

Usage of whatsapp messenger amongst post-graduate students in a university environment: A study of Karnataka state women's university, Vijayapura

¹ Dr. Shobha Patil, ¹ Dr. Deepthi, ² PG Tadasad

¹ UGC Post Doctoral Fellow, Department of PG Studies & Research in Library and Information Science Karnataka State Women's University
Jnana Shakti Campus, Torvi, Vijayapura, Karnataka, India.

² Professor and Chairman, Department of PG Studies & Research in Library and Information Science Karnataka State Women's University Jnana
Shakti Campus, Torvi, Vijayapura, Karnataka, India.

Abstract

Based on a survey of post-graduate students of Karnataka State Women's University, Vijayapura identifies PG students' conceptualization and usage of WhatsApp Messenger. Notes that a greater majority of post-graduate students access whatsapp messenger quite regularly for various purposes including educational purposes. Concludes that the situation is ripe for the university to integrate the mobile technology into learning process and library can take necessary measures to form a user's group on whatsapp to provide a platform for them to share the digital information and also it can be used as a tool to provide various alert services.

Keywords: Mobile technology, WhatsApp, Post Graduates, Vijayapura

1. Introduction

Social media and social network tools especially WhatsApp Messenger, Facebook, imo, Skype, etc., have become very dominant tools in today's digital world for people to share their feelings and moments. These social media and network are affecting user's communication and business operation styles when these are combined with mobile phones^[1]. Mobile phone is one of the most popular and widely used communication devices in the world, particularly in India. India is the second-largest mobile phone user country with over 900 million users. Mobile phones are making our lives easier and it is very hard to imagine life without mobile phones. There are several features of mobile phones like Voice, SMS, Browsing, Downloading, Gaming and variety of applications. With the introduction of smart phones, the popularity of mobile applications has raised and its usage has become increasingly prevalent among mobile users. One such application which is very popular among smart phone users these days is WhatsApp messenger. Today the mobile application, WhatsApp has become a part of youth's life. According to NDTV news, India is the largest market of WhatsApp messenger; and according to DNA news report, there were over 60 million Indian users of WhatsApp in August 2014^[2]. In April 2015, WhatsApp was the most globally popular messaging app with more than 800 million active users^[3].

There are number of mobile applications available in the market which people use according to their preference, choice and desire. WhatsApp application is one of them which is most popular among everyone, an application which not only has function of chatting but also possesses other convenient functions. WhatsApp get famous worldwide with no age boundaries. But it is very popular amongst youth. The purpose behind using this app is keeping connectivity between their friends, relatives and professionals. Since this application is popular amongst the users it is to think about its usage for

educational and informative purpose besides communication^[4]. WhatsApp messenger is used to share their experiences with other users across the globe. WhatsApp application is their most preferred mode of day-to-day communications than mobile voice calls (phone calls). Cost efficiency, effective, quick and easier mode of communication, confidential, and convenient usage are some of the major factors which might influence their decision. WhatsApp emerged as a preferred choice. It was found that, although WhatsApp is making in-roads per students' preference, voice calls still remain more important to them as they rely on it at certain situations and circumstances for their communication. There are positive impacts of digital messaging technologies and this has had positive impact on teen and the youth including their preference of mobile voice calls^[1].

Mobile phones are getting smarter and the usage among youth and more particularly among students of higher learning are becoming more visible. Post-graduate students like other youth are using the mobile phones for talking, texting message, searching the web, listening to music, watching videos, playing games, being on social media, etc. The smart phones have all features and capabilities to be used by libraries of higher education in the dissemination of information. In view of this, a small study has been conducted to find out attitude of post graduate students towards the usage of WhatsApp messenger.

2. What is WhatsApp Messenger?

WhatsApp is an application available on the new generation smart phones like iPhone, Android, Blackberry, Samsung, Sony etc that allows users to send text messages to each other for free. Users are not charged for a text sent through WhatsApp^[5]. This is because WhatsApp sends messages through an internet data connection. WhatsApp supports many different message types, from simple text to pictures to audio files and videos^[6]. WhatsApp is an instant messaging app for smart phones that

operate under a subscription business model. The proprietary, cross-platform app uses the Internet to send text messages, images, video, user location and audio media messages [7]. WhatsApp instant messaging is a free application, which is advantageous. Mobile system text messaging allows the user to send and receive messages synchronously and asynchronously. The WhatsApp instant messaging system is simplistic, intuitive, and very easy to use [8].

3. Review of Literature

Huge amount of literature is generated on the topic and it is noticed that there are a number of reasons why people adopted WhatsApp as their main communication channel rather than alternatives (such as SMS or other social networks) [9]. Instant messaging through WhatsApp for academic purposes provides students with opportunities to interact together and to construct and share knowledge [10]. Social interactions improve the effectiveness of learning and teaching. This helps students to easily construct and share knowledge through WhatsApp social networking [11]. As a result of which positive impacts of collaborative learning through social networking (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.) and its effects can be seen on the learning process Instant messaging is considered to be an effective tool for learning and teaching through social interactions [12].

The population under study was Post Graduate youths, especially University going students in Vijayapura District, Karnataka. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 University students in the age group of 21 and above. The respondents for the study were students who were using of smart phones and mobile application named 'WhatsApp Messenger'. Some students created WhatsApp group and students interacted with each other through the help of WhatsApp Messenger.

4. Methodology

The study has been undertaken to identify the post - graduate students perception of WhatsApp and its usage among them. Survey method of research was adopted to collect the data using a structured questionnaire. The study population comprises of post-graduate students of Karnataka State Women's University, Vijayapura- the only university in Karnataka state exclusively meant for women and one among the eight in the country. Random sampling method has been used to select the target population. Hundred questionnaires were distributed and ninety four duly filled in questionnaires were received. The data collected was fed into SPSS 20.00 V and simple frequency calculation has been used to analyze the data.

5. Analysis and Interpretation

I. General Characteristics

Table 1: Age wise distribution

Age	Frequency	Percentage
21-22	49	52.1
23-24	32	34.1
Above 24	13	13.8
Total	94	100

Table -1 shows age wise distribution of the respondents where it is found that, more than half (52.1%, N=49) of the respondents were aged between 21 and 22 years. More than one third (34.1%, N=32) of them were aged between 23 and 24 and only 13.8% (N=13) were aged above 24 years.

Table 2: Faculty

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage
General Science	56	59.6
Social Science	21	22.3
Arts and Humanities	17	18.1
Total	94	100

Table -2 indicates the faculty to which the respondents belong to and it is found that more than half (59.6%, N=56) of them were from science faculty, 22.3% (N=21) were from faculty of social sciences and 18.1% (N=17) were from faculty of arts.

II. WhatsApp Messenger

Table 3: Access to Internet

Access to Internet	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	92	97.9
No	02	2.1
Total	94	100

It can be found from table -3 that a greater majority (97.9%, N=92) of post-graduate students access Internet and only 2.1% (N=2) of them do not have access to Internet.

Table 4: Frequency of accessing internet sources

Accessing internet sources	Frequency	Percentage
Every day	75	81.5
More than 3 times a week	10	10.9
Once in a week	7	7.6

Table 4 depicts the frequency of accessing internet sources and it is found that 81.5% (N=75) of the respondents access internet daily, 10.9% (N=10) of them access more than 3 times a week and only 7.6% (N=7) of them access internet only once in a week. Thus it can be said that post-graduate students do regularly access Internet.

Table 5: Awareness of the different Mobile Messaging Applications

Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	88	93.6
No	06	6.4
Total	94	100

From table -5 it is found that 93.6% (N=88) of them were aware of different mobile messaging applications. Only 6.4% (N=6) of them were unaware of the mobile messaging applications.

Table 6: Knowledge of different Mobile Messaging Applications

Mobile Applications	Frequency	Percentage
Yahoo Messenger	54	61.4
Google Messenger	33	37.5
Facebook Messenger	69	78.4
WhatsApp Messenger	88	100
Line	31	35.2
Skype	18	20.5
Google Talk	11	12.5
Viber	02	2.3
WeChat	08	9.1
SnapChat	02	2.3
Voxer	00	00
Kik	00	00

Table 6 depicts the knowledge of different mobile messaging applications of the respondents. They had the knowledge of more than mobile messaging applications. It is found that everyone was (N=88) aware of whatsapp messenger. In addition to this a larger majority also had the knowledge of facebook messenger (78.4%, N=69) and yahoo messenger (61.4%, N=54). More than one third also had the knowledge of google messenger (37.5%, N=33) and line (35.2%, N=31). 20.5% (N=18) of respondents had also the knowledge of skype and 12.5% (N=11) did know google talk. A small percentage of respondents had the knowledge of wechat (9.1%, N=8), snapchat (2.3%, N=2) and viber (2.3%, N=2).

Table 7: Access to WhatsApp Messenger

Use	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	88	93.6
No	06	6.4
Total	94	100

From table 7 it can be interpreted that whatsapp messenger is very popular among the post-graduate students as 93.6% (N=88) of them had access to whatsapp messenger. Only 6.4% (N=6) of them do not have access to WhatsApp messenger.

Table 8: Reasons for not using WhatsApp Messenger

Not use	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of Time	5	5.7
Economic	3	3.4
Smart phone	1	1.1
Wasting of Time	0	00
Network Problem	0	00

Table- 8 provides the reasons for not using whatsapp messenger by the respondents. And it can be found that lack of time (5.7%, N=5), financial problems (3.4%, N=3) and not having smart phone (1.1%, N=1) were quoted as the reasons given by them for not using WhatsApp messenger.

Table 9: Source of knowing WhatsApp Messenger

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Friends	73	82.5
Family Members	46	52.3
By own	15	17.1
Websites	3	3.4

From table- 9 it is found that 82.5% (N=73) of them came to know about it through friends and family members (52.3%, N=46) and 17.1% (N=15) on their own started using it and the remaining 3.4% (N=3) came to know about it through websites.

Table 10: Access to WhatsApp Messenger

Access	Frequency	Percentage
24x7 online	63	71.6
As and when needed	25	28.4

From table- 10 it is found that 71.6% (N=63) of post-graduate students access WhatsApp by being 24x7 online and 28.4% (N=25) use it as and when needed by them.

Table 11: Reasons for using WhatsApp Messenger

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Chatting	88	100
Sending Image	82	93.1
Sending Videos	48	54.4
Sending Audios	43	48.8
Group Chatting/Discussion	21	23.8
Sharing of documents	11	12.5
Activities or Event updates	18	20.5
Sharing of job information	61	69.3
Information Sharing	34	38.6
Sharing of Academic information	42	47.7
Entertainment	72	81.8

It is found from table 11 that everyone (N=88) uses whatsapp for chatting purpose, 93.1% (N=82) use it for sending images, 81.8% (N=72) for entertainment, 69.3% (N=61) for sharing job information, 54.4% (N=48) for sending videos, 48.8% (N=43) for sending audios, 47.7% (N=42) for sharing academic information, 38.6% (N=34) for information sharing, 23.8% (N=21) for group chatting/ discussions, 20.5% (N=18) for activities or event updates, and 12.5% (N=11) of the respondents use whatsapp messenger for sharing of documents.

Table 12: WhatsApp groups used for educational purpose

Used for educational purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	50	56.8
No	38	43.2
Total	88	100

When analysed whether the respondents use whatsapp groups for educational purpose it is found that 56.8% (N=50) use it for educational purpose and 43.2% (N=38) do not use the groups for educational purpose (Table -12).

Table 13: Information shared in groups as concerned to academic purpose

Information shared	Frequency	Percentage
Send text notes	48	54.5
Send clipping of information as images	28	31.8
Copy and send information through different websites	09	10.2
Send job vacancy details	47	53.4
Send old question papers	15	17.0

When analysed the type of information shared in whatsapp groups as concerned to academic purpose it is found that 54.5% (N=48) of them send text notes, 53.4% (N=47) of them send job vacancy details, 31.8% (N=28) send clipping of information as images, 17% (N=15) send old question papers, and 10.2% (N=9) send information copied through different websites.

Table 14: Rating in using WhatsApp Messenger

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Novice	09	10.2
Average	24	27.3
Perfect	55	62.5

From table 14 it is found that 62.5% (N=55) of them rate themselves to be perfect in using whatsapp, 27.3% (N=24) rate themselves as average and 10.2% (N=9) rate themselves as novice in using whatsapp messenger.

6. Conclusion

WhatsApp has become very popular and besides all, this Application is highly addictive and can create a great impact on regular users, and apart from that it can leave a trace that becomes difficult to control and cure”^[13]. It can be established from the study that youths are more familiar with WhatsApp messenger. WhatsApp was more preferred by the students, with some reasons such as its convenience and easier usage, its effectiveness and reliability, and it saves money. WhatsApp is used by the students to inform about issues related to private exchanges of information and educational purpose.

All the possible types of communication are used in whatsapp group communication. They frequently share videos, audios, words, emoticons, images, photographs and URL links. WhatsApp has become so cosy/comfortable application among youngsters. Now WhatsApp is being used by youth for creating, sharing and exchanging information. WhatsApp with its tagline “Simple. Personal. Real time messaging,” has proved that its tagline is very much apt for the brand. No wonder, the brain behind Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg took the ownership of WhatsApp very recently. The main reason is its wide use and popularity among youth itself^[14].

WhatsApp application allows patrons to stay updated on library events and to plan events they wish to attend without having to physically go to the library. A library can post images of books for discussion groups, post news about the library, and post pictures and videos of the library orientation programme and library events etc. It also allows libraries to interact with patrons through discussion boards and walls, image tagging, and comments. Whatsapp not only allows libraries to reach out to patrons, but it also allows patrons to reach out to libraries. Patrons can leave feedback for libraries and can make suggestions to improve services in a setting that is comfortable for the patron. Also allow library users to find information about the library in an interface with which they are already familiar. It allows libraries to reach out to patrons and to market services outside of traditional methods, providing increased opportunities to connect with current and potential library users. The results have major impacts on the libraries. The results show that a greater majority of post-graduate students access Internet quite regularly. They were aware of different mobile messaging applications. They had the knowledge of more than mobile messaging applications. Everyone was aware of whatsapp messenger and it is very popular among the post-graduate students. They access whatsapp by being 24x7 online for various purposes. The respondents also use whatsapp groups for educational purposes as well. Thus it can be seen that the situation is ripe for the university to integrate the mobile technology into learning process and library can take necessary measures to form a user’s group on whatsapp to provide a platform for them to share the digital information and also it can be used as a tool to provide various alert services.

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