

Customer Satisfaction with Mobile Banking Applications: An Empirical Analysis

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Abstract:

Mobile banking applications have become the primary interface between banks and their customers in India. With smartphone penetration exceeding seventy crore users, affordable data and the extraordinary success of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), the bank branch has, for most routine purposes, migrated into the customer's pocket. In this environment, the quality of a bank's mobile application is no longer a supplementary service attribute it is the principal determinant of customer experience, satisfaction, retention and advocacy. This paper empirically analyses customer satisfaction with mobile banking applications, identifying the service-quality dimensions that drive satisfaction and examining how satisfaction translates into continued usage and loyalty.

The study combines secondary data on the growth of mobile banking from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) with an illustrative structured-questionnaire survey of 400 mobile banking users analysed through percentage analysis, weighted mean scores, Cronbach's alpha, chi-square tests, correlation and multiple regression. Seven dimensions of mobile banking app quality are examined: ease of use, transaction efficiency, reliability (uptime and error-free performance), security and privacy assurance, app design and content, responsiveness and grievance redress, and perceived usefulness of the feature set. The analysis indicates that all seven dimensions correlate positively with overall satisfaction, with reliability, security assurance and ease of use emerging as the strongest predictors, jointly explaining about half of the variance in satisfaction. Satisfaction, in turn, strongly predicts continuance intention and willingness to recommend, while transaction failures and poor grievance redress are the leading causes of dissatisfaction and app-switching. The paper concludes that in an era of functionally similar apps, reliability engineering and complaint resolution rather than feature proliferation offer banks the highest returns on customer satisfaction, and offers recommendations for banks, fintech partners and regulators.

Keywords: Mobile Banking, Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality, UPI, Continuance Intention, E-Service Quality, Digital Banking, Technology Acceptance, India.

Introduction

Banking has passed through three delivery revolutions the branch, the ATM/card, and the internet and is now firmly in its fourth: the mobile application. In India, this transition has been unusually swift and complete. The confluence of inexpensive smartphones, among the world's cheapest mobile data,

Aadhaar-enabled onboarding and the open, interoperable UPI rails built by NPCI has made the mobile phone the default banking channel for hundreds of millions of customers. RBI payment statistics show mobile-based transaction volumes growing at rates that dwarf every other channel, while branch footfall for routine transactions declines steadily. Banks now compete less on branch networks and interest spreads visible to the customer, and more on the daily experience delivered by a piece of software.

This shift raises the economic stakes of customer satisfaction. In the branch era, dissatisfied customers faced high switching costs; in the app era, an alternative bank or third-party UPI application is a download away, and account portability initiatives lower the barriers further. Satisfaction with the mobile application therefore directly shapes customer retention, cross-selling potential, cost-to-serve (satisfied app users self-serve; dissatisfied ones call centres and visit branches) and reputational outcomes through app-store ratings and social media. Understanding what drives satisfaction with mobile banking applications is thus a first-order strategic question for Indian banks.

Mobile Banking Applications: Scope and Features

For this study, a mobile banking application is a smartphone application provided by a bank (or by a bank in partnership with a technology provider) that allows customers to access banking services, including: balance enquiry and statements; funds transfer through UPI, IMPS, NEFT and RTGS; bill payments and recharges; fixed and recurring deposit management; card management (limits, blocking, tokenisation); loan applications and servicing; investment and insurance purchases; and service requests such as cheque-book issuance and grievance lodging. Third-party UPI apps (PhonePe, Google Pay, Paytm) overlap with this space for payments; the study focuses on bank-provided applications while recognising that customers benchmark bank apps against the polish of these large technology platforms.

Customer Satisfaction: Concept and Relevance

Customer satisfaction is conventionally understood through the expectation disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1980): satisfaction arises when perceived performance meets or exceeds expectations. In digital services, expectations are formed not only by other banks but by the best applications customers use anywhere messaging, shopping, entertainment which continuously raises the bar for banking apps. Satisfaction matters instrumentally because a substantial literature links it to loyalty, continuance intention, positive word of mouth and profitability; in the app economy it is also publicly visible, since app-store ratings aggregate customer sentiment in real time and influence adoption by prospective customers.

The Research Problem and Significance

Although Indian banks have invested heavily in mobile applications, customer experience remains uneven: outages during peak periods, failed transactions with delayed reversals, cluttered interfaces, forced re-logins, intrusive cross-selling and weak in-app grievance redress are persistent complaints, reflected in the volume of digital-transaction complaints received under the RBI Integrated Ombudsman Scheme. At the same time, security anxieties fraud, data privacy shade customer evaluations of even well-functioning apps. The research problem is to identify which dimensions of the mobile banking app experience most strongly determine customer satisfaction, and how satisfaction translates into continued usage evidence that can direct banks' scarce technology investment toward the highest-yield

improvements. The study is significant for bank managements prioritising app-development roadmaps, for regulators framing digital customer-protection norms, and for the academic literature, where post-UPI Indian evidence on bank-app satisfaction remains comparatively thin.

2. Review of Literature

The adoption stream begins with the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), in which perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use determine attitude and usage intention, and its successors UTAUT and UTAUT2 (Venkatesh et al., 2003, 2012), which add social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation and habit. Applications to mobile banking consistently confirm usefulness and ease of use as core drivers while elevating trust and perceived risk to central roles: Luarn and Lin (2005) extended TAM with perceived credibility and self-efficacy for mobile banking in Taiwan; Zhou (2011) highlighted initial trust formation; and Alalwan, Dwivedi and Rana (2017) found performance expectancy, effort expectancy, hedonic motivation, price value and trust to be significant for Jordanian mobile banking. Indian studies in this stream (e.g., research on UPI-era adoption) similarly identify usefulness, ease, trust and facilitating conditions as decisive, with demonetisation and COVID-19 acting as exogenous adoption accelerators.

The satisfaction stream draws on service-quality theory. SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988) established the gap model of service quality; its electronic descendant E-S-QUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Malhotra, 2005) proposed efficiency, system availability, fulfilment and privacy as the core dimensions of e-service quality, with responsiveness, compensation and contact forming the recovery scale. Adaptations to mobile banking add interface design, content and transaction speed: Sagib and Zapan (2014) found reliability and responsiveness driving satisfaction in Bangladeshi m-banking; Arcand et al. (2017) linked m-banking quality dimensions to trust and commitment; Shankar and Jebarajakirthy (2019) showed that e-banking service quality strongly influences loyalty through satisfaction in India; and Sharma and Sharma (2019) demonstrated that service quality, information quality and system quality (the DeLone–McLean triad) shape satisfaction and intention in Indian mobile banking. Studies of app-store reviews corroborate that crashes, failed transactions and login friction dominate negative sentiment, while speed and simplicity dominate positive sentiment.

Oliver's (1980) expectation–disconfirmation theory underpins the satisfaction–behaviour link, formalised for information systems by Bhattacharjee's (2001) expectation–confirmation model of IS continuance: confirmation of expectations drives satisfaction, which with perceived usefulness drives continuance intention. Empirical work across markets finds satisfaction to be the proximate determinant of continued m-banking use, recommendation and cross-buying, with trust and switching costs as moderators. In banking specifically, satisfied digital customers exhibit lower attrition and materially lower cost-to-serve, strengthening the business case for experience investment.

Post-2016 Indian literature situates bank apps within the UPI ecosystem, where interoperability lets customers transact from any app on any bank account, converting app quality into a direct competitive battleground. RBI's Master Direction on Digital Payment Security Controls (2021), the limited-liability circular (2017), online dispute resolution mandates for failed transactions, and the harmonised turnaround-time (TAT) circular (2019) prescribing auto-reversal timelines for failed transactions form the customer-protection backdrop; complaint statistics under the Integrated Ombudsman Scheme show

digital payment issues among the largest complaint categories, underscoring the salience of reliability and redress in the Indian satisfaction equation.

Research Gap

Three gaps emerge. First, much Indian evidence predates the mature UPI era in which customers benchmark bank apps against large technology platforms, and app parity has shifted the frontier from adoption to satisfaction and continuance. Second, the adoption literature (TAM/UTAUT) and the service-quality literature (E-S-QUAL) are seldom integrated into a single satisfaction model for Indian bank apps that also incorporates grievance redress a dimension the complaint statistics show to be critical. Third, the behavioural consequences of dissatisfaction channel switching, app switching, negative reviews are under-measured. This study addresses these gaps with an integrated dimensional model tested on post-UPI-era users.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the growth and penetration of mobile banking in India and profile the usage patterns of mobile banking app customers.
2. To identify the principal dimensions of mobile banking application service quality relevant to Indian users.
3. To measure the level of customer satisfaction with mobile banking applications across these dimensions.
4. To analyse the influence of service-quality dimensions on overall customer satisfaction, and of satisfaction on continuance and recommendation intentions.
5. To identify the major problems faced by users and suggest measures for improving satisfaction with mobile banking applications.

Hypotheses of the Study

H01: Customer satisfaction has no significant effect on continuance intention and willingness to recommend the mobile banking application.

Research Methodology

The study employs a descriptive-cum-analytical design combining longitudinal secondary data on mobile banking growth with a cross-sectional primary survey of users measuring perceptions, satisfaction and behavioural intentions. Secondary data are drawn from RBI Payment System Statistics and Annual Reports, NPCI product statistics, RBI Ombudsman Scheme annual reports and published research. Primary data are collected through a structured questionnaire covering demographics, usage patterns, five-point Likert-scale items for the seven service-quality dimensions, overall satisfaction, continuance and recommendation intentions, and problems experienced. As in the companion studies, the survey results presented in Section 8 are illustrative model data constructed to demonstrate the analytical framework and the pattern of relationships established in prior literature; field replication should substitute actual responses.

A non-probability convenience-cum-purposive sample of 400 respondents who have used a bank-provided mobile banking application for at least six months is drawn across urban, semi-urban and rural locations and across public-sector, private-sector and small finance bank customers. The size satisfies the conventional threshold ($n \geq 384$) for a 95 per cent confidence level with a 5 per cent margin of error. Secondary data cover 2018–19 to 2024–25; the survey refers to user experience during the twelve months preceding data collection.

Analytical tools include: trend and CAGR analysis; percentage analysis; weighted mean scores for dimension-wise satisfaction; Cronbach's alpha for reliability of scales; chi-square tests for demographic associations; Karl Pearson's correlation among dimensions, satisfaction and intentions; and multiple linear regression with overall satisfaction as the dependent variable and the seven quality dimensions as predictors. Hypotheses are tested at the 5 per cent significance level. Independent variables (service-quality dimensions): ease of use (EOU), transaction efficiency/speed (EFF), reliability/system availability (REL), security and privacy assurance (SEC), app design and content (DES), responsiveness and grievance redress (RES), and perceived usefulness of features (USF). Dependent variables: overall satisfaction (SAT), continuance intention (CI) and willingness to recommend (WOM). Control variables: age, gender, education, occupation, location and bank type.

Conceptual Framework

The framework integrates three theoretical strands. From TAM/UTAUT it takes ease of use and usefulness; from E-S-QUAL it takes efficiency, system availability (reliability), privacy/security and the recovery dimension of responsiveness; from mobile-commerce quality research it takes design and content. These seven dimensions constitute the perceived quality of the mobile banking application. Following the expectation–disconfirmation and IS-continuance logic, perceived quality drives overall satisfaction, and satisfaction drives continuance intention and word of mouth. Trust in the bank and demographic characteristics act as background variables.

Ease of use covers intuitive navigation, simple login (biometric/MPIN) and minimal steps per task. Efficiency covers transaction speed and first-time success. Reliability covers app uptime, absence of crashes and error-free processing, including scheduled-maintenance communication. Security covers authentication strength, visible safeguards, fraud alerts and data-privacy assurance. Design covers interface clarity, vernacular language support and accessibility. Responsiveness covers in-app complaint lodging, status tracking, auto-reversal of failed transactions within prescribed TAT and effective human escalation. Usefulness covers the breadth and relevance of features payments, deposits, cards, loans, investments to the customer's needs.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Part A (Section 8.1) presents secondary evidence on the growth of mobile banking; Part B (Sections 8.2–8.8) presents the survey-based satisfaction analysis. As stated in the methodology, tabulated figures are illustrative estimates compiled from official sources (Part A) and illustrative model survey data (Part B) designed to demonstrate the empirical framework.

Growth of Mobile Banking in India

Table 1: Growth of Mobile-Based Banking Transactions

Year	Mobile Banking Volume (crore)	Mobile Banking Value (₹ lakh crore)	UPI Volume (crore)	Registered Mobile Banking Users (crore)
2018–19	620	29.5	535	45
2020–21	1,440	78.0	2,233	72
2022–23	4,200	225.0	8,376	110
2024–25	8,800	410.0	17,200	150+

Source: Compiled (illustrative) from RBI Payment System Statistics and NPCI data, various issues.

Mobile banking transaction volumes grew at a compound rate above 50 per cent per annum, and registered users more than tripled. The mobile app is now unambiguously the dominant banking channel by transaction count, which makes app-level customer satisfaction coterminous with bank-level customer satisfaction for the digital-first majority.

Reliability of Measurement Scales

Table 2: Scale Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)

Construct	Items	Alpha
Ease of use (EOU)	4	0.85
Efficiency/speed (EFF)	4	0.83
Reliability/availability (REL)	4	0.88
Security & privacy (SEC)	5	0.87
Design & content (DES)	4	0.81
Responsiveness/redress (RES)	4	0.84
Usefulness of features (USF)	4	0.80
Overall satisfaction (SAT)	4	0.90
Continuance intention (CI)	3	0.88

Source: Author's computation on illustrative model data.

All constructs exceed the 0.70 reliability threshold, permitting composite-score analysis.

Dimension-wise Satisfaction Levels

Table 3: Weighted Mean Satisfaction Scores by Dimension (5-point scale)

Dimension	Urban	Semi-urban	Rural	Overall	Rank
Ease of use	4.12	3.96	3.71	4.00	2
Efficiency/speed	4.05	3.90	3.68	3.94	3
Usefulness of features	4.10	3.88	3.60	3.95	—
Design & content	3.86	3.70	3.42	3.73	5
Security & privacy assurance	3.78	3.62	3.38	3.66	6
Reliability/availability	3.64	3.50	3.30	3.54	7
Responsiveness/grievance redress	3.30	3.12	2.86	3.17	8
Overall satisfaction	3.92	3.74	3.46	3.79	—

Source: Illustrative model survey data (author's construction).

Overall satisfaction is moderately high (3.79/5), with customers most satisfied with ease of use, speed and feature usefulness the areas where UPI-era app design has matured and least satisfied with grievance redress (3.17) and reliability (3.54), the operational dimensions. Satisfaction declines monotonically from urban to rural respondents on every dimension, reflecting connectivity constraints, language barriers and lower support access. Chi-square tests show significant association of satisfaction level with location ($\chi^2 = 21.4$, $df = 4$) and age ($\chi^2 = 17.8$, $df = 4$) at the 5 per cent level, rejecting H_{01} .

Problems Faced by Users

Table 4: Problems Experienced in the Past 12 Months (multiple responses)

Problem	Respondents	Percentage
Failed/pending transaction with delayed reversal	218	54.5
App downtime/login failure at needed moment	186	46.5
Slow performance/frequent forced updates	142	35.5
Confusing navigation for non-payment services	118	29.5
Fear of fraud/security while transacting	112	28.0
Complaint unresolved or resolved late	98	24.5
Language/accessibility difficulties	64	16.0

Source: Illustrative model survey data (author's construction).

Failed transactions and downtime top the problem list over half the users experienced a failed or pending transaction within a year and a quarter report unsatisfactory complaint resolution, mirroring the dominance of digital-transaction issues in RBI Ombudsman complaint statistics. Notably, 31 per cent of those with an unresolved complaint reduced their use of the app or shifted primary usage to a third-party UPI app, quantifying the behavioural cost of poor redress.

Correlation Analysis

Table 5: Correlation of Quality Dimensions with Satisfaction and Intentions

Dimension	r with SAT	r with CI	r with WOM
Reliability/availability	0.62*	0.55*	0.51*
Security & privacy	0.58*	0.52*	0.49*
Ease of use	0.55*	0.48*	0.45*
Efficiency/speed	0.51*	0.44*	0.42*
Responsiveness/redress	0.49*	0.46*	0.47*
Usefulness of features	0.44*	0.40*	0.38*
Design & content	0.41*	0.35*	0.36*
Overall satisfaction (SAT)	1.00	0.66*	0.63*

Note: * significant at the 5 per cent level ($n = 400$). Source: Author's computation on illustrative model data.

All seven dimensions correlate positively and significantly with satisfaction, led by reliability ($r = 0.62$), security (0.58) and ease of use (0.55). Satisfaction correlates strongly with continuance intention (0.66) and recommendation (0.63), supporting the framework's satisfaction–behaviour link.

The seven dimensions jointly explain about 52 per cent of the variance in satisfaction. Reliability is the strongest predictor, followed by security assurance and ease of use; responsiveness, efficiency and usefulness contribute significantly, while design loses independent significance once the functional dimensions are controlled. H01 is rejected for six of the seven dimensions. A supplementary regression of continuance intention on satisfaction yields $\beta = 0.66$ ($t = 17.4$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.44$), and of recommendation on satisfaction $\beta = 0.63$ ($t = 16.1$, $p < 0.001$), rejecting H03: satisfaction significantly drives continued use and advocacy.

Findings of the Study

- Mobile banking has become India's dominant banking channel, with transaction volumes compounding above 50 per cent annually and registered users exceeding 150 crore accounts across banks; app experience now effectively defines bank experience for digital-first customers.
- Overall satisfaction with bank mobile applications is moderately high (weighted mean 3.79/5), highest for ease of use, speed and feature usefulness, and lowest for grievance redress (3.17) and reliability (3.54).

- Reliability is the strongest determinant of satisfaction ($\beta = 0.27$), followed by security assurance (0.21) and ease of use (0.18); six of seven dimensions are significant, jointly explaining about half of satisfaction variance (H02 rejected).
- Failed or pending transactions (55 per cent of users in a year) and downtime (47 per cent) are the most common problems; about a quarter of users report unsatisfactory complaint resolution, and nearly a third of those reduced app usage or shifted to third-party apps quantifying the retention cost of weak redress.
- Satisfaction strongly drives behaviour: it explains 44 per cent of continuance intention ($\beta = 0.66$) and predicts willingness to recommend ($\beta = 0.63$), confirming the satisfaction–loyalty chain (H03 rejected).
- Visual design has no significant independent effect once functional dimensions are controlled, cautioning against cosmetic redesigns as a substitute for reliability engineering and redress improvement.

The findings reposition the managerial question from 'what features should we add?' to 'how do we make what exists work every time?'. The primacy of reliability echoes E-S-QUAL's system-availability and fulfilment dimensions (Parasuraman et al., 2005) and the app-review literature, and it is intuitive in a high-frequency service: a customer transacting daily encounters a 1 per cent failure rate several times a month. That failed transactions and slow reversals top the problem list despite RBI's harmonised TAT circular mandating auto-reversal timelines suggests an execution gap between regulation and experience that banks can convert into competitive advantage by engineering reversals faster than the mandated ceilings and communicating status proactively.

The strength of security assurance as a satisfaction driver, distinct from actual security, matters strategically: customers reward visible safety biometric login, instant alerts, in-app card controls, spending limits which banks can supply relatively cheaply. Conversely, the insignificance of design once function is controlled warns against equating digital transformation with interface refreshes; users forgive plain screens, not failed payments. The satisfaction–continuance elasticities confirm that experience investment is retention investment: in an interoperable UPI market where a competitor app is a download away and the same account can be operated from third-party apps, dissatisfaction leaks usage silently the bank keeps the account but loses the engagement, the data exhaust and the cross-sell window. Finally, the urban–rural satisfaction gradient extends the financial-inclusion agenda into experience quality: onboarding rural users is incomplete if their daily experience is systematically inferior; vernacular interfaces, offline-tolerant design, assisted modes and USSD/lightweight fallbacks are the next frontier of inclusive digital banking.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- Treat reliability as the primary product: invest in capacity planning for peak loads (salary days, festivals), chaos-testing, graceful degradation, transparent status pages and scheduled-maintenance communication; publish and internally target app uptime and transaction success rates.
- Engineer redress into the app: one-tap complaint lodging tagged to the failed transaction, real-time status tracking, auto-reversal ahead of RBI TAT ceilings with instant notification, and human escalation with call-back converting the weakest dimension into a differentiator.

- Make security visible and empowering: default biometric login, instant transaction alerts, in-app card and UPI controls (freeze, limits), fraud-education nudges and clear data-privacy disclosures.
- Design for the next hundred million users: vernacular language support, simplified/assisted modes for older and first-time users, low-bandwidth performance and accessibility compliance, addressing the rural and age satisfaction gaps.
- Rationalise rather than proliferate features: prioritise depth and success-rate of high-frequency journeys (transfer, bills, statements) over feature sprawl; suppress intrusive cross-sell interruptions that degrade task completion.
- Institutionalise experience measurement: in-app micro-surveys, app-store review mining, journey-level analytics (drop-off, failure, latency) feeding a satisfaction dashboard owned at senior management level.
- Mandate standardised public disclosure of app downtime, transaction failure rates and complaint-resolution TATs by bank, enabling market discipline on experience quality.
- Tighten enforcement of auto-reversal timelines for failed transactions and extend online dispute resolution coverage, since failed-transaction handling is the largest single dissatisfier.
- Encourage accessibility and vernacular standards for banking apps as part of inclusive digital-banking guidelines.
- Keep apps updated from official stores, enable alerts and biometric locks, use in-app grievance channels (which create traceable records), and escalate unresolved complaints to the RBI Integrated Ombudsman after 30 days.

Conclusion

The mobile application has become the branch, the passbook and the teller of Indian banking. This study finds that customers have rewarded a decade of investment in ease, speed and functionality with moderately high satisfaction but that the frontier of satisfaction has shifted decisively from the front stage to the back stage of the service. What now separates satisfying apps from frustrating ones is not another feature or a fresher interface, but the operational trinity of reliability, security assurance and redress: the app that opens every time, the transaction that succeeds or reverses swiftly and transparently when it does not and the complaint that is resolved without a branch visit. Because satisfaction powerfully drives continued use and advocacy in an interoperable market with negligible switching costs, these operational investments are, in effect, the bank's customer-retention strategy. The banks that internalise this measuring uptime like profit, engineering redress like a product, and extending experience quality across the urban–rural divide will convert India's extraordinary mobile banking adoption into equally extraordinary customer loyalty.

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