Report on Survey Findings: Flat & Roommate Preferences

1. Introduction

This report presents findings from a survey conducted to elicit user requirements for a proposed application designed to help individuals find flats, flatmates, or both. The survey served as an elicitation technique, capturing user demographics, housing search behavior, flatmate preferences, and safety concerns. The insights derived from this data will guide the identification of user needs and system features.

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2. Demographic Profile of Respondents

- The respondents represent a distinct mix of students and working professionals, with **62.5% identifying as students** and **37.5% as working professionals**. This indicates that the app must cater to the needs of both segments, which may have different priorities regarding budget, location, and amenities.
- Age responses confirm the user base is primarily within the **young adult (18–30 years) range, accounting for approximately 94% of all respondents**. A more detailed breakdown reveals that over three-quarters of respondents (**77%**) are between 18 and 24 years old, which is consistent with the target group of university students and recent graduates who are most likely to rent shared accommodations.

Key Implication: The application should provide demographic-based filters (age, gender, occupation) while ensuring inclusivity.

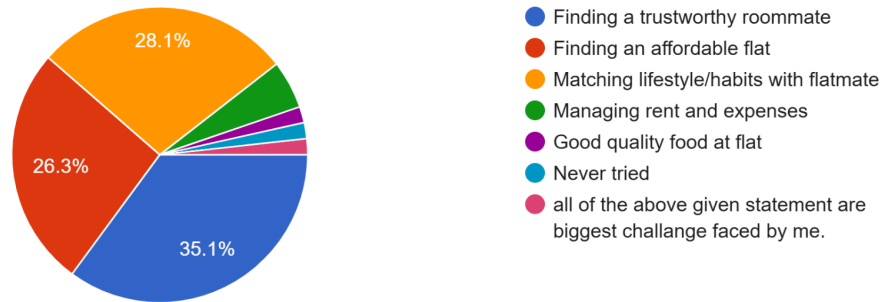## 3. Challenges in Finding Flats/Flatmates

- Respondents reported facing significant challenges such as:

  - Difficulty in finding **trustworthy and compatible flatmates**.

  - Lack of **centralized and reliable housing information**.

  - Struggles with **budget alignment** and hidden costs.

   ○ Inconvenience in **coordinating visits and discussions**.

Key Implication: The system must prioritize building **trust, transparency, and ease of discovery** in both flat and flatmate search processes.

What is the biggest challenge you face while searching for a flat/flatmate?
57 responses

● Finding a trustworthy roommate
● Finding an affordable flat
● Matching lifestyle/habits with flatmate
● Managing rent and expenses
● Good quality food at flat
● Never tried
● all of the above given statement are biggest challange faced by me.

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4. Search Behavior and Housing Preferences

- Most respondents begin their search by focusing on:

    ○ **Location proximity** to workplace/college.

    ○ **Budget constraints** as a primary filter.

    ○ **Flat type** (shared room, single occupancy, furnished/unfurnished).

- Budget ranges are concentrated in **affordable segments (₹5,000–15,000 per month)**.

- Respondents emphasized **location convenience** as non-negotiable.

Key Implication: Core features must include **budget and location filters**, as well as customization by type of flat and occupancy.
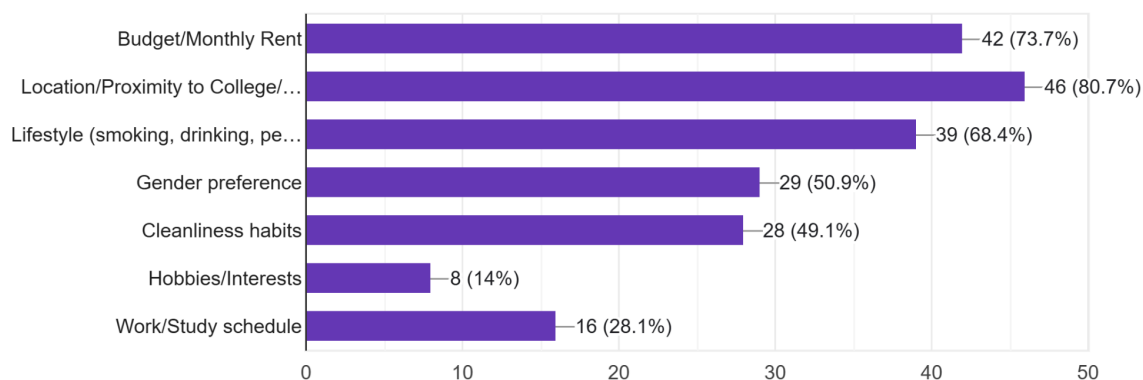
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5. Flatmate Preference Insights

- Respondents consistently highlighted the importance of compatibility based on:

- - **Cleanliness and hygiene habits**.

  - **Lifestyle choices** (smoking, drinking, daily routines).

  - **Gender preference**.

  - **Shared responsibilities (cooking, cleaning, bill splitting)**.

- Some respondents also valued shared hobbies and social compatibility, while others prioritized financial and logistical compatibility over lifestyle.

Key Implication: The app should support **detailed roommate preference input and matching** with both essential and optional criteria.

What preferences would you like to filter on (like in a dating app)? (check all that apply)
57 responses

Budget/Monthly Rent — 42 (73.7%)
Location/Proximity to College/… — 46 (80.7%)
Lifestyle (smoking, drinking, pe… — 39 (68.4%)
Gender preference — 29 (50.9%)
Cleanliness habits — 28 (49.1%)
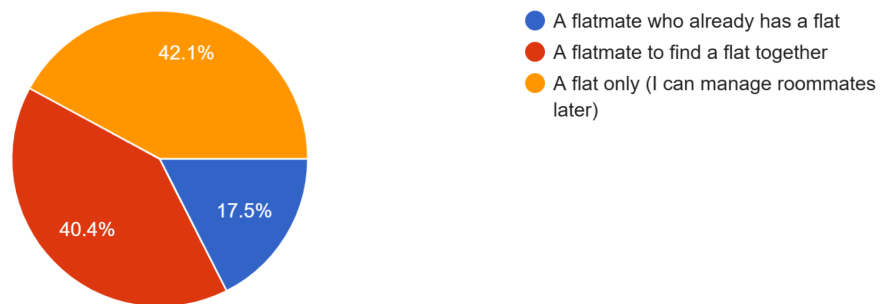Hobbies/Interests — 8 (14%)
Work/Study schedule — 16 (28.1%)

6. Flexibility in Search Objectives

- Three distinct user intentions emerged:

  1. Individuals seeking **only a flatmate** (already have accommodation).

  2. Individuals seeking **only a flat**.

  3. Individuals seeking **both a flat and a flatmate simultaneously**.

Key Implication: The application should offer **multiple modes of use** aligned with these distinct search objectives.

When you search for housing, what do you usually look for first?
57 responses

- A flatmate who already has a flat
- A flatmate to find a flat together
- A flat only (I can manage roommates later)
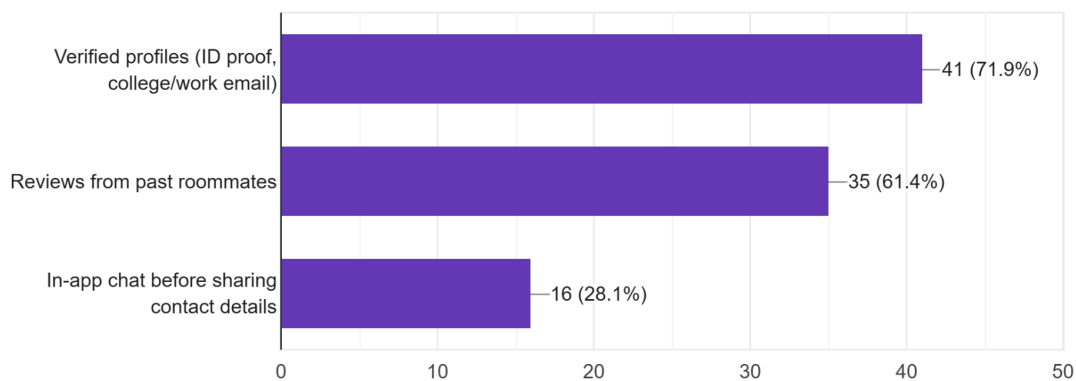
42.1%

17.5%

40.4%

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7. Safety and Trust Concerns

- A large proportion of respondents expressed **safety concerns** when selecting flatmates.

- Desired measures included:

    - **Profile verification** (government ID, institutional email).

    - **Background checks**.

    - **Ratings, reviews, and references from previous flatmates**.

    - **Secure in-app communication** before sharing personal contact details.

Key Implication: The application's **credibility and adoption** will heavily depend on the integration of robust safety and verification features.

What would make you feel safer while choosing a flatmate through the app?
57 responses

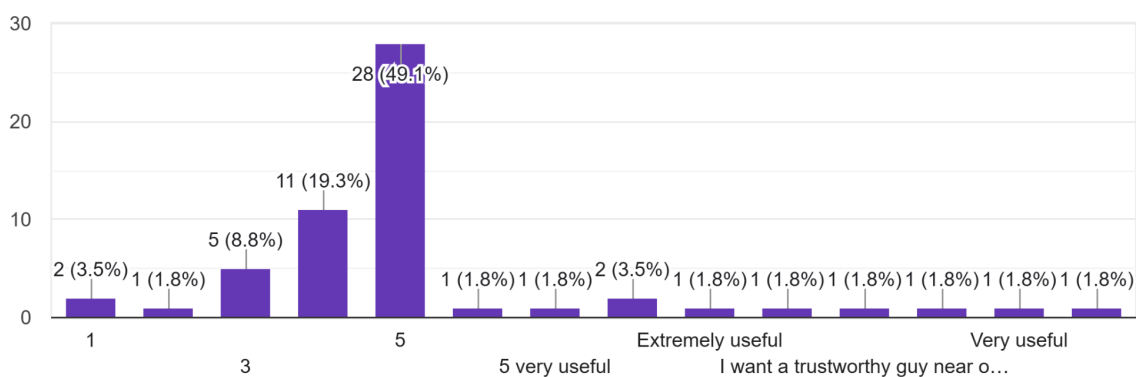|	
Verified profiles (ID proof, college/work email)	41 (71.9%)
Reviews from past roommates	35 (61.4%)
In-app chat before sharing contact details	16 (28.1%)

8. Usability Preferences

- Respondents rated highly the usefulness of a system that allows them to **describe preferences in natural language** (e.g., "I want a quiet non-smoker near XYZ College") and receive instant matches.

- This highlights the need for **intelligent search capabilities** and **natural language processing (NLP)**.

Key Implication: Beyond filters, the app should enable **conversational and intuitive search experiences**.

How useful would it be if you could just type your preferences in simple words (e.g., "I want a quiet non-smoker near XYZ College") and get instant matches? (1 = Not useful, 5 = Very useful)
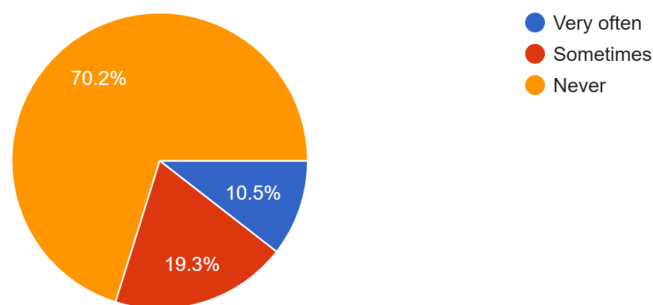57 responses

9. Rent Payment Habits

- Responses indicated that some users occasionally **forget rent deadlines**, while others are punctual.

- This suggests an opportunity for the app to integrate:

  - **Reminders for rent and utility payments**.

  - **Shared expense tracking** among flatmates.

Key Implication: Incorporating **financial reminders and tracking tools** can enhance convenience and reduce conflicts.
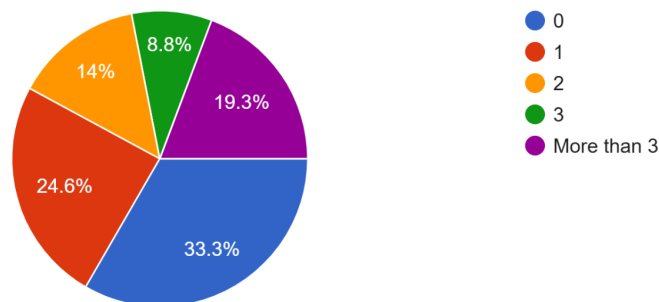
How often do u forget to pay rent?
57 responses

- Very often
- Sometimes
- Never

70.2%
10.5%
19.3%

10. Past Renting Experience

- A **clear majority (67%) of respondents have prior renting experience**, with many having rented multiple times.
- About **one-third (33%) of respondents have never rented before**, highlighting a significant group of **first-time renters.**

Key Implication: This indicates that most users of the application will already be familiar with the rental process and can provide **firsthand insights into challenges such as unreliable landlords, mismatched flatmates, or hidden costs**. Their lived experience strongly validates the need for features like **community reviews, background checks, and transparency mechanisms**.

How many times have you rented a place ?

57 responses

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- More than 3

8.8%
14%
19.3%
24.6%
33.3%

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11. Additional Features Suggested

- Diet & food preferences (Veg/Non-Veg).

- Cultural compatibility.

- Some respondents suggested the current filters are already enough.

Key Implication: Food habits are a **recurring hidden challenge** that should be **included in lifestyle filters.**

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12. Summary of Core Insights

- **Demographics:** Young adults, balanced mix of students and professionals.

- **Challenges:** Trust, transparency, affordability, compatibility.

- **Search Priorities:** Location, budget, and occupancy type dominate decisions.

- **Flatmate Preferences:** Lifestyle, hygiene, gender, and shared responsibilities.

- **Flexibility:** Users differ in whether they seek a flat, a flatmate, or both.

- **Safety Needs:** Strong demand for verification, ratings, and secure communication.

- **Usability:** High interest in natural language search.

- **Rent Habits:** Opportunity for reminders and expense tracking.
- **Renting Experience:** Two-thirds have rented before, offering firsthand insights; one-third are first-time renters needing guidance.

- **Additional Features:** Diet and cultural compatibility are suggested as key lifestyle filters.

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11. Conclusion

The survey highlights the pressing need for an integrated solution that balances **search efficiency, safety, flexibility, and compatibility** in the flat/flatmate discovery process. The findings underline that while affordability and location are foundational requirements, trust and lifestyle compatibility are equally decisive. Incorporating safety mechanisms, intelligent search, and convenience features will not only meet user expectations but also distinguish the application in the market.