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## Use of WhatsApp Messenger among LIS students of University of Karachi, Pakistan

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## **Topic of Research:**

**Use of WhatsApp Messenger among LIS students of University of Karachi,**

**Pakistan**

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## **Abstract:**

This study examined the use of WhatsApp Messenger among students. It studied the reasons and the time spend by students on using WhatsApp. The research further explores that what features of WhatsApp is frequently used by students and the challenges they are facing. The survey method is used and the questionnaire was distributed among 53 students of Library Information Science Department, University of Karachi. It is found that 51 students are users of WhatsApp and 03 are non-users. The results showed that students use WhatsApp consistently in their communication and very supportive in academics. Some of the issues occurs while using WhatsApp including network, privacy and unregulated messages.

**Keywords:** WhatsApp, instant messaging, social network, WhatsApp and academics

## **Introduction:**

Internet plays a vital role in getting the people in touch with one another worldwide. With the passage of time, people are now connecting more and more with each other through Internet.

“More than 4.5 billion people are using the internet at the start of 2020, while social media users have passed the 3.8 billion mark. Nearly 60 percent of the world’s population is already online, and the latest trends suggest that more than half of the world’s total population will use social media by the middle of this year”. (Datareportal, 2020)

Internet growth has immensely changed conventional media into digital media and one of the most rapidly growing tools of communication is social media. The use of social media technology is penetrating within professional as well as personal lives. Now everyone can communicate, share, participate, and form a network online that can help him in disseminating contents.

The social media by their nature have the capabilities of educating, informing, entertaining and inflaming the audience. Above all, they possess a contagious and outreaching influence which the conventional media lack. This potential is most likely what Osahenye (2012) refers to as “unstoppable power of the social media”.

Abubakar (2012) posits that “social media, which include blogs (political Blog), networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), video sharing (YouTube) audio sharing (Podcast), mobile sites (2go etc.), image or picture sharing (flicker), etc. have the capacity of boosting participation because of their open, conversational nature, connectedness and textual and audio-visual characteristic appeals”.

Some of the popular instant messaging apps are Line, Hike, We Chat, Hangout, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, What’s App, Skype, Line, Nimbuzz, Blackberry Messenger, Viber, Telegram Messenger, IMO, Snapchat etc. These apps have become important assets of people’s daily life as they provide facility to keep in touch.

WhatsApp is one of the messaging app that lets users’ text, chat, and share media, including voice messages and video, with individuals or groups. WhatsApp, started in the year 2009, with the tag line- “Simple. Personal. Real time messaging.” It is a mobile messaging app which allows the users to exchange messages without having to pay for. The WhatsApp messenger was purposely created by Brian Acton and Jan Koum (2009) to make communication and the distribution of multimedia messaging more easily and faster.

The main purpose behind this application is to replace SMS with a cross platform mobile messenger that works on an internet data plan. WhatsApp relies on data to send messages, like iMessage or BBM, so it doesn't cut into your monthly text allotment. WhatsApp uses mobile network data or local area network to send and receive messages. WhatsApp Messenger is a proprietary, cross platform instant messaging application for smart phones. In addition to text messaging, users can send images, video, and audio messages to each other (Wikipedia, 2013). WhatsApp allows its users to use their Internet connection to send messages to each other. WhatsApp is like a chat program for mobile phones. Smart phones are becoming increasingly popular and WhatsApp is available for almost all Smartphone.

“WhatsApp constitutes a powerful educational tool to encourage second language interaction among participants and its tremendous potential to activate students' involvement remains one of the least exploited functionalities of mobile phones” (p. 63). WhatsApp can also boost students’ dynamic participation (Baffour-Awuah, 2015) and inspire learners to get involved in purposeful activities with a special emphasis on effective learning outcomes (Beetham & Sharpe, 2013).

#### **Some Important Features of WhatsApp:**

**Simple, Reliable Messaging:** In WhatsApp, we can send free messages through using the phone’s internet. We can send photos and videos on WhatsApp instantly.

**Groups to Keep in Touch:** In WhatsApp, we can create a group of peoples to have the discussion with group members at a time. With group chat people can send images, videos, documents, audio etc. and group chats are limited up to 256 people at once.

**Speak Freely:** Through WhatsApp we can make Audio calls and Video Calls with free of cost, even in another country by using phone’s internet connectivity.

**Keep the Conversation Going:** We can use WhatsApp in mobile as well as in desktop. We can seamlessly synchronize all our chats on our computer to chat on whatever device is most convenient for us.

**Security by Default:** In WhatsApp we have end-to-end encryption to secure our messages and calls.

**Document Sharing Made Easy:** Through WhatsApp we can send PDF, spreadsheets, slideshows and more without the hassle of file sharing app and email.

## Literature Review:

Gutiérrez-Colon et.al. (2013) study that university students in Spain to explore the advantages and disadvantages of using instant short messaging systems like WhatsApp to enhance learners' reading skills in English as a foreign language (EFL). The study determines that a vast majority of students demonstrated a high degree of satisfaction and accepted that their ability to read English had not only improved but also had a positive impact on their reading habits and resulted in greater regularity and confidence.

Tulika and Dhananjay (2014) examines that students find learning with WhatsApp is quite fascinating and useful. Besides, they also find it a shared learning experience and helpful in growing their interactivity with peers and teachers in society. The research highlighted a positive attitude of students towards WhatsApp learning. Students gave preference learning through WhatsApp over traditional classroom and demonstrated willingness to use it in the future as well. Motiwalla (2007) study the use of mobile devices for students learning. The study examines the use of instant messaging is getting high and learning through mobile devices is gaining popularity among university students.

The use of WhatsApp at University in South Africa is studied by Bere (2013). It is found that the learning through WhatsApp among students and teachers is better than traditional class room environment. The students who are passive in traditional class but they are very active in app environment. The students gave response that the use of app is more convenient and easy to communicate with their teachers.

AichaBlehchAmry's study (2014) has shown the efficacy of WhatsApp social networking as opposed to face-to-face learning in the classroom of Taibah University. The study found that mobile learning technology supports students to develop a learning community, build knowledge and to share with others easily.

Lauricella and Kay (2013) examines the use of text messaging and instant messaging by higher education students. The study investigated the level of comfort, frequency of use, usefulness, and reasons for messaging and differences peer-to-peer and peer-to instructor interactions. It is found that students feel comfortable by using both text and instant messaging because of its ease of use. It is concluded that both text and instant messaging are useful and viable methods for communication in higher education.

Annie and Syamimi (2014) study the use of WhatsApp among the undergraduate students at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. It is found that use of WhatsApp benefits the students in discussing and sharing their academic information. This study further discussed the issues related to the messages received in bulk quantity which is not relevant to their studies and create distraction. This research, however, revealed that the undergraduates are rather responsible in sharing the unregulated information.

Jisha and Jeba Kumar (2014) studies WhatsApp as a mobile communication tool among Chennai youth. This research explores that young Chennai youth spend the maximum amount of time on WhatsApp and which can help them to build networks. This study focused on the college students of Chennai region in India. It is found that they use WhatsApp by utilizing its feature like image sharing, audio and video files. The study also revealed that the only application that the youth uses when they are spending time on their smart phone is WhatsApp.

Nondzor and Alhaji (2014) conducts a study among the polytechnic students in Ghana. The study explores the preferences among students of WhatsApp message as compare to a voice call. The research found that the students are more familiar with voice calls than WhatsApp message

but those who use both apps preferred WhatsApp to voice calls because of its ease of use, effectiveness and reliability in their communication and saving money.

Chokri (2015) research examines the effectiveness of using mobile to support a blended learning course. The study reveals that the online students operating from school or home, anything shared by students or teachers will be accessible instantly in a blended mobile lecture. The findings of this research shows that WhatsApp's social learning practices bring benefits for student's accomplishments and making attitudes towards mobile learning.

Baishya and Maheshwari (2020) explores the academic use of WhatsApp group in Sikkim University, India. They study that how students WhatsApp groups functioning can influence by the presence of teachers in groups. The research findings demonstrates that presence of teachers in students' WhatsApp group can be very effective and their communication becomes more structured and controlled.

From the above literature survey, it is identified that the studies investigate the use of WhatsApp and its easiness as a communication tool among students and teachers. This study intended to investigate not only the use of WhatsApp but to identify what features are more beneficial and the challenges faced by its users.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following are the study's objectives:

- a) To find reasons for usage of WhatsApp among Students of LIS Department University of Karachi, Pakistan.
- b) To find frequency of WhatsApp usage among Students LIS Department University of Karachi, Pakistan.
- c) To explore the features of WhatsApp used the most by the Students LIS Department University of Karachi,
- d) To find out the challenges encountered by the respondents in using WhatsApp.

## **Scope and Limitation of the study:**

This study focused on the effect of WhatsApp messenger usage among students in Library Information Science Department, University of Karachi. The population of the research setup covers students of all grades (BS, BLIS, MLIS, Mphil) in the Department.

## **Methodology:**

The survey method is adopted for this study. Questionnaire was used as data collection tool. Structured questionnaire is made including 03 open ended and 12 closed ended questions. For data collection, the questionnaire was distributed among sample of 53 students randomly. Questionnaire distributed directly to the students of Department of Library & Information Science, University of Karachi. The data were collected from BS, BLIS, MLIS and MPhil students. All 53 distributed questionnaire were filled by students in which 51 are users of WhatsApp and 03 were found non-users. The data obtained through questionnaire were analyzed by using simple statistical method with the help of MS-excel.

### Data Analysis & Interpretation

The questionnaire was distributed randomly among the students of Department of Library & Information Science, University of Karachi. 54 questionnaires were distributed. The responses are presented in the following tables.

**Table 1 Demographic Information**

Gender	No of students	%age
Male	12	22.22 %
Female	42	77.77%
Total	N= 54	

Table 1 indicated that majority of the respondents are females. The data in table 1 shows that approximately 78% respondents are female and 22% are male students.

**Table 2 Level of Education**

Program	No. of Students	%age
MPhil	10	18.51 %
MLIS	15	27.77%
BLIS	15	27.77%
BS	14	25.92%
Total	N=54	

There are 10 questionnaires distributed among the students in M.Phil program. 15 in MLIS, 15 in BLIS and 14 students in BS program. (Table 2)

**Table 3 WhatsApp Users/ Non Users**

Options	No of Students.	%age
Users	51	94.44 %
Non users	03	5.55 %
Total	N=54	

The data in table 3 indicated 94.44% users of WhatsApp and 5.55% non-users of this application. The majority of the users are found using WhatsApp.

**Table 4 Frequency of use**

Time per day	No of Students	%age
Less than 1 hours	12	23.59 %
1 to 2 hours	19	37.25 %
3 to 4 hours	11	21.53%
More than 4 hours	09	17.64 %
Total	N=51	

The collected data in table 4 shows that majority of the respondents use WhatsApp less than 4 hours a day as 37.25% use 1-2 hours, 23.59% use less than hour and 21.53% use 3-4 hours a day. However 17.64% use more than four hours a day.

**Table 5 Duration of Use**

<b>Duration</b>	<b>No of Students</b>	<b>%age</b>
Less than 1 month	0	0
1 to 3 months	02	3.7 %
3 to 6 months	0	0
9 to 12 months	03	5.5 %
More than 1 years	46	85.18 %
Total	N=51	

WhatsApp is launched in 2009. Nowadays majority of students are user of WhatsApp. When the students asked about the duration for the use of WhatsApp then majority of LIS students are found experienced in the use of this application as 46(85.15%) using WhatsApp more than one year. Very few of them are using WhatsApp less than a year. (Table 5)

**Table 6 Level of Use**

<b>Level</b>	<b>No of Students</b>	<b>%age</b>
New/ Beginner	06	11.76 %
Moderate	31	60.76 %
Expertly Use	14	27.45 %
Total	N=51	

Table 6 reveals the perception of LIS students about their level of expertise for the use of WhatsApp. It is found that majority 31(60.76%) consider them as moderate user however 14(27.45%) feel that they use this app expertly. While 6(11.76%) indicate that they are at beginner level.

**Table 7 General Use (per day)**

<b>Interval</b>	<b>Text Messages</b>	<b>Audio Message</b>	<b>File Sharing</b>	<b>Audio/Video Calls</b>
1-50	04 (7.84%)	20(39.215)	22(43.13%)	51 (100%)
51-100	11 (21.56%)	8(15.68%)	16(31.37%)	00
10-150	12 (23.52%)	11(21.56%)	8(15.68%)	00
150-200	14 (27.45%)	12(23.52%)	3(5.88%)	00
More than 200	10(19.60%)	00	2(3.92%)	00
Total	51(99.97%)	51(99.98%)	99.98%	51 (100%)

The data in table 7 indicates that 14(27.45%) respondents received/send around 200 messages daily followed by 12(23.52%) respondents' received/sent around 150 messages daily.

The data in table 7 also shows that 20(39.21%) respondents' received/sent up to 50 audio messages daily followed by 12(23.52%) respondents' received/sent around 200 audio messages in a day.

File sharing is an important feature of the application. The table 7 further indicate that 22(43.13%) respondents are using feature to share up to 50 files daily followed by 16 (31.37%) respondents are using this feature to send/receive around 100 files daily.

Audio/Voice call is an effective way of communication as it avoid misconception. The table 7 shows that 51 (100%) respondents are using this features to send/received around 50 calls daily.

**Table 8 Academic Use (per day)**

Interval	Text Messages	Audio Message	File Sharing	Audio/Video Calls
1-20	5(9.80%)	14(27.45%)	8(15.68%)	17(33.33%)
21-40	6(11.76%)	12(23.52%)	13(25.49%)	14(27.45%)
41-60	9(17.64%)	8(15.68%)	16(31.37%)	7(13.72%)
61-80	13(25.49%)	11(21.56%)	9(17.64%)	6(11.76%)
81-100	8(15.68%)	3(5.88%)	4(7.84%)	3(5.88%)
More than 100	10(19.60%)	2(3.92%)	1(1.96%)	4(7.84%)
Total	51	51	51	51

It was discovered that 13(25.49%) respondents send/receive around 80 text messages a day for academic purpose on WhatsApp whereas 10(19.60%) respondents send/received more than 100 text messages a day for academic purpose.

The data of table 8 also shows that 14(27.45%) respondents send/receive up to 20 audio messages in a day for academic use followed by 11(21.56%) respondents send/receive around 80 audio messages daily.

The output revealed that most of the respondents 16(31.37%) prefer to send/receive up to 60 messages through files sharing for academic purpose daily followed by 13(25.49%) like to send/receive around 40 messages through file sharing for academic purpose daily.

The results explore that majority of the respondents 17(33.33%) use the feature of Audio/Video calls for communication up to 20 calls for academic purpose in a day whereas 14(27.45%) respondents use this feature to communicate around 21 to 40 calls in a day.

**Table 9 Benefits**

Preferred Features	Users	Percentage%
Text Messages	18	35.29%
Audio/video calling	15	29.47%
Audio messages	25	49.01%
File sharing	15	29.47%
Others	04	7.84%

There are many features of WhatsApp which make this application beneficial. Table 9 depict that half of the respondents consider audio messaging 25(49.01%) as most beneficial feature followed by text messaging 18(35.29%). However file sharing and audio calling is also very important feature of this application opinioned by approximately 29% each. The respondent's percept audio message feature more reliable as compare to other to avoid ambiguity in communication.

**Table 10 Reason for using WhatsApp**

Reason	Users	Percentage %
Interaction with Friends	37	68.51
Business	07	12.96
Academics	36	66.66
General Information	20	37.03
Interaction with Family	35	64.81
Others	04	7.40

WhatsApp has many features which attract users to use this application. There are many reasons of the use of this application. Table 10 clearly indicate that majority of the users 37(68.51%) use this app for the interaction with friends followed by academic use 36(66.66%) and interaction with family 35(64.81%). The use of WhatsApp among the students of LIS found low for getting general information and business purpose.

**Table 11 User opinion about WhatsApp**

Score	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
WhatsApp can be used for study purpose.	20 (39.21%)	31 (60.78%)	00	00	00
It can be used for daily communication better than other options.	18 (35.29%)	28 (54.90)	04 (7.84%)	01 (1.96%)	00
WhatsApp takes the important messages faster amongst my friends.	19 (37.25%)	30 (58.82%)	01 (1.96%)	01 (1.96%)	-
I spend most of the time on WhatsApp as it is interesting	04 (7.84%)	12 (23.52%)	30 (58.82%)	02 (3.94%)	03 (5.88%)
Information about classes, meetings, projects etc. is sent faster on the app.	27 (52.94%)	24 (47.05%)	00	00	00
WhatsApp has become an important part in my life.	14 (27.45%)	19 (37.25)	17 (33.33%)	01 (1.96%)	00
After putting the pics on WhatsApp I post less pics on the Facebook.	06 (11.76%)	15 (29.41%)	19 (37.25%)	00	11 (21.56%)
After started using the app, I have decreased the frequency of checking emails.	12 (23.52%)	26 (50.98%)	09 (17.64%)	03 (5.88%)	01 (1.96%)
I check my status on the app very frequently.	02 (3.92%)	18 (35.29%)	24 (47.05%)	04 (7.84%)	03 (5.88%)
I become part of the groups of my choice and interest.	10 (19.60%)	35 (68.62%)	02 (3.92%)	01 (1.96%)	03 (5.88%)
I am more secure and comfortable on the App.	06 (11.76%)	25 (49.01%)	18 (35.29%)	02 (3.92%)	00

This App is used by me because of its simplicity and easy usage.	17 (33.33%)	34 (66.67%)	00	00	00
Receiving personal information and sharing the same is easy on this app.	16 (31.37%)	29 (56.86%)	03 (5.88%)	03 (5.88%)	00
I came closer to my friends after using this app.	18 (35.29%)	20 (39.21%)	12 (23.52%)	01 (1.96%)	00
Sending an SMS is old fashion and sending messages on the app is latest.	12(23.52 %)	23(45.09 %)	14(27.45 %)	-	02(3.92%)

The data in table 11 indicates clearly that WhatsApp could be used for academic of students they agree 31(60.78%) that “WhatsApp can be used for study purpose”. They strongly agree 27(52.94%) that they can share information about their classes, meetings projects etc. in faster manner. They also agree that they get help in their academics by joining the groups of their choice.

The respondents indicate that WhatsApp is a common messenger for information sharing and daily communication 28(54.9%) respondents agreed that this application used for their daily communication and 30(58.8%) consider WhatsApp a fast messenger amongst friends. 20 (39.21%) also agreed that WhatsApp provide chance to come close with friends.

Respondents disagreed that WhatsApp is used only because it is an interesting application, 30 (58.82%). Even though they agree 19(37.25%) that WhatsApp became the part of their daily life. The respondents feel comfortable because of its security 25(49.01%).

The respondents mostly disagree 19(37.56%) that they post less pictures on Facebook after using WhatsApp for this purpose. Even though WhatsApp decrease the frequency of e-mail checking agreed by 26(50.98%) respondents. 34(66.67%) users of this application use it due to its simplicity and easiness also they agree 29(56.86%) that the information sharing is easy on this application.

WhatsApp is considered latest tool for messaging as compared to sms percept by 23(45.09%) respondents.

**Table 12 Challenges faced while using WhatsApp**

Challenges	Frequency	%age
Bulk Forwarded Messages	42	82.35%
Privacy	14	27.45%
Information Overload	36	70.58%
Distraction	24	47.05%
Internet service issue	26	50.98%
File size limitation	11	21.56%
Network availability	10	19.60%
Security	11	21.56%
Expensive data packages	24	47.05%
No Challenge	11	21.56%

Table 12 evident that there are many challenges percept by the respondents. 42(82.35%) face bulk forwarded messages as challenge however challenge of information overload is faced by

36(70.58%). The other challenges appeared during collection of data are Distraction, internet service issues expensive data packages etc. Network availability, Security, privacy and limitation in file size also faced by few respondents. 11(21.56%) respondents face no issues while using WhatsApp.

**Table 13 User’s perception on statement “WhatsApp create misconception”.**

Options	No of students	%age
Yes	31	60.77%
No	20	39.22%
	N=51	

In table 13 one statement “WhatsApp create misconception” is given to the respondents for their opinion. The results presented in above table indicate that 31(60.77%) respondents agree with the given statement. On the other hand 20(39.22%) disagree with this statement.

**Discussion:**

Majority of students accepted that learning through WhatsApp is a collaborative learning and their social interactivity with their peers and teachers has increased (Tulika and Dhananjay, 2014 and Annie and Syamimi, 2014). The results of this study are in line with the studies mentioned above as the majority of students found using Whatsapp to interact with friends for academic purpose even though the use of WhatsApp for general and entertainment purpose is also found high.

Annie and Syamimi (2014) further concluded in their study that majority of students use WhatsApp for more than 3 hours a day, which has been endorsed to its easy usage, real-time messaging and inexpensive, as well as the rapid retrieval and transfer of information. The findings of this study are aligned with the above mentioned research, it is found majority of students use WhatsApp up to 2 hours a day, which ensured that their communication has become more effective, students can share class lectures and discuss their academic projects and problems quickly and easily.

Baishya and Maheshwari (2020) study that as compare to other social sites students prefer WhatsApp messenger because it has many features that they can send audio, video very easily and can send documents which is very significant to students. In connection with this study our LIS students use all the features of WhatsApp mentioned above in their communication. In these features majority of students use text messaging but they have suggested to use audio message to avoid vagueness in communication.

The study found that students faced some challenges in their use of WhatsApp which includes network availability, privacy and security issues, distractions to studies and information overload due to bulk forwarded messages

**Conclusion:**

The students use WhatsApp to communicate with friends they spend their most of the time on WhatsApp as they consider it more beneficial in their academics. The knowledge sharing on this app increases the collective learning and create better interaction among students in discussing and resolving their academic queries with cooperation. Due to this collective learning, students who were passive in traditional classroom are active in WhatsApp environment. Students can quickly and easily share the material almost in all forms of communication media (i.e document, image, audio messaging, audio and video call and etc.). Apart from its easiness and benefits, the

study concluded that the unregulated or irrelevant messages are also circulated among students which caused information overload and some misconception too. The network and privacy issues are also faced by students. As problem in the use of WhatsApp hence it can safely concluded that WhatsApp is an interesting and effective network tool for learning in social as well as in academic environment.

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