



Cellular Usage Habits of The Youth in Mumbai City

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ABSTRACT

People consider cellular phones to be an inevitable part of their lives. There has been a shift from using more of the primary functions of the phone to advanced and data related functions. The entire primary research was conducted in Mumbai. Data collection was done through a detailed questionnaire and personal interviews of 150 youth across Mumbai city and the western and central suburbs.

KEYWORDS : cellular, usage pattern, changing utility, medical side-effects.

The cellular revolution

Mobile phones today have changed our lives entirely. This development is expanding every day, with new technologies being evolved everyday and replacing the older ones; aided by faster and better coverage networks for connectivity.

Business leaders today mention that mobile phone is the strongest medium to have a successful venture. Anything and everything based on a mobile phone is most close to being successful, owing to the reach it has acquired in today's time. This industry has now started seeing cut throat competition in the phone manufacturing industry and the service provider industry. However, the customer benefits, with increased choices, and lower profit margins offering lower and lower prices to the customers.

In earlier times cell-phone used to be a craze, symbol of money and power but nowadays even kids find it a necessity of life. Some people interviewed by this researcher consider it as an inevitable part of their lives.

Objectives of the study:

This study was carried out between January and mid-April 2015 with the following objectives in mind:

- To study the habits and attitude of the youth, towards mobile phones.
- To observe the usage patterns amongst youth and arrive at some observations
- To examine the functionality of mobile phones and the shift from using more of the primary functions of the phone to advanced and data related functions.
- To identify the patterns of purchase of cell phones and investigate their awareness regarding recent product launches
- To understand the perception of the youth towards medical side-effects associated with cell phones.

Methodology

The entire primary research was conducted in Mumbai. The youth were defined as the population in the age group 15 to 29 years. Data collection was done through a detailed questionnaire administered to 150 youth across Mumbai city and the western and central suburbs. The usable responses turned out to be 141, the remaining 9 could not be used due to incomplete data. For more in-depth understanding a few personal interviews were also conducted. The responses from the questionnaire and the personal interviews were obtained, compiled, processed and analysed to arrive at the opinions on different issues.

Limitations of the study

Cellular usage in this study refers to use of mobile phone in the presence of cellular network. Thus, only those services have been studied which can be carried on only in the presence of network coverage. Services like Bluetooth, calculator, convertor have not been a part of the study. The population is the urban youth in the city of Mumbai. The results and observations do not apply to the population in general and to the rural youth.

Analysis of data

Table 1 --Number of hours spent on the phone per day (n=141)

Number of hours	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
<2 hours	12	8%
2-4 hours	44	31%
4-6 hours	72	52%
>6 hours	13	9%
Total	141	100%

The general observation of the researcher that it is difficult to find the young generation who is not busy on their phone was somewhat confirmed. This being clearly indicated by the above data where more than 61% of the youth surveyed were found spending more than 4 hours a day on their phones. In the interviews it was discovered that these days many youngsters carry two phones with them, one is of best and high quality while the other is of low quality, they use their best phone just for taking part in mobile games and internet searching and the low quality phone is used for texting and call purpose. And they easily manage to handle both their activities of playing and communicating with their 2 phones in one time. However one needs to realise that the continuous exposure of signal to and from the cell phone can be a serious concern to human health. Thus one must keep a track record of the number of hours spent on the phone and try to limit the same.

Table 2- Most common place of usage of cellular phones (n=141)

Place of Usage	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Home	44	31%
While Travelling (train/ car/rickshaw/bus)	57	41%
Eating Outlets (Restaurants, Cafeteria etc.)	19	13%
College/office	14	10%
Not too sure	7	5%
Total	141	100%

This question tried to understand the most common place where the youth used their cellular phones for the maximum amount of time in a day. 41% of the youth surveyed was seen using their phones while they are on their way to some destination, thus proving cellular phone is frequently used as a great source of entertainment. This was followed by a 31% of the youth using it at their homes, the reason being the availability of wifi facility at most homes. Eating Outlets, College and office premises were not rated as high as the previous two options, since at such places one is engrossed in many other activities i.e. eating, studying and working respectively. About 5% of the respondents were unable to pinpoint where they used their cellular phones for the maximum amount of time in a day.

Table 3- Frequency of checking the phone (n=141)

Time interval	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Interval of 2-5 mins	42	30%
Interval of 10 mins	35	25%
Interval of 30 mins	37	27%
Interval of 60 mins	14	10%
Every time it rings	6	4%
Interval of 1-2 hrs	4	3%
Very rarely	2	1%
Total	141	100%

More than 50% of the youth could not even manage to stay without checking their phones for barely 10 minutes on any given day. This shows the large extent to which the mobile revolution has interweaved into the lives of people especially the youth and many individuals consider it as an inevitable part of their lives. It appears that the youth can't be left without their cell phone today and constantly use it for communication, business or entertainment, the youth can't be left without their cell phone today, even for a matter of few minutes. This has in-turn given rise to new phobias such as monophobia (the fear of being without cell phone) among the youth.

Table 4- Choice of Mobile brand (n=141)

Top brands	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Samsung	52	38%
Micromax	30	21%
Nokia	20	20%
Iphone	24	17%
Others	7	5%
Total	141	100%

With 37 per cent, Samsung appears to be the outright leader with 38% of the respondents voting it at top position. On further questioning, it was learnt that the brand has maintained its top position not only because the models are sleek and user-friendly but also because the brand is it is very economical and affordable. Micromax and Nokia are the favourite choice of about 205 of the respondents of this survey. The respondents pointed out that Micromax seems to be gaining popularity among the youth whereas Nokia has begun to lose its market share. Apple's iPhone stands on the third position, probably because of its high price. This result does appear a little contrasting as the youth due to peer-pressure, would be spending lavishly on their cellular phones. However many of our respondents did point out income constraints. Brands like Karbonn, Lava and Motorola seem to be the new entrants which still have time to gain popularity among the youth of Mumbai.

Table 5- Duration of time the same handset is used (n=141)

Number of years	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
<1	13	9%
1-2	69	49%
2-3	52	37%
>3	7	5%
Total	141	100%

With the technology evolving every minute and with more sophisticated cellular models in the marketplace, more than half of the youth surveyed prefer buying a new and better cell phone every 2 years. The researcher would like to point out that this is a pointer not just to the techno-savvy nature of the youth but also the fact that the youth have a tendency to roughly handle their phones which might lead to the phone being in a non-usable condition in a period of less than 2 years. Only 5% of the total number surveyed asserted that they had not changed their phones since the last three years at least.

Table 6- Usage of the mobile phone while it is being charged (n=141)

Talking while on charge	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Almost daily	35	25%
3-5 times a week	47	33%
2-3 times a week	28	20%
Only during emergency/ Try to avoid	25	18%
Not at all	6	4%
Total	60	100%

It appears that due to constant usage, the battery of the cellular phone needs re-charging periodically. One-fourth of the respondents even talk on their phones on a daily basis while the phones are connected to the charger. This raises very serious concerns and could prove to be fatal. Only 4% of the respondents claimed to never use their cellular phones on the charging mode and this number should be substantially increased through public awareness campaigns.

Table 7—Usage of the mobile phone while driving (n=141)

Usage while driving	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
No	12	9%
Once in while	41	29%
Only during emergency	78	54%
Only while using Google maps	11	8%
Total	141	100%

91% of the respondents admitted to some use of the cellular phones while driving perhaps either as a source of entertainment or to provide directions by way of Google maps. However this could become major causes of accidents because it deviates the attention of the driver.

Table 8- Usage of Online shopping facility on the cellular phone (n=141)

	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Yes	90	64%
No	38	27%
Not much/rarely	13	9%
Total	141	100%

About 64% of the youth surveyed regularly access online shopping websites. On further questioning the motives were cited as compare Product Prices online, locating a store, researching the product features, finding promotional deals and checking the product availability. Some of them even make online purchases using their smart phone. Thus Digital Commerce is gaining popularity among the youth.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Mobile phones have become a total trend among the youth. However, the way they use the phones greatly differs. However, the way people use the phones greatly differs. Whereas for most of us who belong to the older generation, phones may just remain to be an ideal 'calling device', the youth are able to do a lot of extricates on their phones.

The remarkable features in a mobile phone today, coupled with better coverage networks have enlarged the scope of the utility of the phones. The youth have moved on from the primary phone utilities to advanced utilities. The major reason being the onset of data on phones. However, the usage of data varies among the youth depending upon interest profiles, professional phases among others. However the youth need to make use of their cellular phones properly and sensibly.

(no bibliography as this whole research is based purely on primary data and the observations of the researcher) the Internet (data) over the phones. With the onset of data over phones, the utilities have widened. The usage has moved away from the primary features of calling and texting to more advanced features like messaging through messengers, online calling among others.

However, if you get into demographics, mobile phone and cellular usage will vary greatly in each category. For instance, what a teenager does out of a mobile phone will be very much different than what a middle aged person would be doing. There will even be a usage variation between males and females; implying that though there has been a huge penetration in terms of mobile phones, there is a great deal of variation in how these are used.

Therefore, this area is worth studying. The research tries to delve into the cellular usage habits of the urban youth, and analyze the variation in the usage patterns before and after internet has reached over mobile phones.

RESEARCH RESPONDENTS