

HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT? – A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON CONSUMPTION PATTERNS OF MOBILE APPLICATIONS (APPS) AMONG GENDER

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Abstract: Mobile or smartphone becomes an inevitable part of one's daily life. Mobile is the primary device for Indians as far as the digital needs are concerned. It is studied that on an average a consumer is exposed to at least four hours of mobile consumption on any day. Most of the works get done through mobile phones now days starting from payments of bills to entertainment to socialize with friends and families. Mobile applications make the task facile and convenient as its very easy to install/uninstall besides most of the apps are free on any platforms. Consumers have various intentions in adopting and using mobile applications. Factors such as influence, motivation, reference, education, entertainment, play an important role in consumption of mobile apps. It would be interesting to study how men and women consume mobile applications as they have different taste and preferences. This study discusses overall consumption patterns of mobile applications adopted by women and men. The results of the study provide insights to the marketers and app developers for better communication and consumer engagement.

Keywords: Consumption patterns, Gender, Mobile applications, Usage and Preferences.

Introduction: People are dependent on technology more now days to accomplish their needs. Mobile phones drive the entire day of one's life, starting from alarm to wake you up to working on emails to manage social networks and to entertain as well. There are in total 2.8 million apps are available on ios platform and 2.2 million apps on android platform [1]. Besides this, the downloaded mobile apps worldwide were 175 billion in the year 2017 [2]. These stats accelerate the growth in future as well because the mobile applications make life easy and comfortable, where one can reach to the whole world in a fraction of seconds. Recently, apps have started to attract research attention in the marketing and managerial literature, particularly in the research in branding [3] and consumer adoption [4], where their effects on brands and product stickiness has been investigated. Because of the huge popularity of apps, the "Apps Culture" comes into existence [5]. Very few researches have been done to explore this culture, specifically to the comparative study of gender. People have embraced the mobile phone technology to satisfy various needs, like, getting information, education, entertainment, socializing and many more.

Review of Literature: Mobile devices provide users both entertainment and productivity through mobile apps [6] The number of connected mobile devices will reach 10 billion by 2020, and smartphones and apps are transforming various facets of society [7], [8]. Apps are more user friendly, can be less expensive and easier to download and install compared to desktop applications [9]. Apps can satisfy both hedonic and utilitarian values depending on the app type and the usage need (Wang, Liao & Yang 2013). Myriad studies have been done on the usage of mobile apps in the different sectors, like medical and health services [10], [11], travel-related tasks [12] or the use of news and location-based app services [13]. Consumers use mobile applications for various reasons like, surf on internet, for socializing and networking, read news, play games, get entertainment, listen music and many more [14]. Usage of an applications depend on many reasons; one such reason is smartphone addiction [15]. Moreover, apps are

also used to develop new relationships and maintain the old one [16]. It also allows to connect with the world through social media apps such as Facebook and Whatsapp [17].

Methodology: Women and men both have different taste and preference for the adoption of technology. This comparative study focuses on the consumption patterns of both gender (men and women) for mobile applications usage. This exploratory study has collected 18 in-depth interviews in total (10 females and 8 males). Transcripts of each interviews are prepared and on that basis, content analysis was done. The authors found certain themes to elaborate the findings which are explain in detail. Moreover, certain demographic details such as, age, monthly income, education details, and family & marital status are also keep into consideration set.

Results and Discussion: *Demographic profile:* out of the total respondents, majority belongs to the age group between 18-35 years. All the interviewees were working professionals having post-graduation degree. Only two male candidates had doctorate degree. As far as the marital status is concerned, 12 respondents (8 females and 4 males) are married, while others are single. Most of the respondents live in a nuclear family.

Findings:

Table I: Basic Details Regarding System And Apps

		Female	Male
Mobile System	Ios	4	1
	Android	6	7
Average number of applications		39	48
Average number of applications use on	Daily Basis	6	6
	Weekly Basis	4	3
	Need base	29	39

It was found that male candidates have more numbers of apps in their phone than female, however, when it comes to usage, both the gender use average six apps on a daily basis. It was found in the study that social media apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook are frequently used apps among all the respondents. On an average after every 15-20 minutes, respondents are used to check notifications which ultimately leads to the consumption of apps. Even though there are many apps in mobile phone, it is very surprising that most of them (around 75%) are unused or used whenever required. Most of the time, applications are accessed during office hours more rather than at home. However, respondents answered that they check all the notifications in the morning itself before leaving for the job.

All the respondents are agreed on, “friends” are one of the most important sources from where one can get information regarding any new apps. They also influence for the downloading recommended apps. Moreover, app stores and promotional messages are the second choice for getting information regarding any new apps. It is interesting to know that males consider only utility factors while downloading any app, while on contradiction, females consider technical features such as size of an app along with ratings and reviews posted on the play store. In the same way, males don’t prefer to recommend any app to others while females do.

As the data shown in table I, most of the downloaded apps are unused or respondents use it whenever its required. So it happens many time that when one feels issues like storage capacity, slowdown function in mobile, or feel security concerns, respondents shared they start deleting apps which is not in much use. One of the female respondent shared, “I deleted Truecaller app because I got unwanted calls

from unknown people after installing that app". The another reason for deleting apps that candidate shared was, it consumes much battery power and mobile handset discharged quickly.

Both the groups revealed that usage of mobile applications provide convenience and make their lives easy, efficient and comfortable. Along with that they also get quick updates and information through social media apps.

"I don't get time to read a newspaper as I am working woman. So the app installed in my phone gives me all the headlines for the day. Also it updates me with breaking news" – a female respondent.

Mobile applications also provide platform for entertainment. Respondents are used to watch online videos, movies and series in their leisure time. Besides this, through mobile applications one can maintain connections with their friends and family members at any point in time.

"I have my relatives in foreign country. Social media apps help me to stay connected with them. Even, with the video call facility, I can see them and talk with them. I think mobile apps are more helpful in maintaining long distance relationships" – a male respondent.

However, there are certain negative perspectives also, which respondents shared for using mobile apps so frequently in a day.

"Over usage of mobile apps is destructive. It consumes productive time and don't let you active on your assigned tasks. As a result, one become less productive and ruin his/her work efficiency. Relations are become more virtual than real now days" – a male respondent.

"Technology has its own merits and demerits. I personally feel that as people are dependent on these apps, emotional connect is dying. They share feelings by sending emojis and not calling personally" – a female respondent.

In a nutshell, in this study researchers don't found much difference in the usage patterns of mobile applications among men and women. They are different only in the number of applications downloaded and recommendation of an app to others.

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