

Smartphone Usage among College Students - A Comparative Study

***Shruthi C.S.¹, and ** Indiramma B.S.²**

** Post graduate student, **Assistant Professor,
Department of Human Development and Research Centre,
Smt. V.H.D. Central Institute of Home Science (Autonomous)
Bangalore, 560 001.*

** Corresponding author
cssshruthi96@gmail.com¹, indirammabs18@gmail.com²*

Abstract

The aim of the present study was to know the trends of smartphone use among college students. The objectives of the study were to know the accessibility, the usage pattern of smartphone and to understand the popular smartphone applications used by two age groups of college students. Survey design was used to collect the data. A total sample of 160 college going students comprising of 80 boys and 80 girls in two age groups were selected randomly from three academic institutions of Bangalore city. A self-structured questionnaire was used to elicit the data. The data was compiled, tabulated and analyzed by using number and percentage. The results indicated that, every student is having access to at least one smartphone. The findings also suggest that most of them started using their smartphone when they have entered the college for studies. The results also indicated that they mostly use in the afternoon or night. Majority of them used the phones at home. The findings also revealed that students are utilizing their smartphone to the fullest to connect with others and socialise through various applications.

Key words: access, smartphone, students, usage

Introduction

Smartphone technology is ubiquitous in the lives of today's college students. Smartphone use has become vital to students because they use them for several purposes not only for those similar to what the regular phone or Internet provide, but also to explore applications which provide new functions. Each day is a challenge for them without a smartphone, every minute from the time students wake up to going to bed, they need their smartphone near them. It has provided them an opportunity to explore themselves with various apps that make their classwork or assignments easier, to improve their communication with friends or enhances knowledge in the field of their study. Majority of them use it for social networking and entertainment also (Damor, et al 2018, Peter, et.al., 2017). As young students they show an increase continuity level of using smartphone and having an ownership to one gives them a platform to showcase their independency. They also use their phones to showcase their lifestyle, to display different content through social media by interacting with friends and own exploration of themselves. The other added uses of smartphone are also for learning, gaming and entertainment purposes. (Barth 2015, Hong et al., 2012)

The smartphones are popular among students because they increase their social communication and expand their opportunities for establishing social relationships. As a result, they are using the smartphones to the maximum time in a day (Sales 2016, Barth 2015, Ghosh

et.al., 2016, Rai et.al 2016). At home, they use it for various applications (apps), videos, listening to music and for taking videos. Majority of the students opine that smartphone is useful for their education (Saraswathi 2017). Taking pictures, making phone calls, sending text messages and academic referencing are the common purposes of usage of smartphone among students in the college. Many students use smartphones as a regular mobile phone and also as a computer with an internet connection (Alfawareh et.al., 2013).

A relationship with smartphones and its applications starts during their college years as they feel that they get freedom to exercise their thought and feelings during this time of lifespan. The need to communicate and to gain social approval among peers is at its peak during youth period (Santrock 2017). Smartphone provides the youth a way for expression of emotions in the social groups. As a result, there is popularity of different applications among the students.

Methodology

Aim: To study the trends of smartphone use among college students.

Objectives:

1. To know the accessibility of smartphone among two age groups of college going boys and girls.
2. To understand the time of use of smartphone among two age groups of college going boys and girls
3. To study the popular smartphone applications used by two age groups of college going boys and girls

Procedure:

Survey design was used to collect the data. A total sample of 160 college going students comprising of 80 boys and 80 girls from two groups who were studying in pre university (PUC) and degree courses were selected randomly from three academic institutions of Bangalore city. The age groups of the sample were 16-17 years and 20-23 years. A self-structured questionnaire was used to elicit the data regarding the basic and specific information. The specific information included the information regarding the smartphone accessibility, class in which they started using smartphone, time and place of use of smartphone use, and the popular smartphone applications used. The data was compiled, tabulated and analyzed by using number and percentage.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Age distribution of the respondents

Characteristics	Category	Boys		Girls	
		N	%	N	%
PUC Students	16 Years	26	65	30	75
	17 Years	14	35	10	25
Degree Students	20 Years	6	16	11	28
	21 Years	13	32	7	17
	22 Years	8	20	6	15
	23 Years	13	32	16	40
Total		40	100	40	100

Table-1 depicts the age distribution of the respondents. It was observed that among the PUC respondents, majority of the boys (65%) and the girls (75%) were of 16 years old, the remaining (boys-35%, girls-25%) were 17 years old. With regard to the students from degree course, it was found that a higher percentage of boys (32%) were 21 and 23 years old and a higher percentage of the girls (40%) were 23 years old.

Table-2: Accessibility of smartphone

Smartphone usage	Particulars	PUC				Degree			
		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Number of smartphones accessed by the students	One	18	45	25	63	28	70	28	70
	Two	19	48	13	32	8	20	8	20
	More than Two	3	7	2	5	4	10	4	10
Total		40	100	40	100	40	100	40	100

Table-2 depicts the accessibility and use of smartphone by the respondents. With regard to the smartphone accessibility by the PUC respondents, it was observed that a higher percentage of boys (48%) have access to two and higher percentage of girls (63%) have access to one smartphone. A smaller percentage of them have access to more than two smartphones. It is evident that majority of both boys and girls from degree course had access to one smartphone, 20% of them had access to two smartphones and only 10% of them had access to more than two smartphones. The findings reveal that all the respondents have access to phone. The results are in support with Ghosh, et al., (2016) where it was reported that 94% of students had possessed a smartphone and some had two smartphones.

Table-3: Time and place of smartphone use by the respondents

Smartphone usage	Particulars	PUC				Degree			
		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Class in which students started using the smartphone	School Years	19	47	20	50	7	17	7	17
	PUC	21	53	20	50	16	40	15	38
	Degree	-	-	-	-	17	43	18	45
Place where smartphones are used often	Home	22	55	24	60	29	73	29	73
	College	13	33	9	23	5	12	4	10
	While Travelling	5	12	7	17	6	15	7	17
Time of smartphone use	In the morning	2	5	5	12	6	15	8	20
	In afternoon and evening	30	75	20	50	21	53	20	50
	During the night	8	20	15	38	13	32	12	30
Total		40	100	40	100	40	100	40	100

Table-3 indicates the time and place of smartphone use by the respondents. With regard to the class in which the respondents started using smartphones, it was observed that about 50% of the PUC respondents started using the smartphones when they entered PUC and the remaining started using in school years. A similar trend was observed with regard to the use of smartphones by the students of degree course where they have started using the smartphones when they entered degree course. Forty percent of the boys and 38% of the girls of degree have started using the smartphone when they were in PUC.

The responses about the place where the smartphones were used the most by the respondents, indicated that a majority of PUC respondents (boys= 55%, girls= 60%) used their phones at home and 33% of the boys and 23% of the girls used their phones at college. A smaller percentage of them used their phone while travelling. The responses of the respondents from degree course discern that majority of both boys and girls (73%) used their smartphones at home, followed by travelling time. Only 10% of them used their smartphones during college hours. The results are in line with Rai, et al., (2016) where it was reported that majority of the students used their smartphones at home.

With regard to the time of smartphone use by the respondents of PUC course, it was observed that majority of them used their smartphones in the afternoon and evening (boys= 75%, girls= 50%). It was further observed that 20% of the boys and 38% of the girls used it during the night. A similar trend was observed, with regard to the time of smartphone use by the respondents of degree course where it was observed that majority of them used their smartphones in the afternoon and evening (boys= 53%, girls= 50%) and also during the night time (boys= 32%, girls= 30%). This implies that majority of the respondents use their phones in the afternoon and evening and a considerable percent of them use it during night time. The results are in association with Ghosh, et.al., (2016) where it was reported that the student regularly use the smartphones at late night.

Table-4: Popular smartphone applications used by the respondents

Applications used on Smartphones	PUC				Degree			
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Facebook	36	45	34	42	38	48	35	44
Instagram	13	16	28	35	18	22	30	38
Google search/Chrome	32	38	19	24	12	15	29	36
Gmail	7	9	6	7	2	3	39	49
WhatsApp	38	48	40	50	35	44	40	50
Paytm/Google pay	-	-	5	6	25	31	-	-
YouTube	35	44	31	39	38	48	25	31
Gaming apps	37	46	7	9	31	39	-	-
Academic forums	2	3	30	38	1	1	2	3

A cursory glance at the Table-4 reveals the popular smartphone applications used by the respondents. Among the boys of PUC course, the popular apps used were WhatsApp (48%), Gaming app (46%), Facebook (45%), YouTube (44%) and Google search (38%). With regard to the popular smartphone applications used by the PUC girls, it was observed that WhatsApp

(50%), Facebook (42%), YouTube (39%), Academic forum (38%) and Instagram (35%) were popular among them.

Among the boys of degree course, the popular apps used were Facebook, YouTube (48%), WhatsApp (44%), Gaming apps (39%) and Paytm (25%). With regard to the popular applications used by the degree girls, it was observed that WhatsApp (50%), Gmail (49%), Facebook (44%), Instagram (38%), Google search (36%), and YouTube (31%) were used by many of them.

The results thus indicate that only a few of them used the academic forums and the popular smartphone applications used by the respondents were most likely to be WhatsApp and Facebook. The popular applications used by the respondents are in line with the report of Peter, et al., (2017) where it was reported that majority of the present-day youth use instant messenger-WhatsApp and Facebook for social networking.

Summary and Conclusion

Millennials prefer new generation smartphones which comes with a panoply of applications. Mobile apps are one of the reasons why smartphones are so much popular today. These apps are what make phones and tablets smart, in terms of functionality and features. There's almost an app for everything nowadays, and this can make students life easier, safer and more fun with these interesting and amazing conceptualised apps. Hence, the smartphones are becoming more users friendly and have become an integral part of present-day youth.

Based on the above results, the present study concludes that smartphones are an integral part of students life. Every student has an access to at least one smartphone. The findings also suggest that most of them started using their smartphone when they have entered their respective courses. Most of the students use their smartphone in the afternoon or in the evening and some of them use it in night time. Majority of the students use it at their homes. The findings also suggest that students are utilizing their smartphone to the fullest to connect and socialise with their near and dear ones through WhatsApp and Facebook.

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