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**CONSUMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS THE SELECTED MESSAGING APPS IN COIMBATORE CITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The channel of communication is widened with lot of new features in the present time. The technological advancements enlarges the scope of media. Mobile messaging apps helps individual in communicating instantly. These apps include exchange of voice messages, text messages, documents etc. Messaging apps these days play an important role and this has replaced various other forms of communications like letters, e-mail, telegram, fax, etc. Three out of every smart phone users in India is now high on mobile chatting making the market a lucrative one for chat app companies.*

**KEYWORDS**

instant messaging, messaging apps, play store.

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**INTRODUCTION**

A mobile application is a software application designed to run on smart phone, tablet, computers and other mobile devices. They are usually available through applications distribution platforms, which are typically operated by the owner of the mobile operating system such as the Apple app store, Google play, Windows phone store and BlackBerry app world. Some apps are free, while others must be bought, they are downloaded from the platform to target device, such as an iPhone, BlackBerry, Android phone or windows phone.

As more messaging channels become available and communication choices diversify, consumers increasingly expect their interactions with businesses to be contextually relevant. The mobile messaging and social media are combining to fundamentally reshape digital communication. This phenomenon has profound implications for businesses that use e-mail, SMS text messages, other messaging channels to interact with their customers, a trend first recognized by Dave Lewis and David Daniels, preparing for message convergences.

The texts or voice messages are sent within fraction of second. Communications are made easy through such apps. There are innumerable apps available today, all focus on enabling an effective communication. These apps has increased large in number because of change in mind set, trend and these apps helps in contacting people as soon and as early as possible. Messaging apps has become one of the easy forms of communication and helps in contacting people of different country. Though there are too many updates given by the owner, each update has some new feature.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Jyothi Kumari (2014)<sup>1</sup>** made a study on "customer satisfaction towards whatsapp in Lucknow". The main objective of the study was to know customer satisfaction and behavior of customer towards whatsapp. The data were collected from 100 respondents using the questionnaire by adopting convenience sampling technique. It is identified that features of whatsapp such as video calling, privacy, voice-call are considered important. The study concludes that whatsapp is the most used app among the chat apps like facebook, wechat and it shows the users of whatsapp are satisfied and they will suggest others for using whatsapp. It is also revealed that the customers use whatsapp a lot and it is popular among youth and working professionals.

**M.D. Ejaz Raza (2015)<sup>2</sup>** conducted a study on customer satisfaction towards various features of whatsapp messaging application. The main objective of the study is to find the best feature in the whatsapp. The study was conducted, based on the questionnaire answered by 75 respondents. The best feature given by the respondents was, contacting people easily through message, voice and video call. It is concluded that the study by saying, whatsapp has the best customer satisfaction and it also took over or replaced other apps like we chat, line, tango etc.

**Suraj Singh (2015)<sup>3</sup>** made a study on "User satisfaction towards whatsapp in Chennai". The main objective of the study is to find out the level of satisfaction of users towards whatsapp in Chennai. The data was collected from 58 respondents using the questionnaire by adopting convenience sampling technique. It is identified that nine factors are considered important and the opinion of respondents are collected. The study concludes that the demographic variables such as age group, gender and occupation are having less impact on the factors of user satisfaction. The research outcome indicates that, most of the users are satisfied towards whatsapp with respect to the choosing factors such as preference of being in touch with the people, preference of social media app, basis of usage, reasons for not using whatsapp, purpose, medium, feature, charges to be made by whatsapp in future, the amount expected to be paid by the users. The study also reveals that the users are satisfied towards whatsapp with respect to chosen nine factors.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The main purpose of using smart phones these days are messaging apps and social media websites. It has become one of the trendsetter and helps in contacting people easily. Each day there is a new app that has been created for instant messaging. Out of these Whatsapp, hike, line and hangouts are the apps that are being preferred by the people. Whatsapp users are increasing day by day, as it widespread among the people and the features of the app is comfortable for the users. With this view, an attempt was made to study the customer preference towards messaging apps in Coimbatore city.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the source of awareness of the selected messaging apps by the respondents.
2. To analyze the purpose of using the selected messaging apps.
3. To evaluate the features provided by the selected messaging apps.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Area of the study** - The area of the study is Coimbatore city.

**Sample size** - The sample of 200 respondents dealing with messaging apps in Coimbatore was chosen for the study. For the purpose of the study, convenient sampling technique has been adopted.

**Data sources** - Primary data and secondary data has been used for the study. The primary data has been collected using the questionnaire by issuing it to the consumers in the Coimbatore city. The questions in the questionnaire were prepared in such a way that it will be easy for the consumers to understand for filling it. The secondary data was collected from magazines and websites.

**Tools for analysis** - The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage analysis.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. The study confines only to the consumers in Coimbatore city. Hence, the generalization is not possible at national level.
2. This study is based on the information given by the respondents and there is a chance for getting biased view from the respondents.
3. The sample size of this study is limited to 200 respondents.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**TABLE 1: SOURCE OF AWARENESS OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Questions	Options			
Source of awareness	Friends (50.5%)	Relatives (27%)	Advertisements (16%)	Others (6.5%)

Source: Primary Data

Majority (50.5%) of the respondents are aware of the messaging apps through friends.

**TABLE 2: USAGE OF SELECTED MESSAGING APPS**

Questions	Options			
Preferred Messaging App	Hike (27%)	Line (7%)	whatsapp (63%)	Hangouts (3%)
Reason for using messaging app	Convenient (50%)	Find friends to express the feelings and emotions (27.5%)	Have a feeling of belonging to society (16%)	None (6.5%)
Years of usage of messaging apps	Less than 1 year (14%)	1 year to 2 years (40%)	More than 2 years (46%)	
Purpose of Usage of messaging apps	Education (20%)	Entertainment (44.5%)	Business (21.5%)	Others (14%)

Source: Primary Data

1. Majority (63%) of the respondents prefer to use Whatsapp.
2. Majority (50%) of the respondent are using the messaging app as it is convenient.
3. Most (46%) of the respondents have the experience of using the messaging app for more than 2 years.
4. Most (44.5%) of the respondents are using the messaging app for entertainment purposes.

**TABLE 3: FEATURES OFFERED BY MESSAGING APPS**

Questions	Options			
Features	Privacy (75%)	Voice call (55%)	Video call (52%)	Low data consumption (62.5%)
Value added services offered by messaging app	Current news (25%)	Motivational quotes (23.5%)	Jokes (21.5%)	Concession coupons (30%)

Source: Primary Data

1. Majority (75%) of the respondents agree that the selected messaging app offers privacy as the better feature.
2. Most (25%) of the respondents are provided with current news.

**TABLE 4: OPINION OF THE RESPONDENTS BASED ON THE USAGE OF MESSAGING APPS**

Features	Options							
	whatsapp		Hike		Line		Hangout	
	No. of respondents	%	No. of respondents	%	No. of respondents	%	No. of respondents	%
Provides better features	154	77	30	15.0	10	5.0	6	3.0
User friendly	118	59	70	35.0	11	5.5	1	0.5
Frequent hanging	24	12	55	27.5	37	18.5	84	42.0

Source: Primary Data

Majority 77% of the respondents agree that whatsapp provides better features, 59% of the respondents agree that whatsapp is user friendly, 42% of the respondents agree that frequent hanging is possible in Hangout.

**SUGGESTIONS**

On the basis of results of the study and discussions held with the customers, the following are the recommendations made:

**INFRASTRUCTURE** - Majority of the respondents suggested to increase the number of base stations in the city. By doing so, the service providers can expand their customer base and can retain their existing customers.

**ENTERTAINMENT TO EDUCATION** - The messaging apps are used mostly for entertainment purposes. It should rather have a greater focus on the educational aspects. It must have some arithmetic or mathematical, general knowledge and current issues to make the students aware of it.

**UNWANTED MESSAGES** - The unwanted messages that the customer receive may make them feel uncomfortable. So it has to be avoided. To reduce these unwanted messages some privacy alert app has to be introduced.

**UNIQUENESS IN DOWNLOAD** - As the respondents feel each update is worth downloading, so it must have some uniqueness in each download. The update must have some unique features, easy to use; it must be entertaining and must be educative.

**SERVERS TO BE IMPROVED** - Most of the respondents feel that the messaging apps hang very frequently. In order to overcome this, the servers have to be well developed. Each update must pave way for the betterment of the app.

**CONCLUSION**

In today's world, smart phone users are increasing more in number as it has become one of the trendsetters. Smart phone helps people in knowing each and every incident that happens in and around the world. It updates the user in a moment the incident has occurred. As smart phone users are increasing day by day, new apps are created each day in order to provide various features and make them use the apps in increased rate. Each app that is created has better feature than the app used before. More and more people are upgrading from feature phones to smart phones, which accelerates the move from traditional calling and SMS to social messaging applications.

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**WEBSITES**

- 4 www.exotoday.com
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