

Use of Smartphones among Research Scholars at Bangalore University: A Study

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ABSTRACT

The present a study on use of Smartphones among research scholars at Bangalore university. The study indicated that most of the research scholars are used smartphones, in this paper sought to investigate the digital literacy using smartphones of research scholars in Bangalore University. The study brings about the purpose of using smartphones, browser used to search information in smartphone, mobile application used for research, advantages and limitations of using smartphone. The most used browser was the Google Chrome 81.66% and nearly 95.83% respondents used typed keywords to search for information on smartphones. The reliability of information obtained was checked only by respondents. It also observed that the major benefits for using smartphone was their immediate access to information and the barrier was their screen size, the result from this study reflect the research scholar's willingness to adopt the digital technology for information access.

KEYWORDS: Smartphones, Research scholars, Digital information literacy skills.

INTRODUCTION

Smartphones have transformed the mode of human interactions across the world by generating diverse opportunities for storing, collecting and sharing information conveniently at a fast pace. Smartphone applications (apps) are software programs, developed to improve consumer experience. These wonderful electronic gadgets have invaded personal lives and are still rising in popularity. They are used pervasively by university students, who are usually well versed in emerging information and communication technologies, and employ their smartphones as study tool for research and education., Smartphones were used by 1.86 billion people in 2015, 2.1 billion people in 2016, 2.32 billion people in 2017. This number is expected to be 2.71 billion in 2019 and 2.87 billion in 2020 (Statista, 2017). Because of the ubiquitous nature and widespread availability of the smartphones, there is a need to understand the use of this technology for information access. Thus this study attempt to give an insight into smartphone use for academic purpose by research scholars in Bangalore University.

Research questions

- What are the main purposes of using smartphone by research scholars?
- Which browser is most sought to search information in smartphones?
- What are methods used to search information in smartphone?
- What are the academic apps used by research scholars for their research?
- How the reliability of information and academic apps checked?
- What are major limitations of using smartphone for seeking information?

METHODOLOGY

To collect the data for the study, survey methodology is used. For collection of the data structured questionnaire was distributed among the research scholars of Bangalore university. The questionnaire was distributed to the registered research scholars (full time). the questionnaire was distributed to all the research scholars. The questionnaire included items on demographic variables and type of smartphone used. The participant responded to questions on smartphone use patterns, such as the duration of daily smartphone use. Out of 150 research scholars, 120 have responded. The total responses received for the study is 80%.

Table 1: Population size

No. of Questionnaire distributed	Total No. of filled-in questionnaire received	Percentage of responses (%)
150	120	80%

Table 2: Gender wise distribution of respondents

Sl. No	Gender	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Male	75	62.5
2	Female	45	37.5
	Total	120	100

The data summarized in the table 2 presents the Gender wise distribution of respondents. it shows that 62.5% of the respondents are male and 37.5% of the respondents are female.

Table 3: Use of various types of smartphones

Type of smartphone	Frequency	Percentage
Smartphone with android OS	111	92.5
iPhone	9	7.5
Total	120	100

The above table indicates that 92.5% respondents used smartphones with android OS like Samsung, Vivo, Redmi, etc. and 7.5% respondents used iPhone.

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Table 4: Average number of hours' respondents spend using their smartphone each day

Hours	Frequency	Percentage
1-2 hours	56	46.66
3-5	87	72.5
6-9 hours	20	16.66
10-15 hours	15	12.5
More than 15hours	7	5.83

As reported in Table 4, it has been identified that the majority of the respondents spend their day in using their smartphone between 3-5 hours (72. %) followed by 1-2 hours (46.77%) used smartphones, 6-9 hours (16.66%) used smartphones, 10-15 hours' respondent used 10-15 hours and More than 15 hours (5.53%) respondent used Smartphones.

Table 5: Purpose of using smartphone

Purpose of use	Frequency	Percentage
Phone calls	120	100
Browsing internet	119	99.16
Texting	102	85
Social media (WhatsApp, Facebook , Twitter, Instagram)	118	98.33
E-mail	102	85
Games	70	58.33
Online shopping	93	77.5
Taking Photos	103	85.83
Watching videos	107	89.16

Table 5 indicated that the most popular features on the smartphone that the respondent used were to make Phone calls (100%) and Browsing internet (99.16%), followed by using Social media like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. (98.33%), E-mail (85%), Texting (85%), watching videos (89.16%), Taking Photos (85.83%), online shopping (77.5%), games (58.33%) respondent using Smart phones.

Table 6: Use of browser for searching information on Smartphone

Browser	Frequency	Percentage
Google Chrome	98	81.66
Mozilla Firefox	8	6.66
UC browser	10	8.33
Opera	0	0
Safari	4	3.33
Edge	0	0
Total	120	100

Table 6 shows the browsers used to search information in smartphone. The most used browser on smartphone was Chrome (81.66%), followed by UC browser (8.33%), Firefox (6.66%), Safari (3.33%). It was found that none used Opera or Edge browsers in their smartphone for searching information.

Table 7: Use of Search techniques in smartphone

Searching method	Frequency	Percentage
Directly search by typing URL	45	37.5
Using typed keywords	115	95.83
Spoken keywords	59	49.16
Images	7	5.83
Using Boolean Operators/truncations	15	12.5

It is observed from table 7 that majority of respondents, that is , 115 respondents (95.83%) used typed keywords as their search technique for searching information on their smartphones, spoken keywords like Google voice were used by 59 respondents (49.16%), 45 respondents (37.5%) typed URLs to search information, Boolean operators / truncation were used by 15 respondents (12.5%), and images were used by 7 respondents (5.83%).

Table 8: Use of Academic apps for research

Academic apps used	Frequency	Percentage
Calculators	116	96.66
Unit conversion tools	20	16.66
Dictionary	101	84.16
Flash card apps	7	5.83

The above table gives an account of the academic applications used in smartphone by research scholars for their research work. Calculators were used by almost 116 respondents (96.66%), dictionary was used by 101 respondents (84.16%), unit conversion tools like Convert Droid, Unit converter, Convert Pad applications were used by 20 respondents (16.66%), and 7 respondents (5.83%) used flash card app for their research work.

Table 9 : Reliability of the academic apps

Method of checking reliability	Frequency	Percentage
App creator is authoritative source	5	4.16
Review of the app	17	14.16
Updating of the app	14	11.66
Do not check reliability	84	70
Total	120	100

Table 9 deals with the method used to check the reliability of the academic app. almost 84 respondents (70%) stated that they do not check reliability of the academic app, 17 respondent (14.16%) stated that they look at reviews of the app, 14 respondent (11.66%) see whether the app is updated to check the reliability and 5 respondents (4.16%) check whether the app creator is authoritative source.

Table 10: Benefits of using smartphone

Benefits of using smartphone	Frequency	Percentage
Immediate access to information	116	96.66
Easy Handling	113	94.16
Light reading during spare time	76	63.33

Table 10 highlights the benefits of using smartphone for seeking information. Result indicated that immediate access to information (96.66%) was the foremost advantages of using smartphone for seeking information, followed by easy handling (94.16%) and light reading during spare time (63.33%).

Table 11: Barriers of using smartphone for seeking information

Barriers	Frequency	Percentage
Screen size	83	69.16
Speed	45	37.5
Key boarding	76	63.33
Compatibility with software	40	33.33
Compatibility with other computer devices	48	40

Table 11 shows the barriers of using smartphone for seeking information. Results indicated that screen size was the major barrier to seek information (69.16%), followed by keyboarding (63.33%), compatibility with other computer device (40%), compatibility with software (33.33%) and speed (37.5%).

CONCLUSION

The rising growth of mobile device has made research scholars and students to reconsider their information seeking behaviour from the traditional devices to smartphone. With this rapid adoption of smartphone for information access, the author has investigated the digital literacy of research scholars using smartphone in Bangalore University. An increasing number of research scholars have started using smartphones to access information. The study indicated that Google Chrome was the most sought browser and typed keywords were used to search information. However, the reliability of the information or mobile apps was not checked by most of the respondents. Smartphone have a multitude of advantages, but also has potential barriers as well. The major barrier of smartphone is the small size of the smartphone, which results in consistent scrolling. Furthermore, some websites do not support mobile device, hence search result are minimal in smartphones. Despite the limitations, it can be strongly asserted from this study that smartphones have made tremendous impact on research scholars information access due to their ubiquity and immediately accessibility.

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