

02 Access, Ownership and Use of Mobile Technology for Urban Women in Pakistan

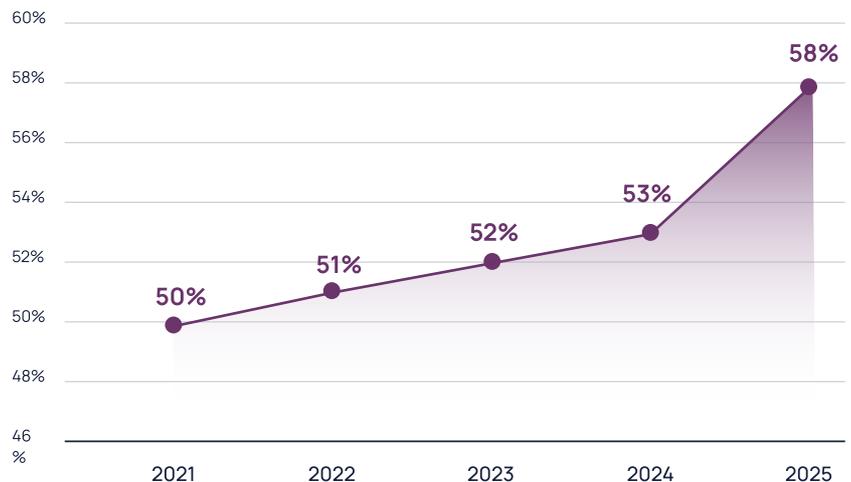
Unpacking mobile access, ownership and digital participation across urban women in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. The key questions explored in this piece:

- What are current patterns of women’s mobile access and ownership?
- How do mobile usage patterns differ across women and men?

This is the second in a four part series on technology access and workforce participation of women.

Women in Pakistan who own mobiles increased from 50 to 58 percent between 2021-2025. This analysis dives into current ownership and usage dynamics for these women.

Women owning mobile phones in Pakistan



Source: GSMA, Mobile Gender Gap Report 2021-2025

Respondent Profile

600+

Survey Respondents

415



Women

187



Men

110 urban neighbourhoods in Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore

18-65 years

Respondents age

37 years

Average age

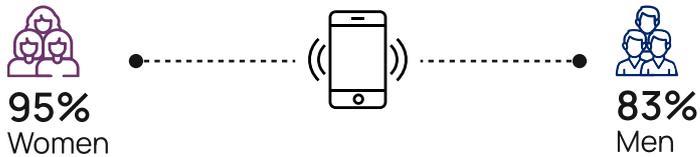
Proportions may not add to 100% due to rounding errors

* represents $p < 0.05$

** represents $p < 0.01$

Necessity and Ownership Dynamics

Are mobile phones a necessity?



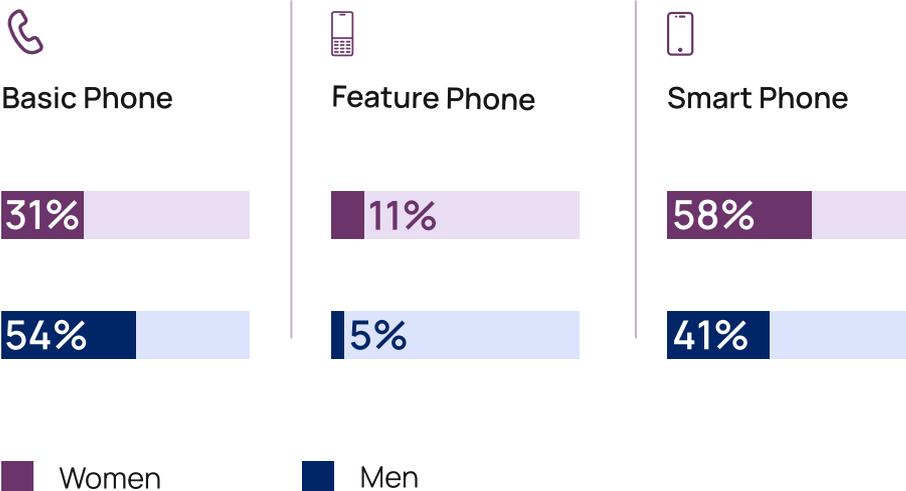
Insights from the survey

01

More women than men considered mobile phones to be a necessity today.*

n: women= 415, men=187

Does phone ownership differ by gender?

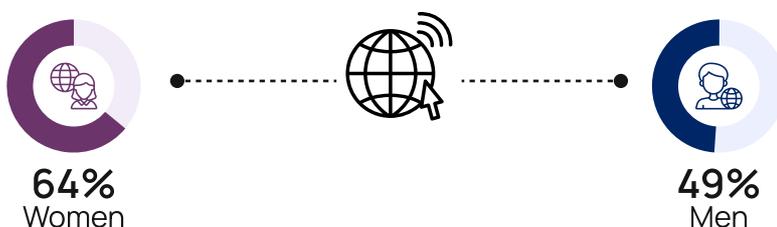


02

Cell phone (overall) ownership was high for men and women, with higher rates of smartphone ownership observed for women.**

n: women = 340, men = 149
subset of those who own mobile phones

What proportion of men and women use the internet?



03

More women than men reported using internet.**

n: women= 351, men= 151;
subset of those with any kind of digital access

Who is more likely to share their phone?



44%

Women



32%

Men

Insights from the survey

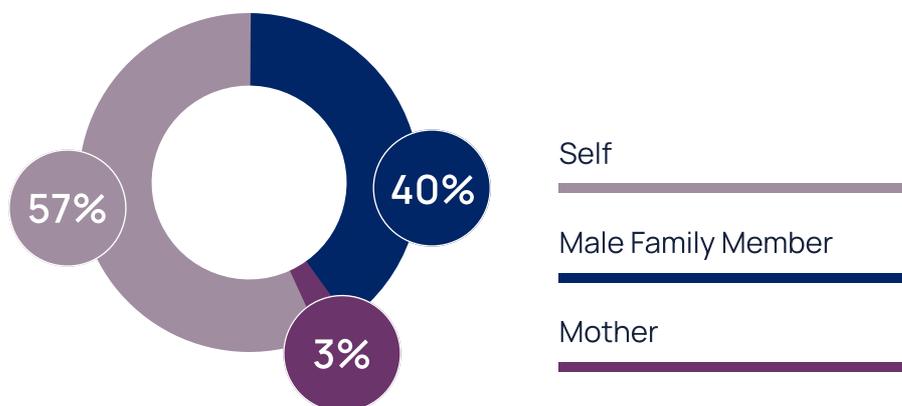
04

Women shared their phones more often than men.*

n: women= 340, men= 149
subset of those who own mobile phones

SIM Registration Patterns

Who is the registered SIM owner?



05

Two out of five women reported using a SIM registered to a male relative, largely due to household dynamics, highlighting a limitation in autonomy.

n: women= 340
subset of women who own mobile phones

What stops women from registering SIMs in their name?

57%

Household Dynamics

24%

Documentation Gaps (No CNIC)

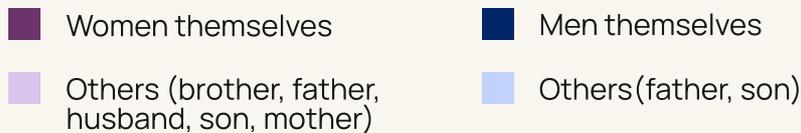
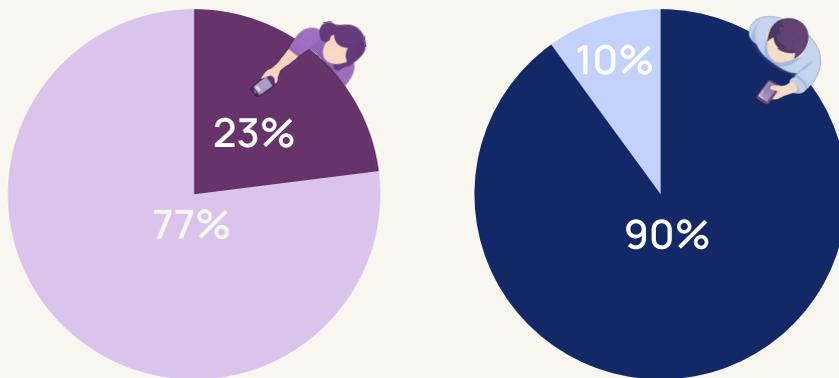
18%

Mobility/ Safety Concerns

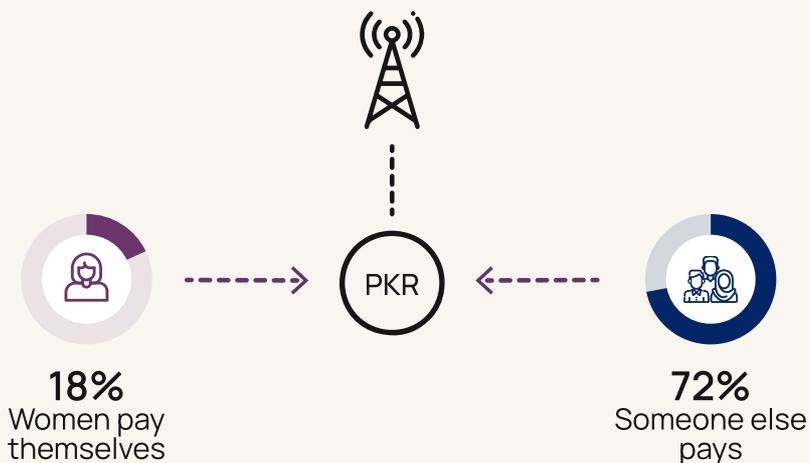
n: women= 147
subset of women who own mobile phones but whose SIM was not registered in their name

Women's Financial Autonomy

Who purchases mobile phones?



Who pays for mobile packages?



n: women= 349, men= 149
subset of those who have access to mobile phones

n: women= 223
subset of women who have access to mobile phones, optional question

Mobile Phone Usage Patterns

How much time do men and women spend using mobile phones?

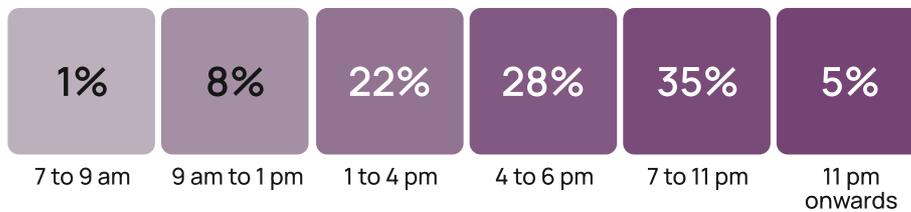


07

Women's mean phone usage was observed to be less than that of men.*

n: women= 349, men= 149
subset of those have access to mobile phones

Which time windows coincide with higher phone usage?



08

Phone usage was highest between 1 and 11pm.

n: women = 349
subset of those have access to mobile phones

Summary insights

What are the patterns of urban women's mobile access and ownership?



Gender-balanced mobile ownership

Cell phone ownership was prevalent across women and men. However, women had higher ownership of smartphones.



Women had shared digital access and limited autonomy

Women shared their phones more often, and were reliant on male family members for SIM registration, purchase and payment of mobile bills.

How do mobile usage patterns differ across urban men and women?



Device-driven internet usage

For both men and women, internet usage was strongly connected to owning a smartphone - as expected, basic phone owners were less likely to use the internet.



Lower mean usage of phones

On average, women used their phones for fewer hours per day than men.

Coming Up

03

Cell Phone Usage: How do Urban Women Navigate the Digital Space?