in intervals. The scaling for age was asked in levels covering: 1=15 - 20, 2= 20 - 25, 3=25 - 30, and 4=30 and above. The median age reported was 2.000, corresponding to the level of 20 - 25. Gender was coded as 1=male and 2=female. Mode

(1.00) is reported for gender information of 150 participants. The gender composition of the sample was 81 males (54%) vs. 69 females (46%).

Correlations between the study variable are shown in Table 2. Reliability scores for the scales of the data measured in Cronbach's alpha are reported along the diagonal in parentheses.

The dependent variable purchase intention, had significant positive correlations with informational influence ( $r = .198, p < .01$ ), utilitarian influence ( $r = .200, p < .01$ ) and brand image ( $r = .365, p < .00$ ). This implies that when informational influence, and utilitarian influence increases the purchase intention of Smartphone buyers will increase. Likewise, when brand image is improved purchase intention of the buyers will also increase.

Purchase intention had no significant correlation with value expressive influence ( $r = .153, p < .06$ ), so it is not included in the regression analysis for hypothesis testing. The dependent variable (purchase intention) was regressed on the remaining independent variables (informational influence, utilitarian influence and brand image).

Table 2. Person Correlations between the Study Variables\*\*\* (N=150)

	1	2	3	4
Purchase intention(1)	(.84)			
Informational influence(2)	.198*	(.60)		
Utilitarian influence (3)	.200*	.535**	(.66)	
Value expressive influence(4)	.153	.09	.264**	(.70)
Brand image (5)	.36**	.63	.183*	.144

\*  $p < .05$ , two-tailed. \*\*  $p < .01$ , two-tailed.

\*\*\* Cronbach's alphas are presented in parentheses on the diagonal.

## 4.1 Testing of Hypotheses

This part presents the regression analysis for testing the hypotheses of the study. The study had four hypotheses: H1 hypothesized that informational interpersonal influence has a positive significant effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers. H2 investigated that utilitarian interpersonal influence has a positive significant effect on purchase intention. H3 investigated that value expressive interpersonal influence has a positive significant effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers while H4 hypothesized that brand image has a positive significant effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers.

Regarding H3 value expressive influence did not have a significant correlation with purchase intention thus it was excluded from further testing. H1, H2 and H4 are tested in this section.

Before running the regression analysis, its process is explained. The assumptions of linearity, independent errors, and normality distribution are tested. Tests to see if the data met the assumption of collinearity indicated that multicollinearity was not a concern (informational influence, Tolerance=. 70, VIF=1.04, Utilitarian influence, Tolerance=. 68, FIV=1.47, and Brand image, Tolerance=. 96, FIV=1. If the VIF value is greater than 10, or the Tolerance is less than 0.1, then there is no concerns over multicollinearity, the general rule is that the VIF should not exceed 10 (Marsh et al., 2004). The data met the assumption of independent errors (Durbin-Watson value=2.23) which satisfied the assumption criteria. Moreover, the histogram of standardized residuals indicated that the data contained approximately normally distributed errors, as did the normal P-P plot of standardized residuals, which showed points that were not completely on the line, but close. According to the above mentioned facts, regression results of this study confirm that multicollinearity is not a serious concern.

H1, H2 and H4 were tested using regression analysis keeping income as a control variable. H1 (Informational interpersonal influence has a positive significant effect on purchase intention) was investigated by looking at results of regression analysis as exhibited in Table 3. The informational influence variable only predicts purchase intention by .21 variances which is statistically insignificant at  $p < .105$ . Thus, the relationship between informational influence and purchase intention is not significant ( $\beta = .216$ ,  $p < .105$ ), therefore, H1 was not supported concluding that there is no significant relationship between informational interpersonal influence and purchase intention of Smartphone buyers.

For testing H2, (Utilitarian interpersonal influence has a positive significant effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers), the same linear regression result was investigated. As the result of the analysis exhibits, utilitarian influence does not predict purchase intention as the beta value indicates ( $\beta = .071$ ). Thus, there is no significant relation between utilitarian interpersonal influence and purchase intention ( $\beta = .071$ ,  $p < .538$ ), therefore, H2 was not supported by the regression results. This implies that Smartphone buyers are not likely to be influenced by others' expectations for buying a Smartphone.

Hypothesis 3 (Value expressive interpersonal influence has a positive significant effect on purchase behavior) was disqualified in correlations, when correlations' results reported that there was no correlations between the two variables. Thus, it was excluded from the regression analysis.

Finally, H4, (Brand image has a positive significant effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers) was investigated in the regression results in Table 3 and found that brand image has a significant effect on purchase intention ( $\beta = .409$ ,  $p < .000$ ). This implies that brand

image positively predicts the purchase intention of Smartphone buyers, or smartphone buyers are likely to be affected by the brand's image while making purchasing decisions.





Table 3. Regression results for informational influence, utilitarian influence and brand image with control variable (income).

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.482	.159		21.911	0.000		
	Income	.049	.074	.054	.653	.515	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	1.222	.478		2.557	.012		
	Income	.021	.07	.024	.309	.758	.974	1.026
	Informational influence	.216	.132	.147	1.631	.105	.703	1.422
	Utilitarian influence	.071	.115	.057	.617	.538	.682	1.466
	Brand image	.409	.092	.343	4.426	.000	.958	1.043

Dependent Variable: Purchase intention.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of susceptibility to interpersonal influence and brand image on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers. This paper was not the first one of its kind for investigating the susceptibility to interpersonal influence, there are other studies which had conducted research about it but in different contexts. This study focused on Smartphone purchase intention where previous studies did not emphasize its relation with susceptibility and brand image. In Smartphone industry, where competition among companies is very tough and dynamic, the previous research did not focus on this area extensively with regard to susceptibility. Thus, this study differentiates itself from the previous studies in a sense that it emphasized on the effect of susceptibility interpersonal influence and brand image on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers. It investigated how these two constructs (susceptibility to interpersonal influence and brand image) determine the purchase decision of Smartphone buyers.

To find out the answer of its research question, (to what extent susceptibility to interpersonal influence and brand image effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers?), the study collected data from 150 students by administering questionnaires. The questionnaire items were adapted from previous research mentioned in the literature review and four hypotheses (informational, value expressive and utilitarian influence and brand image have a positive significant effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers) were developed in this study and tested.

To analyze the data with SPSS software was used and linear regression results were shown in the findings section. Based on the analysis results, three hypotheses were not supported while one hypothesis was supported.

As the regression analysis confirmed there is no significant relationship between informational influence and purchase intention of Smartphone buyers (H1). This implies that purchase intention of Smartphone buyers is less likely to be influenced by information they get from others or their reference groups that they desire to belong. Likewise, the regression results had shown that there is no significant relationship between utilitarian influence and purchase intention of Smartphone buyers (H2). This implies that Smartphone buyers are less likely to be influenced by social groups or other reference groups' expectations to affect their purchase decisions. Similarly, there is no significant relationship between value expressive interpersonal influence and purchase intention of Smartphone buyers as both the correlation and regression results had shown (H3). This demonstrates that the purchase intention of Smartphone buyers is not likely to be influenced by identifying themselves through buying the products that their reference group use. So there are other factors than interpersonal influence to determine a consumers' purchase decisions.

By checking if the income has an effect on the relationship between purchase intention and other independent variables, keeping income as control variable regression results showed that income does not significantly affect purchase intentions.

Finally, the study found out that there is a positive significant relationship between brand image and purchase intention of Smartphone buyers (H4) as reported by both correlation and regression results. This indicates that purchase intention increases with the improvement of

brand image, which means, if there is a high perceived brand image in the consumers' mind, their purchase intentions are likely to be high. Therefore, Smartphone companies should enhance their brand image to stimulate the purchase intentions of buyers. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of the previous research, such as Esch et al. (2006) who stated in their research that consumers' purchase intention can be influenced by brand image and Nasar et al. (2012) who argued that brand image is one of the most powerful factors that builds the reputation of a particular brand in the marketplace. Establishing strong and positive brand image can lead companies get larger market share. Therefore, companies should frequently focus on their marketing and branding strategies.

To sum up, the study found out that susceptibility to interpersonal influence is less likely to significantly influence the purchase intention of Smartphone buyers, whereas brand image has a significant effect on purchase intention of Smartphone buyers. Thus, to promote their sales by attracting considerable consumers, Smartphone companies should strengthen their brand image.

Moreover, brand image is found to be a significant contributor to purchase intention of Smartphone buying, revealing that consumers place stronger importance on the image of the brand being purchased. Thus, it is recommended for Smartphone companies to develop strong, favorable, and unique brand associations in the minds of their target consumers. Methods that augment the brand image might include public relations, direct experience and other commercial sources (Keller, 2008). Since brand image is symbolic construct which is embedded in the minds of the consumers that comprises all the expectations and information related to the product or service (Keller, 2008), companies should enact strategies for enhancing their products' value. In

this way, they would be able to put a positive brand image in consumers' minds so the consumers, in turn, would develop positive associations with the brand. The product's value which might increase the brand image could be the specific attributes of the product such as quality, durability, user friendliness and other innovative facets of the product. So if the company's products stand out of the crowd compared to its competitors, it is more likely that consumers would develop positive associations towards it. Smartphone companies should focus on branding efforts.

### **5.1 Suggestion for further research and limitations of the study**

The study did not take into consideration the personality traits of the respondents, which can have an effect on the relationship between the susceptibility to interpersonal influence as well as the brand image and purchase intention. Thus, a further research would be recommended to conduct on how the relationship could be affected. Moreover, the sample of this study was one university students, which can weaken the representativeness of the sample to generalize it to all Smartphone buyers. Therefore, conducting same research in multiple universities would give more reliable results on the Smartphone purchase decisions of university students. The study adopted questionnaire items which other researchers had used many years ago, which in turn may not be compatible with today's context, so conducting other research with new developed items which are appropriate to this context would be desirable. This study focused on Smartphone products, so other research can be done in other relevant products to expand the result of the study to many products. To verify the findings of this study in order to be generalizable to many products, it would be desirable to conduct similar research in different contexts.

## REFERENCES

Akkucuk, U., & Esmaeili, J. (2016). The Impact of Brands on Consumer Buying Behavior: An Empirical Study on Smartphone Buyers. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147-4478)*, 5 (4), 1-16

Aaker, D. A. (1992). The effects of sequential introduction of brand extensions. *Journal of marketing research*, 35-50.

Auter, P.J. (2007), "Portable social groups: willingness to communicate, interpersonal communication gratifications and cell phone use among young adults", *International Journal of Mobile Communication*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 139-56.

Bearden, W. O., Netemeyer, R. G., & Teel, J. E. (1989). Measurement of consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. *Journal of consumer research*, 15 (4), 473-481.

Bearden, W. O., & Etzel, M. J. (1982). Reference group influence on product and brand purchase decisions. *Journal of consumer research*, 9 (2), 183-194

Bagozzi, R. P., & Burnkrant, R. E. (1979). Attitude organization and the attitude-behavior relationship. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 37 (6), 913.

Dodds, W. B., Monroe, K. B., & Grewal, D. (1991). Effects of price, brand, and store information on buyers' product evaluations. *Journal of marketing research*, 307-319.

Dolich, I. J. (1969). Congruence relationships between self-images and product brands. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 80-84.

Dobni, D., & Zinkhan, G. M. (1990). In search of brand image: A foundation analysis. *NA-Advances in Consumer Research Volume 17*.

Esch, F. R., Langner, T., Schmitt, B. H., & Geus, P. (2006). Are brands forever? How brand knowledge and relationships affect current and future purchases. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 15 (2), 98-105.

- Ebren, F. (2009). Susceptibility to interpersonal influence: A study in Turkey. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 37 (8), 1051-1063.
- Erdem, T., Sweet, J., & Valenzuela, A. (2006). Brands as signals: A cross-country validation study. *Journal of Marketing*, 70 (1), 34-49.
- Huang, Y., Shi, J., & Wang, L. (2012). Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence in Mainland China. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 15 (2), 140-144.
- Hawkins, D. I. (2004), *Consumer Behavior: Building Marketing Strategy*.
- Johnson, M. D., & Puto, C. P. (1987). A review of consumer judgment and choice.
- Jamil, B. and Wong, C.H. (2010), "Factors influencing repurchase intention of smartphones", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 4 No. 12, pp. 289-94
- Johnson, R., & Bruwer, J. (2007). Regional brand image and perceived wine quality: the consumer perspective. *International Journal of Wine Business Research*, 19(4), 276-297.
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *The Journal of Marketing*, 1-22.
- Kropp, F., Lavack, A. M., & Silvera, D. H. (2005). Values and collective self-esteem as predictors of consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence among university students. *International Marketing Review*, 22(1), 7-33.
- Kapferer, Jean-Noël, and Vincent Bastien. "The specificity of luxury management: Turning marketing upside down." *Journal of Brand Management* 16.5-6 (2009): 311-322.
- Keller, K., & Kotler, P. (2012). 12 Branding in B2B firms. *Handbook of Business-to-Business Marketing, Cheltenham [ua]*, 208-225.

- Kelman, H. C. (1961). Three processes of social influence. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 25, 57-78.
- Koubaa, Y. (2008). Country of origin, brand image perception, and brand image structure. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 20(2), 139-155.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. (2012). L. (2006) Marketing management. *Praha: Grada Publishing*.
- Lin, Y. H., & Chen, C. Y. (2012). Adolescents' impulse buying: susceptibility to interpersonal influence and fear of negative evaluation. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 40(3), 353-358.
- Mourali, M., Laroche, M., & Pons, F. (2005). Individualistic orientation and consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 19(3), 164-173.
- Nasar, A., Hussani, S. K., Karim, E., & Siddiqui, M. Q. (2012). Analysis of Influential Factors on Consumer Buying Behavior of Youngster towards Branded Products: Evidence from Karachi. *KASBIT Journal of Management & Social Science*, 5, 56-61.
- Rizwan, M., Jalal, R., Durrani, F., & Sohail, N. (2013). The trend of online shopping in 21st century: Impact of enjoyment in tam model. *Asian Journal of Empirical Research*, 3(2), 131-141.
- Riaz, H. A. (2015). Impact of brand image on consumer buying behavior in clothing sector: a comparative study between males and females of central punjab (LAHORE) and southern punjab (MULTAN). *Kuwait Chapter of the Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 4(9), 24.



Rajh, E. (2002). Development of a scale for measuring customer-based brand equity. *Ekonomski pregled*, 53(7-8), 770-781.

Schiffman, L. G., & Kanuk, L. L. (2000). Customer behavior. *Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prebtice Hall*.

Shukla, P. (2011). Impact of interpersonal influences, brand origin and brand image on luxury purchase intentions: Measuring interfunctional interactions and a cross-national comparison. *Journal of world business*, 46(2), 242-252.

Van Reijmersdal, E. A., Neijens, P. C., & Smit, E. G. (2007). Effects of television brand placement on brand image. *Psychology & Marketing*, 24(5), 403-420.

Wooten, D. B., & Reed, A. (2004). Playing it safe: Susceptibility to normative influence and protective self-presentation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(3), 551-556.

Wang, X., & Yang, Z. (2010). The effect of brand credibility on consumers' brand purchase intention in emerging economies: The moderating role of brand awareness and brand image. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 23(3), 177-188.

Wang, X., & Yang, Z. (2010). The effect of brand credibility on consumers' brand purchase intention in emerging economies: The moderating role of brand awareness and brand image. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 23(3), 177-188.

Yang, J., He, X., & Lee, H. (2007). Social reference group influence on mobile phone purchasing behaviour: a cross-nation comparative study. *International Journal of Mobile Communications*, 5(3), 319-338.

Appendix A: questionnaire

**SECTION ONE**

**Demographic Profile of respondents**

**1. Gender:** Male

Female

**2. Age:**

a) 15-20 yrs

b) 20-25 yrs

c) 25-30 yrs

d) 30-above yrs

**3. Income:**

a) 1000TL-1500TL

b) 1500TL-2000TL

c) 2000TL-2500

d) 2500- above

**4. Education level**

a) Bachelor degree

b) Master's degree

c) PhD

**Informational influence (Park and Lessig, 1977)**

	Questions	Strongly disagree (5)	Disagree (4)	Neutral (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly agree (1)
1	I would search information about various Smartphone brands and models from an association of professionals or independent group of experts.					
2	I seek information from those who work in the Smartphone industry					
3	I will collect Smartphone's information from those friends, neighbors, relatives, or work associates.					
4	If I see the Smartphone's' brand or model which are used by cell phone R&D people or cell phone retailers, I change my mind.					
5	My choice of Smartphone is influenced by other consumers' word of mouth or some evaluation reports from an independent testing agency.					

**Utilitarian influence (Park and Lessig, 1977)**

	Questions	Strongly disagree (5)	Disagree (4)	Neutral (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly agree (1)
1	My friends' evaluation and preference will influence my choice					
2	Other people's recommendation may influence my final decision					
3	The preferences of family members can influence my choice of Smartphone					
4	To satisfy the expectations of classmates or fellow work					

associates, my decision to purchase a Smartphone is influenced by their preferences					
---	--	--	--	--	--

**Value expressive influence** (Park and Lessig, 1977)

	Questions	Strongly disagree (5)	Disagree (4)	Neutral (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly agree (1)
1	I tend to choose those brands or models that will enhance my image in others' eye					
2	I feel that those who purchase or use the Smartphone of a particular brand or model possess the characteristics which I would like to have					
3	I feel that it would be nice to act like the type of person which advertisements show using the Smartphone of a particular brand or model.					
4	I think that the people who purchase the Smartphone of particular brand or model are sometimes admired or respected by others.					
5	Using Smartphone of a particular brand or model helps me show others who I am, or who I would like to be.					

**Brand image** (Yamen Koubaa, 2008)

	Questions	Strongly disagree (5)	Disagree (4)	Neutral (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly agree (1)
1	I find out a product's brand determine the quality of the product					
2	When I am buying a new product, the Brand is the first piece of information that I consider.					

<b>3</b>	I feel that it is important to look for a famous brand when deciding which product to buy.					
<b>4</b>	I refuse to purchase a product without knowing its Brand.					

***Purchase intention (Esch et al., 2006)***

	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Strongly disagree (5)</b>	<b>Disagree (4)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Agree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly agree (1)</b>
<b>1</b>	I would intend to buy Smartphone products.					
<b>2</b>	My willingness to buy Smartphone products is high.					
<b>3</b>	I am likely to purchase any Smartphone product.					
<b>4</b>	I have a high intention to buy Smartphone product.					

Appendix B: questionnaire translated into Turkish.

**Katılımcıların demografik profile**

- 5. Cinsiyet:** 1- Erkek   
2- Kadın

- 6. Yaş:**  
1) 15- 20  
2) 20- 25  
3) 25- 30  
4) 30- üstü

- 7. Gelir:**  
e) 1000TL-1500TL  
f) 1500TL-2000TL  
g) 2000TL-2500  
h) 2500- üstü

- 8. Eğitim Düzeyi**  
1) lisans  
2) yüksek lisans  
3) doktora

**Informational influence (Park and Lessig, 1977)**

	Sorular	kesinlikle katılmıyorum -1-	katılmıyorum -2-	kararsızım -3-	katılıyorum -4-	kesinlikle katılıyorum -5-
1	Çeşitli akıllı telefon markaları ve modelleri hakkında mesleki birlikler ve bağımsız uzman görüşlerine başvururum.					
2	Akıllı telefon endüstrisinde çalışan kişilerden bilgi alırım					
3	Akıllı telefon hakkında bilgileri arkadaşlarımdan, komşularımdan veya iş arkadaşlarımdan alırım.					
4	Eğer akıllı telefon markalarının veya modellerinin perakende sektöründekiler veya ArGe çalışanları tarafından kullanıldığına rastlarsam fikrim değişir.					
5	Benim akıllı telefon seçimim genellikle müşteriler tarafından söylenenlere veya bağımsız test ajansları tarafından uygulanan testlere ve raporlara dayanır.					

**Utilitarian influence (Park and Lessig, 1977)**

	Sorular	kesinlikle katılmıyorum -1-	katılmıyorum -2-	kararsızım -3-	katılıyorum -4-	kesinlikle katılıyorum -5-
1	Arkadaşlarımda değerlendirme ve seçimleri benimkinde etkiler					
2	Diğer insanların önerileri son kararımı etkiler.					
3	Aile üyelerimin yapacağı tercihler akıllı telefon seçimlerimde etkili olur.					

4	İş veya okul arkadaşlarımla memnuniyeti adına akıllı telefon alma kararım onların tercihlerine göre şekillenir.					
---	---	--	--	--	--	--

**Value expressive influence (Park and Lessig, 1977)**

	Sorular	kesinlikle katılmıyorum	katılmıyorum	kararsızım	katılıyorum	kesinlikle katılıyorum
		-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-
1	Benim imajımı diğerlerinin gözünde artıracak marka veya modelleri seçebilirim.					
2	Özellikle belli akıllı telefon marka veya modellerini tercih eden kişilerin benim karakterime yakın kişiler olduklarını hissediyorum.					
3	Belli akıllı telefon marka veya model reklamlarındaki kullanıcı tipleri gibi davranmanın iyi olduğunu hissediyorum.					
4	Belli model veya marka akıllı telefon kullanıcılarının diğer kişiler tarafından kimi zaman saygı gördüğünü düşünüyorum.					
5	Belli marka veya model telefonu kullanmanın diğerlerine kim olduğumu veya kim olmak istediğimi göstermeye yardım ediyor.					

**Brand image (Yamen Koubaa, 2008)**



	<b>Sorular</b>	<b>kesinlikle katılmıyorum</b> -1-	<b>Katılmıyorum</b> -2-	<b>kararsızım</b> -3-	<b>Katılıyorum</b> -4-	<b>kesinlikle katılıyorum</b> -5-
1	Ürünün markasının kalitesini belirlemeye yardımcı olduğunu düşünüyorum					
2	Yeni bir ürün alırken markası dikkate aldığım ilk bilgidir					
3	Bence yeni bir ürün almaya karar verirken ünlü bir markayı aramak önemlidir					
4	Ürünü markasını bilmeden satın almayı reddederim					

**Purchase intention (Esch et al., 2006)**

	<b>Sorular</b>	<b>kesinlikle katılmıyorum</b> -1-	<b>katılmıyorum</b> -2-	<b>kararsızım</b> -3-	<b>katılıyorum</b> -4-	<b>kesinlikle katılıyorum</b> -5-
1	Akıllı telefon ürünleri almaya niyetliyimdir.					
2	Akıllı telefon alma isteğim yüksektir.					
3	Herhangi bir akıllı telefon ürünü alabilirim.					
4	Akıllı telefon alma konusunda fazlaca niyetliyimdir.					

**Çok teşekkür ederim**