

The Role of Fitness Tracker

Introduction

This study aims to learn more about fitness tracker users whether it's an app or device and how it plays into their daily lives. The focus in this study will be on people that use fitness trackers and exercise regularly.

Demographics:

Ages 20-50
Men and women
Have jobs

Psychographics:

Fitness Tracker users

Behaviors:

Exercise regularly

The fitness tracker is an app or device that enable users to track their exercises and daily activities (i.e. steps). Many fitness trackers have more features such as sleep tracking, nutrition, heart rate and many other features.

Fitness trackers are very popular nowadays and variety of apps and devices are available for users. Its an important topic to study and to understand the important features to users, how they are using those features, their behaviors and likes and dislikes. We also would like to understand how people manage to work and exercise and keep track of their performance, and if the fitness trackers help users to achieve their fitness goals.

At the end of the study we will try to provide answers for the following Research Questions:

- What are the most common favorite features utilized by fitness tracker users?
- What are the primary goals of fitness tracker users?
- How are fitness trackers perceived to affect user behavior? (Motivation, fitness habits)

Methods

In order for us to collect the data we need to analyze that will help us to answer the research questions, we decided to conduct interviews with some fitness trackers users who exercise regularly. The demographics focus on age group 20 to 50, men and women that have jobs.

Data collection

The target users in our study are people age between 20 and 50, men and women that have jobs, use fitness trackers and exercise regularly.

The recruitment methods consist of several sources, that include our own network of friends and family and co-workers, using social media to post a request for participants.

Recruitment channels, reached friends and family through text messages, emails, phone calls and in person.

Also, an email was sent to the email list of all employees in ABC company and a Social media post published to the MTWF gym Facebook page (Appendix A)

The study participants as follow:

	Sex	Age	Occupation	Fitness Trackers
P1	Female	Mid 40s	Energy Talent Pipeline Specialist	Fitbit Versa Lite Noom App
P2	Female	Mid-late 40s	Nutrition Mentor, Fitness Pro & CEO	Apple Watch Unkown sleep app
P3	Male	Early 20s	Showcase Sales Consultant	Jefit app Samsung Health App
P4	Female	Late 30s	Full Time Office Manager	Bella Beats Nike run club app
P5	Female	Late 40s	Full time senior paralegal	MyFitnessPal Apple Fitness App
P6	Male	Late 40s	Full time senior internal auditor	Strava
P7	Male	Late 60s	Grounds worker	Fitbit
P8	Female	Late 60s	Statistician	Apple watch
P9	Female	Late 40s	Library Technical Assistant	Fitbit Zip Fitbit Ultra

Interview protocol was prepared that consist of an introduction, General Questions (Exercise Habits), Tracker General questions, Tracker Data / Features questions, Tracker Overall Feelings questions and outro. (Appendix B)

Data analysis

All interviews were recorded to be able to capture all information and to refer to recordings as needed. All interviews were transcribed for the data to be analyzed. Then a raw data sheet was prepared to summarize the important information. Then we used affinity diagram to group and analyze data. We spent almost 6 hours working on the affinity diagram (Appendix C) and analyzing data.

Also, three personas were created to help us more understand the fitness tracker users, their needs, feeling, motivations and frustrations. (Appendix D)

Findings

Summary Results

Our study data reveal that people exercise mostly to stay fit and healthy and users mainly use fitness tracker fitness trackers to monitor their steps and daily activity. Majority of users reported that fitness trackers help them achieve their fitness goals and keeps them accountable.

Key Findings

One of the key findings is that walking is the most popular exercise for people that work especially with full time jobs as work schedule a user stated "I don't take care of myself when I am working." So, walking to work and taking the stairs become part of their daily routine. We also found out that counting steps and mileage is the most reported important fitness tracker feature. Many users stated that they setup their tracker with daily number of steps goal.

Most of our study participants feel positively about using a fitness tracker, many people reported it help them to stay motivated to do better and encourage them to exercise and it became a necessity to them, one user said "It keeps me on my toes", another user stated "Couldn't live without it". Some participants stated that using the fitness tracker make them feel accountable and feel they would make excuses without it.

However, some participants have some frustrations, especially concerning the monthly subscription fees, and if they chose to use the free version, they will have to watch a lot of advertising. Also, some users have trouble with editing mistakes (for instance if the user forgot to start/stop workouts).

Many fitness trackers have social aspects that allow users to share data with community, friends and family. We found out that not too many people using this feature as they concerned about their privacy and they believe their performance and progress is private information.

Our participants main goal for exercising is to stay fit and healthy, they need something to help them track their progress and to track their calories. For runners they need to track their average miles per minute, to know how fast they are going. They found that the fitness tracker helps them to record data and to keep track of their performance.

Recommendations

Many users rely on fitness trackers to track their steps and activity level, the fitness tracker companies need to focus more in enhancing the steps tracking feature and ensure it provide a more accurate data.

To lower the cost of the subscription, I recommend adding a customized subscription feature where user can select what features she/he would like to access and lower the subscription fee.

Nutrition information and meal plans is another important feature for many users and my recommendation is design fitness trackers to have the nutrition features.

Conclusion

In general fitness tracker users feel positive about fitness trackers and believe it plays an important role in keeping them motivated and to make them accountable. With steps tracking features they can setup daily goals of steps they need to achieve so they could stay fit and healthy.

Appendices

Appendix A: Email and Social Media Post Template

Hello Team,

I'm working on a School project and I'm looking for 3 participants (should be using fitness tracker and exercise regularly) to interview regarding their use of fitness tracking apps/devices such as Fitbit, Apple Health, or MyFitnessPal or any other fitness tracker.

Interviews will be 1 on 1 either in-person or online through Skype, or Microsoft Teams. The interview will take about 20-30 minutes, and cover how the app fits into your routine, what data you track with it, how it helps you reach your fitness goals, and your opinions on the app as a whole.

If you want to participate in an interview between now and February 24th, please reply to this email. Your help will be really appreciated

Please note:

- I would like to get your consent to audio recorded the interview so that I can capture all details.
- I also would like to assure you that your personal information will not be shared, and your answers will remain confidential without any reference to you.

Thank you

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Introduction:

Hi, my name is _____, Thank you for coming. I will start the interview by asking general questions about your exercise habits to understand your exercising goals. Then I will ask you questions regarding your usage of fitness trackers, by fitness tracker I mean any form such whether it's an app or device. The interview will take about 20-30 minutes. Please feel comfortable expressing what your thoughts and feelings are. There are no right or wrong or desirable or undesirable answers. If there are any questions you do not wish to answer, or you wish to stop the interview at any time, that's completely okay.

I would like to get your consent to audio record the interview so that I can capture all details. I also would like to assure you that your personal information will not be shared, and your answers will remain confidential without any reference to you.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we get started?

(If they are fine not being anonymous): Could you tell us your name, gender identity, and occupation? (Student, part-time, full-time)

General Questions (Exercise Habits)

How often do you exercise in general, how do you work it into your normal routine?

How long have you been exercising consistently?

- Has it been on-and-off at all?

What is your goal/motivation for exercise? (Are you trying to lose weight, gain muscle, training for something, general wellness)

- Are you an athlete?

What types of exercise do you focus on (Cardio, lifting, specific body parts. Any routine related to that?)

Tracker General

What fitness tracker do you use most regularly?

- Is it an app or a device? If device, any apps that go with it?

When did you get it? How long have you used it?

- Have you used any other fitness trackers before this one?

How often do you use it? How does it fit into your workout routine?

- When do you enter information into it? During or after workout?)

What made you start using a fitness tracker? (Wanted something easier to monitor your progress? was it recommended to you or was it a gift?)

How do you feel overall about your fitness tracker?

What features of your fitness tracker are most important to you?

What do you not like about your fitness tracker?

Tracker Data / Features

What specific data do you track with the one you use? (Workouts, steps, calories, weight, food intake)

Does your tracker have any goal setting/tracking methods? (Setting target weight, calories burned)

Does it have any features not strictly related to exercise related? (Nutrition, sleep tracking,)

Are there any social aspects to your fitness tracking? Do you workout with or share data with your friends and family?

- Part of any workout or challenge groups?
- Social Media

When you look through the data in your tracker, how does it change what you do in your exercise (Seeing areas of improvement, what to do better next time. Workout suggestions)

How do you feel it affects your motivation? Does it make you feel good about your progress, or does it discourage you?

How does that data help you reach your fitness goals? (Relate to what they said their goal was earlier)

Do you feel the data the app tracks is accurate? (Does the tracker track it automatically, or is it inputted by the user)

Tracker Overall Feelings

Do you think your fitness behavior would differ if you didn't use a fitness tracker? If so, how?

Are there any features you wish your tracker had?

Would you recommend this tracker to others?

Outro

That's all the questions I have for you. Thank you so much for your time. Do you have any questions for me? Any concerns you have with this interview and how it will be used? Anything you wish to be anonymized?

Appendix C: Affinity Diagram



Appendix D: Personas

Kevin White



" Using fitness tracker make me accountable to myself and I would see what I have achieved"

AGE: 25

WORK: Electrical Engineer

FAMILY: Single

LOCATION: Ann Arbor, MI

Bio

Kevin is an Electrical Engineer. Kevin exercise 5 days a week and he focus on cardio and weight training, his main goal to stay fit and build more muscles. Kevin needed something to allow him to record his exercise time, number of sets and repetitions. Kevin started to use fitness tracker to be able to record his body measurements, fat percentage and body weight. It help him to set goals based on the data.

Goals

- To lose weight
- To build more muscles

Frustrations

- Hard to fix user error.

Motivations

- Recording and comparing data give him a path toward his goals

Sara Smith



"I need to stay fit and to stay motivated. I must focus and push myself to stay active"

AGE: 49

WORK: Founder of ABC Organization

FAMILY: Married, 2 sons

LOCATION: Los Angeles, CA

Bio

Sara is an entrepreneur and charitable person. Sara works almost 10 hours a day. Due to her busy work schedule, Sara doesn't have the time to regularly exercise and usually forgets to do some activity during the day (i.e. standing up). On her birthday she received a fitness tracker. Sara likes using the tracker especially the feature that keeps reminding her to stand up.

Goals

- Stay active
- Nutrition and weight management

Frustrations

- Not too many trackers offer nutrition features or must pay subscription to have it.
- Can't find customized nutrition programs

Motivations

- Something to remind her to be active
- Tracking calories and seeing the progress

Megan Doe



“It is important to me to see how many minutes I’m active during the day and to track how far and how fast I’m going.”

AGE: 46

WORK: Office Manager

FAMILY: Married, 2 sons, 1 Daughter

LOCATION: Huston, TX

Character: Perfectionist, Active

Bio

Megan is a full-time office manager and a mother of three kids, her job requires her to set on the desk for long time. Exercising is part of her daily routine as she wants to stay fit and healthy and to be able enjoy food without feeling much guilt. Megan is using a fitness tracker app that enables her to track the mileage

Goals

- To stay fit and healthy.
- Track average miles per minute. how fast and how far running.

Frustrations

- The limited options with the freemium
- The GPS in the tracker not very accurate.

Motivations

- Tracking and comparing exercise data that recorded with the fitness tracker.