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BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMES****(AIJBES)**[www.aijb.es.com](http://www.aijb.es.com)**BRAND SWITCHING INTENTION AMONG MALAYSIAN  
SMARTPHONE USERS: A PUSH-PULL-MOORING  
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**DOI:** 10.35631/AJBES.517004.**This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)****Abstract:**

This study aims to investigate factors that lead to brand switching intention among Malaysian smartphone users, specifically using the Push-Pull-Mooring model. Push factors are understood as the negative factors that push people away from the original provider while pull factors are the positive factor that attract people towards a new provider. As for mooring factor, it includes the lifestyle, cultural and personal factors that affect the switching intention. The push factors included in the study are price and dissatisfaction. Meanwhile, mooring factors include variety seeking and social influence. On the other hand, attractiveness of alternative is considered as the pull factor for this study purpose. Quantitative approach through self-administered questionnaire is employed in this study. The targeted respondents are Generation Y smartphone users, and the survey was carried out in Kuala Lumpur. Data Analysis was done using IBM SPSS Statistic 24 and AMOS 22. The findings revealed that social influence and attractiveness of alternatives were the factors that highly affect the brand switching intention. Other factors which include price, dissatisfaction, and variety seeking were also found to be factors leading to the switching intention although their results are not as significant as compared to the other two. This study offers valuable insights to smartphone companies to better understand the factors that contribute to brand switching. It allows empowerment of the companies to further improve on various aspects and ultimately foster brand loyalty, which is vital for long-term success in the smartphone industry.

**Keywords:**

Smartphone, Brand switching, Push-Pull-Mooring, Generation Y

## Introduction

The widespread use of smartphones in the modern era has brought significant changes in the society and peoples' daily routines. Smartphones have transformed how we interact with one another. Functions like calling, messaging, emailing, capturing image, gaming, and accessing numerous forms of entertainment are all easily combined into a single device.

In both Malaysian and global contexts, the smartphone market has experienced continuous growth and improvement. According to a survey by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, smartphone usage increased most significantly in Malaysia within 2013 to 2017, rising from 37.4% in 2013 to 75.9% in 2017. Additionally, the survey reported that smartphone penetration rates increased tremendously from 68.7% in 2016 to 75.9% in 2017, reflecting a 7.2% increase (Hand Phone Users Survey, 2018). The penetration rate continued to grow and in year 2021, the rate has reached an all-time high of 94.8% (Hand Phone Users Survey, 2021). As of the third quarter of 2022, it was reported that approximately 97.6% of the Malaysian population owned smart phones (Statista, 2023).

Previous studies on smartphones (Eze and Lee, 2012; Kim, 2014; Regan and Chang, 2015; Gao, Yang, and Krogstie, 2015; Berenguer et al., 2017; (Rakib, Pramanik, Amran, Islam, & Sarker, 2022) mostly concentrated on initial acceptability and purchase intention of smartphones. Therefore, this study aims to examines smartphone users' post-adoption brand switching intention. Most earlier studies on switching in the area of information technologies concentrated on brand switching in personal computer-based informational technologies and software (Chang, Liu, and Chen, 2014; Zhou, 2014; Chang, Wong, and Li, 2017; Wu, Vassileva, and Zhao, 2017; Cheng, Lee, and Choi, 2019).

Therefore, there is a research gap concerning brand switching in the smartphone sector due to limited previous research in this area. In addition, earlier studies (Hati, Gayatri, & Indraswari, 2021, Jung, Han, & Oh, 2017; Han & Hyun, 2013; Hou, Chern, Chen, & Chen, 2011; Hsieh, Hsieh, Chiu, & Feng; 2012; Sun, 2014) primarily applied the push-pull-mooring (PPM) model to examine switching intentions in service sectors such banking service, airline, online gaming platform, restaurant, auto repair, and hotel services. By examining brand switching in smartphone devices using the PPM paradigm, this study seeks to expand the current literature. Specifically, it aims to identify the causes Malaysians smartphone users' intentions to switch brands.

## Literature Review

There are seven points discussed in literature review.

### **Brand Switching**

Brand switching is the event where consumer change to a competitor's brand (Wang & Xiao, 2021). Brand switching usually happens when consumers are not satisfied with their current brand and choose to switch to another brand (Bhatt & Saiyed, 2018). However, it is interesting to note that customers may decide to switch to a new brand even if they are happy with the current product. Brand switching is the opposite of customer loyalty (Wieringa & Verhoef, 2007). While disloyal customers tend to switch brands, loyal ones stick with a certain brand. Consumers can now easily compare brands while making purchases because of simple access to product information. Businesses must deliver superior offerings, added value, and forge solid, long-term connections in order to keep clients (Ahmed, Gull, & Rafiq, 2015).

According to Bassey, Ewah, and Ndu (2019), brand switching may be temporary or permanent. As highlighted by Hou et al. (2011), consumers who switch brands permanently do not go back to their original choice, whereas consumers who switch brands temporarily do so. If businesses are unable to maintain customers' loyalty, frequent brand switching could result in losses for them.

Jung et al. (2017), on the other hand, stressed that brand switching might either result in the loss of customers to businesses through out-switching, or it could bring in new customers to them through in-switching. As a result, it is crucial for businesses to comprehend the concept of switching intentions since it can help them assess their own strengths and shortcomings to keep their current consumers while also recruiting new ones.

### ***The Push-Pull-Mooring Model***

The Push-Pull-Mooring (PPM) model, which derives from the well-known theory of human migration, serves as the theoretical foundation for this study. Pull factors are alluring aspects that attract people to a specific location and push factors are elements that push people away from their original location (Bogue, 1969). The "mooring" factor was first put forth by Moon (1995), and it incorporated lifestyle and cultural factors that affect migratory decision. The PPM model was later applied to better understand consumers' brand switching behavior in the marketing context. It was first utilized in marketing literature by Bansal, Taylor, and James (2005) to explain customer switching behavior. Push factors are understood as the negative factors that push people away from the original provider while pull factors are the positive factor that attract people towards a new provider. As for mooring factor, it includes the lifestyle, cultural and personal factors that affect the switching intention.

The development of hypotheses and a review of each element are covered in the section that follows.

#### ***Push Factor: Price***

According to definition of Kotler and Keller (2017), price is the amount customers need to pay for products or services. Price have been identified as a key push factor for brand switching among customers, notably in the context of services, by Jung et al. (2017) and Colgate & Hedge (2001). Shah, Husnain, & Zubairshah (2018) and Ugwuanyi's (2017) investigation also supported this claim. According to Pantow (2019), price has a significant impact on consumer brand switching behavior. Further highlighting the importance of price as a contributing factor in brand switching are Firdaus and Budiman (2021). Other than that, Agu (2022) also found that price can predict switching intention. Further strengthening the viewpoint are Hussain et al. (2022) which revealed that price significantly influence the towards switching and switching intention.

The following is therefore hypothesized:

H1: Price has a significant relationship with brand switching intention.

#### ***Push Factor: Dissatisfaction***

Satisfaction is the comparison of the customer's expectations with the product's perceived performance to determine whether the consumer feels pleased or disappointed Kotler and Keller (2017). Hew, Badaruddin, & Moorthy (2017) suggested that customer dissatisfaction arises from a product's inability to satisfy their needs and requirements, which results in unfavorable circumstances that fall short of their expectations. Trihudiyatmanto, Purwanto, &

Yulistiana (2022) also found that dissatisfaction has a positive effect on brand switching. Yasri and Engriani (2018) supported that customer's intention to switch is significantly affected by the customer dissatisfaction. According to Hou et al. (2011), unsatisfied users are more likely to switch to a different platform, with truly dissatisfied users being especially proactive in looking for alternatives. Similar findings made by Irviandra & Trinanda (2020) revealed that dissatisfaction has a significant effect towards brand switching among college students. Yani, Budiati, Nusair, & Santoso (2022) found that customer dissatisfaction positively and significantly affects brand-switching intention. Customer dissatisfaction was also identified as a factor contributing to switching behavior in a study on airline services conducted by Jung et al. (2017), however it may not be the strongest factor of such behavior.

The following is therefore hypothesized:

H2: Dissatisfaction has a significant relationship with brand switching intention.

#### ***Mooring Factor: Variety Seeking***

Variety seeking is the desire for new experiences (Aroean, 2012). According to Chuang & Tai (2016), variety seeking happens when consumers look for novel motivations to buy products because there are so many different options. According to Ali, Muhammad, Rasheed, & Lodhi (2020), variety seeking has a positive impact on brand switching among young consumers Yani, et al. (2022) found that variety seeking positively and significantly affect brand-switching intention. However, according to Wang and Xiao (2022), variety seeking was not significantly associated with brand switching intention. According to Jung et al. (2017), users' desire for a variety of experiences influences their decision to fly with a different airline operator. According to Palma, Iriani & Harti (2021), Millennial brand switching is positively impacted by variety seeking.

The following is therefore hypothesized:

H3: Variety seeking has a significant relationship with brand switching intention.

#### ***Mooring Factor: Social Influence***

Given the contemporary environment of social interactions and technical breakthroughs, social influence comprises a variety of channels - peer and family and mass media (Hew et al., 2012). Through blogs, tweets, and other social networking sites, social media influencers also help to shape the opinions of their audience (Gulamali and Persson, 2017). The term "social influence" in this study refers to how smartphone users are influenced by their family, friends, and the mass media and social media influencers. Based on past researchers, social influence affect the switching intentions of the users because people have the tendency to comply with the group norm (Rawis, Nasution, Hadiansyah, Adiani, & Aprianingsi, 2022). According to Acharya and Gupta's (2014), younger people have a propensity to build close relationships with their peers and seek approval within their peer group, which causes the opinions of their friends to affect their brand choices. Aasir, Arshad, Muhammad & Rab (2019) also supported that social influence positively affect young consumers to switch brand. Based on Shah, Husnain, and Zubairshah's (2018) research, switching brands in the telecoms industry was positively influenced by social influences from family, friends, and relatives. Furthermore, Cheah (2017) highlighted the enormous influence that social media influencers have on customers' intentions to make purchases, demonstrating that these influencers are very important in influencing consumer choices.

The following is therefore hypothesized:

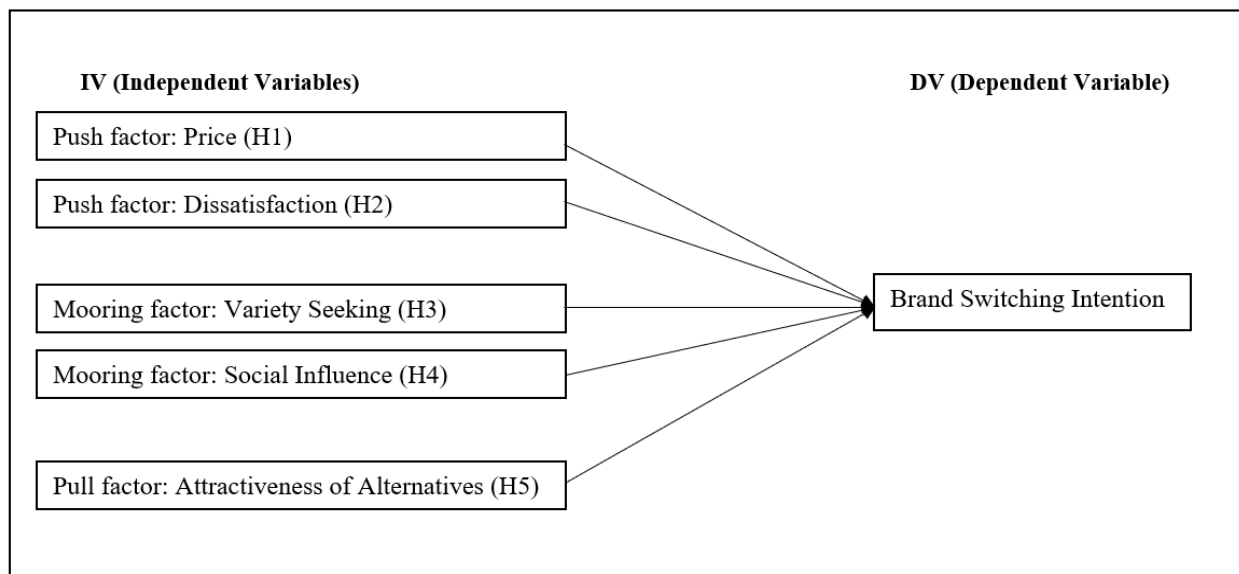
H4: Social influence has a significant relationship with brand switching intention.

#### ***Pull Factor: Attractiveness of Alternatives***

According to Chang et al. (2014), attractiveness of alternatives relates to consumers' perception of the potential satisfaction provided by rival brands in the market. More specifically, it refers to their positive evaluation of prospective substitutes. According to Bravo (2016), consumers' willingness to switch brands is influenced by the benefits they anticipate from a rival brand. In a similar vein, Sánchez García & Curras-Perez (2019) discovered that attractiveness of alternative has a direct effect towards the brand switching intention. Wahyono (2018) also found that the attractiveness of alternatives has a considerable and favorable direct impact on switching behavior. Similar outcome was also reported by Chan, Zhang, Wang, and Li (2022).

The following is therefore hypothesized:

H5: Attractiveness of alternatives has a significant relationship with brand switching intention. Figure 1 illustrates the research framework for this study which is developed based on the PPM model. The model is designed to determine the major variables that affect smartphone users' decisions to switch brands. Push factors are represented by price and dissatisfaction, while the mooring factors are represented by variety seeking and social influence. Meanwhile, the pull factor is represented by the attractiveness of alternatives.



**Figure 1: Research Framework**

### **Research Methodology**

This study employed the quantitative approach using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on reference to past studies. The study variables include the following: price (five items) adopted from Jung et al. (2017) and Suki (2013); dissatisfaction (five items) adopted from Jung et al. (2017) and Hew et al. (2017); variety seeking (five items) adopted from Peng, Zhao, Zhu (2016) and Aroean (2012); social influence (five items) adopted from (Hew et al. 2012) and Gulamali and Persson (2017); attractiveness of alternatives (four items) adopted from Jung et al. (2017) and Hou et al. (2011); and switching intention (three items) adopted from Chang et al. (2014). Five-point Likert scale was applied with a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing strongly disagree to 5 as strongly agree.

The targeted respondent for this study is Generation Y smartphone users in Malaysia born between the year 1985 and 1999, a tech-savvy generation that grew up with technology and is profoundly familiar with smartphone. This study applied judgemental sampling under the non-probability sampling technique due to the absence of sampling frame (Warren et al., 2014).

A total of 410 questionnaires were distributed to smartphone users in Kuala Lumpur. The specific location for questionnaires distribution is KL Sentral, a world-class centre comprising of Stesen Sentral, corporate towers, hotels, condominiums and shopping mall. It exhibits a high concentration of students, working professionals and individuals from different parts of the country. The respondents were ensured to fulfil these criteria: Generation Y smartphone users who also have the intention to switch the smartphone brand. They were properly acknowledged on the purpose of the survey and were ensured that their participation was voluntary. The questionnaires were thoroughly reviewed after the end of the session to ensure that there were no missing data. The collected data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistic 26 and AMOS 22.

### Findings

After the removal of extreme outliers, 399 responses were remained. Majority of the respondents were female (54.4%) as compared to male respondents (45.6%). 42.4% of the respondents have either obtained certificate, diploma or pre-U qualification. 49.1% of them have degree qualification, 5.5% have their master's degree, 0.5% have doctorate qualification; and 2.5% with other types of education qualification. In terms of income level, 36.8% of them fall under the range of monthly income of none to RM2,500, 45.4% of them have income range between RM2,501 to RM3,500, 9.3% of them have income range between RM3,501 to RM5,000. Meanwhile 6% of the respondents earn between RM5,000 to RM7,500 per month, and 2.5% of them reported a monthly income of RM7,501 and above.

**Table 1: Respondents' Demographics Information**

Variables	Classification	Frequency	Total Frequency	Percentage ( per cent)	Total Percentage
Gender	Male	182	399	45.6	100
	Female	217		54.4	
Education Level	Certificate/ Diploma/ Pre-U	169	399	42.4	100
	Degree	196		49.1	
	Master's	22		5.5	
	Doctorate	2		0.5	
	Other	10		2.5	
	Income Level	RM0 to RM2,500		147	
RM2,501-RM3,500		181	45.4		
RM3,501-RM5,000		37	9.3		
Rm5,000-RM7,500		24	6.0		
RM7,501 and above		10	2.5		

### Validating the Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the model's fit and provide support for both convergent and discriminant validity. The results of the CFA are presented in

Table 1. The measurement model's fit demonstrated an acceptable fit with RMSEA=0.064, CFI=0.944, TLI=0.936, and normed chi-square=2.64.

**Table 2: Goodness-of-fit Results for Measurement Model**

Name of index	Index Full Name	Acceptance threshold	Values
RMSEA	Root Mean Square of Error	< 0.08	0.064
CFI	Comparative Fit Index	> 0.9	0.944
TLI	Tucker Lewis Index	> 0.9	0.936
$\chi^2/df$	Normed Chi-square	< 5.0	2.642753521
$\chi^2$	Chi-Square		750.542
df	Degree of Freedom		284

Source: Developed for the present study

Convergent validity was measured by the factor loading of each measurement scale items and average variance extracted (AVE). The purpose of convergent validity test is to assess whether different measures or indicators of the same construct are consistent and converge. As presented in Table 2, the factors loading values for all measurement scale items were all above the cut-off point of 0.60 as recommended by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham (2014). Meanwhile, the AVE values of this study range from 0.616 to 0.803 which have all surpassed the recommended threshold of 0.50 as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Reliability of variables in this study is assessed through Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR). The purpose of reliability test is to assess whether the measurement instrument produces consistent and reliable results. According to Hair et al. (2014), a variable is considered reliable if CA and CR values meet or exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70. As presented in Table 2, CA results range from 0.883 to 0.938 while CR values range from 0.884 to 0.937. This shows that the variables of the study are reliable.

**Table 3: Convergent Validity and Reliability of the Variables**

Constructs	Items	Factor Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Price	P1	0.792	0.913	0.912868	0.724315
	P2	0.822			
	P3	0.917			
	P4	0.868			
Dissatisfaction	D1	0.899	0.938	0.937975	0.751696
	D2	0.865			
	D3	0.887			
	D4	0.822			
Variety Seeking	VS1	0.832	0.936	0.936066	0.74554
	VS2	0.878			
	VS3	0.888			
	VS4	0.847			
	VS5	0.871			
Social Influence	SI1	0.787	0.889	0.889273	0.616357
	SI2	0.782			
	SI3	0.803			
	SI4	0.786			

	SI5	0.767			
Attractiveness of Alternative	AA1	0.8	0.883	0.884459	0.657375
	AA2	0.874			
	AA3	0.76			
	AA4	0.805			
Switching Intention	S1	0.909	0.924	0.924635	0.803548
	S2	0.899			
	S3	0.881			

Source: Developed for the present study

Discriminant validity assess whether the measures of different constructs are distinct from one another and do not correlate. It is determined by two criteria. Firstly, the square root of AVE of each construct must be greater than the correlation with other constructs; secondly, the AVE values must be greater than the maximum-shared-squared-variance (MSV) as according to Fornell and Larcker (1981). Based on the results presented in Table 3, both criteria are fulfilled, indicating an acceptable level of discriminant validity.

**Table 4: Discriminant Validity of the Variables**

Variables	AVE	MSV	AA	P	D	VS	SI	S
AA	0.657	0.573	<b>0.811</b>					
P	0.724	0.130	0.278	<b>0.851</b>				
D	0.752	0.130	0.231	0.361	<b>0.867</b>			
VS	0.746	0.166	0.407	0.224	0.138	<b>0.863</b>		
SI	0.616	0.573	0.757	0.183	0.146	0.322	<b>0.785</b>	
S	0.804	0.496	0.704	0.282	0.267	0.397	0.677	<b>0.896</b>

Source: Developed for the present study

Notes, a) AA= Attractiveness of Alternative, P=Price, D=Dissatisfaction, VS=Variety Seeking SI=Social Influence, S=Switching Intention

b) The diagonal entries (in Bold and Italics) represent the square roots of AVE

### Validating the Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Once the validation of measurement model and reliability test were completed; the validation of the structural model was carried out through structural equation modelling (SEM). The results, as showed in Table 4, returned with a good model fit for the structural model with RMSEA=0.026, CFI=0.991, TLI=0.989, and normed chi-square=1.2278.

**Table 5: Goodness-of-fit Results for Structural Model**

Name of index	Index Full Name	Acceptance threshold	Values
RMSEA	Root Mean Square of Error	< 0.08	0.026
CFI	Comparative Fit Index	> 0.9	0.991
TLI	Tucker Lewis Index	> 0.9	0.989
$\chi^2/df$	Normed Chi-square	< 5.0	1.2778
$\chi^2$	Chi-Square		343.75
df	Degree of Freedom		269

Source: Developed for the present study

Next, hypotheses testing was conducted. The hypotheses results are presented in Table 5. In terms of push factors, price returned with beta=0.037, p=0.008, and dissatisfaction returned with beta=0.036, p=0.035 which shows that both factors have significant relationship with



switching intention, therefore H1 and H2 are supported. As for mooring factors, variety seeking returned with  $\beta=0.040$  and  $p=0.028$ , indicating significant relationship with switching intention, thereby supporting H3. For social influence, significant relationship with switching intention was strongly present as the results returned with  $\beta=0.106$  and  $p<0.001$ ; therefore, H4 is strongly supported. Lastly for pull factor, attractiveness of alternative, returned with  $\beta=0.100$  and  $p<0.001$ . This shows that a strong and statistically significant relationship between attractiveness of alternative and switching intention was evident, hence, H5 is strongly supported.

**Table 5 : Hypotheses Testing**

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p-value	Std. Estimate
H1	P→S	.098	.037	2.669	.008	.112
H2	D→S	.076	.036	2.106	.035	.086
H3	VS→S	.088	.040	2.197	.028	.095
H4	SI→S	.499	.106	4.687	***	.369
H5	AA→S	.377	.100	3.768	***	.315

Source: Developed for the present study

Notes, S.E.: Standard error of regression weight( $\beta$ ), C.R.: Critical Ratios for regression weight; P: Level of Significance, \*\*\* $p < .001$

Based on the results from the data analysed, the hypothesis testing summary are show in Table 6:

**Table 6 : Hypotheses Testing Summary**

Hypothesis	Direct relation	Results
H1	Price has a significant relationship with brand switching intention.	Supported
H2	Dissatisfaction has a significant relationship with brand switching intention.	Supported
H3	Variety seeking has a significant relationship with brand switching intention.	Supported
H4	Social influence has a significant relationship with brand switching intention.	Supported (strong)
H5	Attractiveness of alternatives has a significant relationship with brand switching intention.	Supported (strong)

Source: Developed for the present study

## Discussion

Based on the results, social influence (mooring factor) and attractiveness of alternatives (pull factor) are found to be the two strongest factors that show significant relationship with smartphone users' brand switching intention.

In this study, social influence includes the influence from family, friends, mass media as well as social media influencers. This means that when it comes to brand switching the smartphone users are able to get influenced not only by their family and friends, traditional mass media but also the social media influencers that they adore. This finding is coherent with the prior studies

which revealed that social influence plays a significant role in consumers' switching intention (Sahay & Sharma, 2010; Shah, Husnain, & Zubairshah, 2018; Cheah, 2017; Gashi, 2017)

On the other hand, attractiveness of alternative is when the alternative companies provide better and more superior and suitable products and services and appear to be more attractive to the users (Chang et. al, 2014). The study found that this factor is also one of the strongest factors that affect smartphone users' brand switching intention. This finding is consistent with prior studies whereby consumers, when faced with more attractive options, their satisfaction towards their original option will drop and portray high tendency to switch brand Liu, Li, Xu, & Heikkilä (2016). Other than that, past study also proved that the attractiveness of a substitute product tends to bring negative impact to the original options and it leads to brand switching intention Zhang, Ding, Ma, & Wang (2018).

Meanwhile, the result of the study also found that other factors, although not as significant as the previous two, are also factors that lead to the switching intention among the smartphone users although. The factors include that price (push factor), dissatisfaction (push factor), and variety seeking (mooring factor) .

Based on this study result, when the smartphone users find that the price of the smartphone is high and does not int into their user experience, they will consider switching brand for their next purchase. This finding is in line with the previous study of Jung, Han, & Oh (2017) which mentioned that price is one of the significant push factors that cause consumer to switch brand. Other than that, it is also aligned with the study of Uppu, Pujari & Gundala (2016); Shah et al. (2018); Ugwuanyi (2017) which found that price possessed significant impact in affecting consumer brand switching intention.

Next, dissatisfaction is the negative feeling that arise when consumers experience did not meet their expectation. The study revealed that when smartphone users are feeling dissatisfied with their current smartphone brand, they will also consider switching the brand in the future. This result is consistent with the prior findings which conclude that dissatisfaction is one of the factors that lead to brand switching intention among consumers (Shah et al. (2018); Jung et al, 2017)

Lastly, variety seeking is users' personal nature to look for something new. The result of the study supported that variety seeking as one of the factors that lead to brand switching intention among the smartphone users. This is congruent with the prior studies finding that conclude that high variety seeking behavior has significant impact on users' switching intention (Jung et al., 2017; Palma et al., 2021).

### **Limitation of Study and Recommendation for Future Study**

Firstly, this study only used quantitative method whereby "closed-ended" questions were administered in the survey. Although closed-ended questions are simple to answer, they will limit the respondents to provide detailed answers and opinions. Besides that, the targeted respondents of this study are limited to only Generation Y and this does not represent the entire consumer groups of the smartphone market.

Therefore, as recommendation for future study, future researchers can combine quantitative and qualitative approaches. Under qualitative method, the interview approach will allow the researchers to collect more in-dept findings as the respondents are not constraint to give their

personal opinions. Moreover, future research can also extend the target respondents' age group to better represent the entire consumer base of the smartphone market.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides significant implication for both established and emerging smartphone companies. It gives valuable insight into the factors influencing smartphone users' brand switching intention. By identifying the greatest key factors which are social influence and attractiveness of alternatives, smartphone companies can focus their efforts on enhancing these aspects to better retain and attract customers.

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