An Empirical Study on Awareness and Satisfaction of Gmail Users in Coimbatore City

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Abstract

Electronic mail, most commonly referred to as email or e-mail since 1993, is a method of exchanging digital messages from an author to one or more recipients. Though there are so many email service providers in the world, Gmail has unique set of features and it is the leading email service provider at the moment in the world with huge market share. The present study primarily aims to analyse the awareness and satisfaction level of gmail users. Besides the reasons for using gmail service and switching over from previous mail services and problems faced by the gmail users were also analysed. Non-probability convenience sampling method has been used for selecting the sample respondents. Results revealed that majority of the respondents are highly aware (80%) and also highly satisfied (70%) with the gmail service. 'Speed' is considered as the main factor for preferring gmail service whereas 'operational difficulties' is identified as the major problem in accessing gmail service.

Keywords: Awareness, Email, Gmail, Independent Variables, Satisfaction, Service Provider

1. Introduction

Email is an information and communications technology. It uses technology to communicate a digital message over the Internet. Users use email differently, based on how they think about it. There are many software platforms available to send and receive. Popular email platforms include Gmail, Hotmail, rediffmail, Yahoo! Mail, Outlook and many others. The present study focuses on the major email service provider 'Gmail' by considering their dominance in this email service [1].

Gmail is a free, advertising-supported email service provided by Google. Users may access Gmail as secure webmail, as well as via POP3 or IMAP4 protocols. Gmail initially started as an invitation-only beta release on April 1, 2004 and it became available to the general public on February 7, 2007, though still in beta status at that time. The service was upgraded from beta status on July 7, 2009, along with the rest of the Google Apps suite [2].

The important Gmail features are Storage, Using attachments (Documents, Photos, Videos), Settings for personalized changes, Keyboard shortcuts in settings, Gmail Labs, MP3 Player, Tabbed inbox, Spam filter, Gmail Mobile, Social network integration, Google Voice in Gmail chat, Maximum 50 page viewer, Gmail Search, Language input, Money transfer and payment options, Importing contacts etc [3].

2. Statement of the Problem

Gmail is a web based mail service. The gmail cannot function without users. Hence, the satisfaction of the users with regard to the services rendered by the gmail becomes necessary. All the features of gmail should be focusing on satisfying the needs of its existing and prospecting users. So it is important to determine how the needs of the users have been awarded and satisfied. Hence, an attempt has been made in this study to know the Reasons for using

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gmail service by the users, Awareness level of gmail users, Satisfaction level of gmail users, Reasons for switching over from previous mail services and Problems faced by the gmail users.

3. Research Methodology

This study is an empirical research based on the survey method. Coimbatore city in Tamil Nadu has been purposively selected for the study.

3.1 Data

The study is based on both primary data and secondary data. The first hand information was collected from the sample respondents with the help of an interview schedule prepared and pre-tested through pilot study. The necessary secondary data was collected from various journals, newspapers, magazines, books and websites.

3.2 Sampling Design

As the population size is unknown, 100 sample respondents have been selected by using non-probability convenience sampling method. Data were collected directly from the sample respondents by interviewing them personally [4].

3.3 Area and Period of the Study

The area of the study is confined to the Coimbatore city in Tamil Nadu. The study covered the period from September 2014 to January 2015.

3.4 Statistical Tools Used

The statistical tools such as Mean, Likert's scaling technique, Chi-square test and Garrett Ranking method used for this study [5].

3.5 Reasons for using Gmail Service

Table 1 shows the overall ranks assigned to the reasons for using Gmail service.

Table 1 reveals that Speed, Quick & Multiple attachments and Capacity & Storage are the major reasons for using the gmail service as per Garret ranking analysis followed by the features like Easy to operate, Availability of MP3 Player, Quick down loading process, Highly secured etc.

3.6 Awareness Level of the Gmail Users

Likert's 3 point rating scale is applied to measure the awareness level of the users of the Gmail service. Table

Table 1.   Reasons for using Gmail service - Garrett ranking analysis

Reason	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
Speed	6040	60.40	I
Quick & Multiple attachments	5697	56.97	II
Capacity & Storage	5512	55.12	III
Easy to operate	5427	54.27	IV
Availability of MP3 Player	4978	49.78	V
Quick down loading process	4961	49.61	VI
Highly secured	4890	48.90	VII
More options	4468	44.68	VIII
Chatting	4378	43.78	IX
Substitution	3149	31.49	X

Source: Computed from Primary data

2 shows that the distribution of the total respondents by their level of awareness on Gmail service.

Table 2. Classification of sample respondents as per their level of awareness on Gmail features

Level of Awareness	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Highly Aware (Score above 18)	80	80%
Less Aware (Up to 18)	20	20%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary data

Table 2 reveals that majority of the sample respondents (80%) are highly aware of the various gmail features.

3.7 Association between Independent Variables and Awareness Level of Gmail Users

Significance of the association of all the eight variables with the opinion of gmail users regarding their awareness was analysed by applying the Chi-square test. Table 3 shows the results of chi-square test.

Results of the chi-square test indicate that the independent variables such as Age, Place of residence and Browsing status have significant influence over the awareness level of the gmail users in the study region.

3.8 Reasons for Switching Over from Previous Mail Service

Table 4 shows the overall ranks assigned for the reasons for switching over from pervious mail service.

Table 4 reveals that More attaching & Downloading Time, Less Operating Speed and Temporary disconnection of service are the major reasons for switching over from the previous mail service to the gmail service as per Garret ranking analysis followed by the reasons like Less options, Operational difficulties etc.

3.9 Satisfaction Level of the Gmail Users

Likert's 5 point rating scale is applied to measure the satisfaction level of the users of the Gmail service. Table 5 shows the distribution of the total respondents by their level of satisfaction on Gmail services.

Table 5 reveals that majority of the sample respondents (70%) are satisfied on the Gmail service and usage.

3.10 Association between Independent Variables and Satisfaction Level of Gmail Users

Significance of the association of all the eight variables

Table 3. Results of Chi-Square Test

Variable	Chi-square Calculated Value	Chi-square Table Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance
Age	9.4349	5.991	2	S
Gender	0.3636	3.841	1	NS
Place of residence	0.6491	5.991	2	S
Marital status	0.0212	3.841	1	NS
Educational qualification	2.1241	3.841	1	NS
Occupation	0.5939	7.815	3	NS
Period of using	5.1474	5.991	2	NS
Browsing status	14.040	7.815	3	S

Level of significance 5%; S – Significant; NS – Not Significant

Table 4. Reasons for switching over from previous mail service - Garrett ranking analysis

Reason	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
More attaching & Downloading Time	5246	52.46	I
Less Operating Speed	5165	51.65	II
Temporary disconnection of service	4977	49.77	III
Less options	4897	48.97	IV
Operational difficulties	4891	48.91	V
Lack of Awareness	4886	48.86	VI
Lack of Security	4738	47.38	VII

Source: Computed from Primary data

Table 5. Distribution of sample respondents as per their level of satisfaction on Gmail service

Level of Satisfaction	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Satisfied (Score above 27)	70	70%
Dissatisfied (Score Up to 27)	30	30%
Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

with the opinion of gmail users regarding their satisfaction was analysed by applying the Chi-square test. Table 6 shows the results of chi-square test.

Results of the chi-square test indicate that all the independent variables have no significant influence over the satisfaction level of the gmail users in the study region.

3.11 Problems Faced by the Gmail Users

Table 7 shows the overall ranks assigned to the problems faced by the Gmail users.

Table 7 portrays that Operational difficulties and Lack of Security are identified as the major

Table 6. Results of Chi-Square Test

Variable	Chi-square Calculated Value	Chi-square Table Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance
Age	5.5753	5.991	2	NS
Gender	1.0840	3.841	1	NS
Place of residence	5.1840	5.991	2	NS
Marital status	0.1266	3.841	1	NS
Educational qualification	3.1508	3.841	1	NS
Occupation	1.1878	7.815	3	NS
Period of using	0.1110	5.991	1	NS
Browsing status	6.3260	7.815	3	NS

Level of significance 5%; S – Significant; NS – Not Significant

Table 7. Problems faced by the gmail users – Garrett ranking analysis

Problems	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
Operational difficulties	5316	53.16	I
Lack of Security	5253	52.53	II
Less options	5059	50.59	III
Lack of awareness	5074	50.74	IV
Temporary disconnection of service	4919	49.19	V
More downloading time	4822	48.22	VI
Less operating speed	4370	43.70	VII

Source: Computed from Primary data

problems of the gmail service users as per Garret ranking analysis followed by the problems like Less options, Lack of awareness etc. Less operating speed and more downloading time are considered as their least problems while using Gmail service.

4. Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following valuable suggestions are given:

- Most of the sample respondents felt that speed is the main reason for using gmail service. Hence, it is suggested that the concerned service provider should concentrate on maintaining and increasing the speed of gmail which would attract more number of users.

- Most of the sample respondents felt that operational difficulties is the major problem while using Gmail service. Hence, it is suggested that there is a need to the gmail service provider to create awareness about various gmail features and their operation methods through YouTube videos, PPTs etc.

- It is found that 20% of the gmail users are still less aware of various features of gmail service. Hence, it is suggested that more efforts need to be taken by the gmail service provider to create awareness among the gmail users by allowing them to have online user manuals with clear explanation of all the features and their operation methods. This would help the users to learn a lot about the gmail service.

- It is found that there is a significant association between browsing status and awareness level of the respondents. Hence, it is suggested that the gmail service provider should provide many information relating to the features and operation of gmail service in the form of online advertisement whenever the users enter into the gmail website. This would certainly create and increase the level of awareness of rare as well as regular users of gmail service.

5. Conclusion

E-mail plays a vital role in the growth and development of the country. E-mail activity starts and ends with the users. In this modern world, rapid technological development has taken place everywhere. Email users interest and desires are also changing with the fast development of technology. To survive in this stiff competition, an email service provider has to be constantly innovating and understanding the trends and desires of the latest email users. Based on the findings of the study, some viable suggestions are given. If those are properly taken care of fruitful results could be achieved.

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