

Rural Consumer Awareness & Perception of Usage of Mobile Apps in Tirupattur - Vellore Dt.

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Introduction

Nations on the globe are transforming at a staggering rate and the main reason for such a great transformation is technological growth around us. Studies reveal that technology is almost there in every aspect of our life. Generally maximum activities are done electronically due to its connectivity, convenience in usage and reachability to various localities, security and personalization both at home and in the work place. This enables even the rural consumer to transform all their activities through the mobile apps. Here the mobile applications are of different types.

- i. Native application, is developed to run on particular platform / operating systems like android and ios (Instagram, VLC Media, Word Press & 2048 games).
- ii. Hybrid application, is designed and developed to apply on multiple platforms like IonicFramework, Phone Gap and SenchaTouch.
- iii. Progressive web applications, are used without installing the app from the app store/play store.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the level of rural consumer awareness and perception about mobile application
2. To understand rural consumers acceptance level of mobile app
3. To bring out the factors affecting the reach of mobile apps among consumers.

Literature Review

L. Chen *et.al.*, in his thesis "Consumer awareness and use of mobile health services in India: An urban-rural comparison study", talks about mobile health which can be accessed through mobile application that can make the service reach out to a bigger population. It can be done at low cost and in quality too. In the article they analyze how mobile service can serve the multitude in the rural set up. They came up with the finding, that through the usages of these services, empowerment of people are taking place and also more and more awareness is coming into the lives of the ordinary people.¹

¹L. Chen *et.al.*, (2014, January). *Consumer awareness and use of mobile health services in India: An urban-rural comparison study*, Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/289172856_Consumer_awareness_and_use_of_mobile_health_services_in_India_An_urban-rural_comparison_study

'Mobile handset penetration: why rural consumer is not rural anymore' is an article written by Meghna Sharma. In this article she states that in the rural part of India the mobile has much more infiltration than TV even. So, every company is almost forced to reach out to the rural customers through various mobile applications to make them know about their product. She also finds the fact that where media finds difficult to reach, the mobile and its applications penetrate easily to reach the wider population especially in the rural set up. One of such beautiful example is the mobile radio by Hindustan Unilever's (HUL) *KanKhajuraTesan(KKT)*. Though in the rural areas people may not have a TV set or a desktop facility or a newspaper companies make use of mobile apps to reach out to them to advertise about their products. As regards the growth of rural marketing is concerned it has been noticed that there has been a growth of 10-12% between the years 2016 and 2017. In the same time span, digital media had 50% growth. Ads by digital media to reach out to the rural India is approximately worth Rs. 7,300 cross.²

Suresh Misra & Sapna Chadah, write in their article 'Consumer Awareness in Rural India - An Empirical Study', about the way of taking care of the welfare of customers through the goods and services that are provided to them. Mobile app has been made available especially for customers of rural base to understand the complicated laws and regulations directing this process and the facilities available to address their grievances. Earlier, the existing approach was to overlook the rural population but today they have become the central point of reference for every company to address. Accordingly mobile apps which are easily accessible to reach them have been made use as well. Such apps not only give information but also serve as a base for accessing data, placing order and also to become a forum to give advertisements. So this has turned out to be a new opportunity for business. Service sector like the insurance companies also makes their head way into the rural sector through these facilities.³

Research Methodology

Data Source: Mobile application users of Tirupattur region is the primary data source. Prepared questionnaire was utilized to collect data. Secondary data source is from journals, books and websites.

Duration of the Study: The duration of the study is 20 days.

Analytical Tools: Various relevant analytical tools were used like ANOVA Single Factor and Percentage Analysis.

Population: Mobile Application users of Tirupattur.

²Meghna Sharma. (2017, August). *Mobile handset penetration: why rural consumer is not rural anymore*, Available at: <https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/mobile-handset-penetration-why-rural-consumer-is-not-rural-anymore/788513/>

³ Suresh Misra&SapnaChadah. (2009, September). *Consumer Awareness in Rural India - An Empirical Study*, Available at: <http://www.consumereducation.in/ResearchStudyReports/consumetrawarenessinruraindia.pdf>

Sample Size: The total sample size chosen is 100. In this the people who are involved are working professionals, college students, business man and other users of mobile applications.

Sampling Technique: The sampling technique that is in use is non-probability convenient sampling.

Date Analysis & Interpretation

01. Rural consumer awareness and perception about mobile application

Table No. 1

S. No.	Particulars	Yes (%)	No (%)	Uncertain (%)
01.	Awareness about Mobile App	99	01	00
02.	Operating experience in Mobile App	61	39	00
03.	Preference in use of Mobile App	65	06	29

From table no. 1 it is very evident that there is vast awareness already existing about the mobile apps among the rural people. It is clear from the table that 99% of the people have responded to it saying that they are aware whereas when it came to the matter of operation experience on the mobile app it is 61% against 39% who have no experience in this field at all. 65% of the respondents said that they prefer to mobile apps if required to against a mere 6% opting to say they won't prefer to go along with the usage of mobile apps. 29% surprisingly are still found to be undecided about the same fact.

02. Rural consumer knowledge about mobile application

Table No. 2

S. No.	Particular	Online (%)	Friends (%)	Advertisement (%)	Family (%)	Non (%)
01.	Know about Mobile App	32	33	13	21	01

Table No. 2 presents to us the facts relating to how the concerned people came to know about mobile app and the answer was 32% came to know about it online. 33% had their friends to let them know where as 13% relied on advertisements to come to about the same facts. 21% got to know about it through their family members and 01% had no aid to let them know about the same.

03. Respondents' opinion about their choice for using mobile app

Table No. 3

Particulars	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Connectivity	20	49	24	06	01
Convenience	21	44	26	08	01
Reachability	18	33	34	11	04
Security	18	42	25	15	00
Personalization	15	39	37	08	01

Why do the customers opt for mobile app was yet another question to be answered to which connectivity became a strongly agreed (S A) factor for 20% and 49% said agreed (A) to the same. Only 6% and 01% had disagreement (D) and strong disagreement (SD) respectively to the same issue. 24% found it difficult to make a choice (N) in this regard. When it was a matter of convenience 21% and 44% strongly agreed and agreed respectively as a reason for their choice of mobile app. When 26% remained not so sure about the reason, 8% and 1% had options of disagreement and strong disagreement on to the same issue. As far as reachability is concerned 33% agreed to it while 18% strongly agreed to the same. 34% were non-committal but 11% disagreed to the same. 4% were strongly disagreeing to the same as well. Security reasons for choosing mobile apps were agreed upon by 42% and 18% strongly agreed too. 25% remained non-committed and 15% disagreed. Personalization was a reason for choosing 39% of the respondents and 15% had this as a very strong reason too. 37% remained neutral to the statement whereas 08% and 01% were disagreeing and totally disagreeing to the same issue.

Table No. 4

ANOVA – Single Factor						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	4996.4	4	1249.1	69.47164	1.92E-11	2.866081
Within Groups	359.6	20	17.98			
Total	5356	24				

In this case, calculated value is F-value and the table value is F-Cri.

Here $F = 69.47164$ - calculated value is greater than the table values $F_{Cri} = 2.866081$. So we **accept H_1** and reject H_0 , i.e., there is significant relationship between various parameters for choosing mobile app.

04. Respondents' frequency of using mobile app

Table No. 5

Particulars	Daily	Once a Week	Once in 2 Weeks	Once in a Month	Once a While	Never
%	15	20	20	15	05	25

On the question of the frequency of using mobile apps it was found that there is total of 15% using it daily, and another 20% using once week. Once in a month it was used by 15% again but 20% used to once in two weeks. 5% obviously used it only once in a while. 25% of the respondents never used it.

Conclusion

Enhancement of technology and sustainability has been valued even by the rural consumers to use mobile app which has high responsiveness to make them feel convenient in connectivity and reachability for globalization. (combination of global and local). Consumers feel maximum security both in personal and official activity with the use of mobile apps. So today, consumers residing in rural or semi-urban identified the real need and use of mobile app in their day to day activities in spite of its merits and demerits which is to be addressed in the near future.

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