

Perception of WhatsApp Usage among Students of College of Excellence: A Case Study

A. J. Joicy¹ and S. Ally Sornam²

¹Tgugctej Scholar, ²Head, Associate Professor

^{1&2}Department of Library and Information Science, Bishop Heber College, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, India

E-Mail: srjoicelitfcc@gmail.com

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Abstract - This paper has analysed the perception of WhatsApp usage among students of a College of Excellence. The objective of this study is to know the perception of the students towards WhatsApp. To carry out this study a questionnaire was used as research instrument to gather data. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed among the students and 80 completed questionnaires were received. The response rate was 80% which is considered as very effective. The result shows that WhatsApp is a vital tool of communication used mainly for one to one communication. The results showed that participants had access to smart phones for WhatsApp. The use of WhatsApp was common among participants. Students use WhatsApp for personal and social purposes on a daily basis. The participants perceived the integration of WhatsApp into their education to be easy, fun, and useful. They had positive feelings and intentions about using WhatsApp in their formal learning if it is introduced.

Keywords: WhatsApp, Perception on WhatsApp, College of Excellence, Educational purposes, Social Networking Sites

I. INTRODUCTION

A. History of WhatsApp

WhatsApp was established by Brian Anton and Ian Koom in 2009¹. It is a text messaging mobile application for smart phones. Users can exchange text-based chats, images, videos and audio media messages through Internet. It mostly depends on the active Wi-Fi network system to provide online users the ability to send and receive different social applications. WhatsApp is a unified messaging app which is connected directly to one's phone number without any password or login. Statistics have shown that there were 1.2 billion active monthly users of WhatsApp in 2017 (Statista, 2017)². WhatsApp facilitates online collaboration and communication and promotes students' school performance (Barhoumi, 2015)³. For instance, between January 2015 and February 2016, the number of active users had grown sharply from six hundred million to one billion (Statt& Nick, 2016)⁴.

B. WhatsApp Usage

WhatsApp is one of the changes in technology that is commonly used on specific mobile phones and computers. According to Beebe and Masterson (2003)⁵, human communication comprises what people say, how they say it and to whom they say it. This means that what people say

depends on the environment in which they are. Thus people are bound to change the way they communicate in relation with the environment at any given time. Statistics have shown that there were 1.2 billion active monthly users of WhatsApp in 2017.

WhatsApp Messenger is a smart phone- and web-based instant message application that allows users to exchange information using a variety of media including text, image, video, and audio messages (Church & de Oliveira, 2013⁶; Sahu, 2014⁷). WhatsApp is a free, easy to use, fast, convenient, personal mode of communication. It is found that WhatsApp was one of the most popular SNSs among university students. The use of WhatsApp to facilitate blended learning had a positive and significant impact on students' learning performance and their attitudes toward blended learning.

C. About Bishop Heber College

The College was raised and started in 1966 and it now offers thirteen Under-Graduate, eighteen Post-Graduate and four Post-Graduate Diploma Programmes and three Diploma Programmes of study besides research programmes leading to eight M.Phil. and twelve Ph.D programmes. The College runs the accredited Study Centre of the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi. The revived College celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 2016. The College was accredited with 5 stars by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) on 21st May 2001 and was reaccredited at the A+ Level on 31st March 2007.

The University Grants Commission, New Delhi and Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli granted Autonomy to our College during 2004-2005. In 2011, the UGC conferred on Bishop Heber College the status of College with Potential for Excellence. The College was awarded a coveted status as "College of Excellence" by UGC in 2017. National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2018 Nationally Ranked 3rd by MHRD through National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), 1st Rank at the South India and State Level and 1st Rank among the affiliated colleges of the varsity. The website of the college is www.bhc.edu⁸.

II. REVIEW LITERATURE

Malecela (2016)⁹ carried out a study entitled “Usage of WhatsApp among Postgraduate Students of Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia”. The study explored the impact of using of WhatsApp among postgraduate students’ learning at the Kulliyah of Education (KOED), at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The study resulted into that using WhatsApp as learning tool is useful to both students and instructors. The study suggested that electronic etiquette should be applied in teacher student learning process through WhatsApp.

Patil (2015)¹⁰ in the paper, “Usage of WhatsApp messenger amongst post-graduate students in a university environment: A study of Karnataka State Women’s University” based on a survey of post-graduate students of Karnataka State Women’s University, Vijayapura identifies PG students’ conceptualization and usage of WhatsApp Messenger. He explored that WhatsApp messenger is used by a greater majority of post-graduate students quite regularly for educational purposes. The study discussed the role of library in mobile learning. He suggested that university must integrate the mobile technology into learning process so that a platform can be created to share the digital information.

Yeboah and Dominic (2014)¹¹ in their study titled, “The Impact of WhatsApp Messenger Usage on Students’ Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Ghana” used quantitative methods among students from five tertiary institutions. They were interviewed and 500 questionnaires were administered to students from the same institutions. The study showed the negative impact upon students such as destruction of students’ spellings and grammatical construction of sentences, lack of concentration during lectures, results in unbalancing WhatsApp activities and academic preparation and distraction of students from assignment work etc.

III. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study focuses on the “Perception of WhatsApp among students of a College of Excellence”.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population under study was postgraduate students of Bishop Heber College, Trichy, which recently was rated as 3rd Best College in the country by NIRF ranking (March 2018). The purposive sampling method was used to collect the data from the respondents and duration of time taken in the month of Feb 2018. Students having the smart phone and using WhatsApp are selected for the sample of the study. The data were collected with the help of a structured questionnaire. One hundred questionnaires were distributed to the students of Arts and Science departments of Bishop Heber College. Eighty filled up questionnaires were collected from the respondents for the data analysis and

interpretations on the basis of filled up questionnaire the data has been analysed and tabulated using SPSS version 23.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the frequency and time spent in WhatsApp usage.
2. To explore the perception of using WhatsApp as a learning tool from the selected students of a College of Excellence.
3. To examine the correlation between WhatsApp usage and selected variables.

VI. HYPOTHESIS

1. There is a significant difference between gender of students’ with regard to their perception of WhatsApp usage.
2. There is a significant difference between students’ perception of WhatsApp usage and their category.
3. There is a significant difference between students’ perception of WhatsApp usage and their discipline of study.
4. There is a significant relationship between the frequency of visit or number of times log to the account with regard to their perception towards WhatsApp.
5. There is a significant relationship between use of WhatsApp with regard to their perception.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the questionnaires distributed to the arts and science students of various departments in Excellence of College, Trichy is given below.

TABLE I DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY GENDER

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	30	37.5
Female	50	62.5
Total	80	100.0

Since more female respondents study PG programme than male students in College of Excellence, the result has comprised of 62.5% female and 37.5% of male respondents.

TABLE II DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY CATEGORY

Category	Frequency	Percent
Aided	48	60.0
Self-Finance	32	40.0
Total	80	100.0

Results indicated that 60% of the respondents are from aided category, and 40% of respondents are from self-finance category.

TABLE III DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY DISCIPLINE

Discipline	Frequency	Percent
Arts	38	47.5
Science	42	52.5
Total	80	100.0

Table III clearly shows that 47.5% of the respondents are from Arts discipline and 52.5% of respondents from Science discipline.

TABLE IV HAVE YOU EVER USED WHATSAPP BEFORE?

Used WhatsApp	Frequency	Percent
Yes	80	100.0

The study has found that 100 % of students have been using WhatsApp for several purposes.

The study has found that 5 major categories in a particular question, 61.3% and 21.3% of students have been receiving the higher category of using WhatsApp several times per day and once a day; merely 16% of respondents have been using WhatsApp once in a week or month.

TABLE V THE FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO WHATSAPP ACCOUNT

Frequency of visit	Frequency	Percent
Several times per day	49	61.3
Once a day	17	21.3
Several times per week	1	1.3
Once a week	7	8.8
Once a month	6	7.5
Total	80	100.0

TABLE VI WHY DO YOU USE WHATSAPP?

Use WhatsApp	Frequency	Percent
Free of charge	3	3.8
Convenient and user friendly	46	57.5
Peer influence	2	2.5
Communicate instantly with a group of people	28	35.0
Express feelings	1	1.3
Total	80	100.0

57.5 and 35% of students have been responding that WhatsApp is convenient and user friendly and communicate instantly with a group of people , very less number of students have been marked to express feelings and free of charge (3.8 % and 1.3%).

TABLE VII PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS TOWARDS WHATSAPP USAGE

S. No	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I think WhatsApp is important for educational learning	11 (13.8)	41(57.2)	14(17.5)	12(15.0)	2(2.5)
2	Having lessons on WhatsApp helps me to develop team work skills	16(20.0)	39(48.8)	14(17.5)	8(10.0)	3(3.8)
3	WhatsApp enables me to share information and connect ideas with peers	21(26.3)	48(60.0)	9(11.3)	2(2.5)	0(0)
4	WhatsApp increases my interests and motivation in lessons	6(7.5)	29(36.3)	18(22.5)	19(23.8)	8(10.0)
5	I feel WhatsApp learning is a waste of time	9(11.3)	18(22.5)	24(30.0)	26(32.5)	3(3.8)
6	Chatting on WhatsApp helps me to maintain social relationships	24(30.0)	39(48.8)	7(8.8)	9(11.3)	1(1.3)
7	WhatsApp increase my Communication with friends more efficiently	23(28.7)	44(55.0)	7(8.8)	5(6.3)	1(1.3)
8	I feel a sense of belonging When using WhatsApp	3(3.8)	28(35.0)	28(35.0)	19(23.8)	2(2.5)
9	WhatsApp is new to me and I am not comfortable using it	4(5.0)	15(18.8)	14(17.5)	33(41.3)	14(17.5)
10	The use of WhatsApp stresses me out	3(3.8)	19(23.8)	29(36.3)	21(26.3)	8(10.0)
11	My grades would be better if I could contact teachers through WhatsApp after College hour	8(10.0)	35(43.8)	22(27.5)	14(17.5)	1(1.3)
12	I find that WhatsApp is not conducive to good learning because it creates technical problems	6(7.5)	25(31.3)	36(45.0)	9(11.3)	4(5.0)

Results indicated the following: 57% of the respondents agreed WhatsApp is important for educational learning. 48.8% of the respondents agreed WhatsApp helps them to develop team work skills. 60.0% of the respondents agree WhatsApp enables them to share information and connect ideas with peers. 36.3 % of the respondents WhatsApp increase interests and motivation in lessons. A majority of 32.5% and 30.0 % of the respondents disagreed and felt undecided that WhatsApp learning is a waste of time. 48.8 % of the respondents agreed chatting on WhatsApp helps to maintain social relationships. More than half 55.0% of the respondents agreed that WhatsApp increases communication with friends more efficiently. 35.0 % of the respondents agreed and undecided with a sense of belonging using WhatsApp. 41.3 % of the respondents disagreed WhatsApp is new to them and they are not comfortable of using it. 36.3% of the respondents were undecided whether using WhatsApp makes one stressful. 43.8 % of the respondents agreed that their grades would be better if they could contact with teachers through WhatsApp after college hour. Nearly half 45.0 percent of the respondents were undecided to find that WhatsApp is not conducive to good learning because it creates technical problems.

TABLE VIII OVERALL LEVEL OF PERCEPTION OF WHATSAPP USAGE

Overall Perception Level	Frequency	Percent
Low Level	29	36.3
Medium Level	30	37.5
High Level	21	26.3
Total	80	100.0

37.5 % of respondents have revealed medium level of perception towards WhatsApp usage.

VIII. RESULT OF HYPOTHESIS

1. Difference between Male and Female Students with Regard to their Perception towards WhatsApp

When the above hypothesis was tested using students „t” test, it is found that there is no significant relationship between students” perception towards the use of WhatsApp education learning and their gender, hence the null hypothesis for the above table is accepted.

4. Difference between Frequencies of Visit of WhatsApp Account with Regard to Perception towards WhatsApp

TABLE XII ANOVA

q8	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Result
Between Groups	52.366	4	13.091	.498	.737	P> 0.05 – not significant
Within Groups	1972.022	75	26.294			
Total	2024.387	79				

When the above hypothesis was tested using student”s anova test, it is found that there is no significant relationship between the frequencies of visit of WhatsApp

TABLE IX T – TEST

S.No	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistical Inference
1.	Male	30	31.17	4.728	T= .164 Df= 78 P= .870 P>0.05 – not significant
2.	Female	50	31.36	5.298	

2. Difference between Arts and Science Students with Regard to their Perception towards WhatsApp

When the above hypothesis was tested using students „t” test, it is found that there is no significant relationship between students” perception towards the use of WhatsApp education learning and their discipline, hence the null hypothesis for the above table is accepted.

TABLE X T– TEST

S.No	Discipline	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistical Inference
1.	Arts	38	31.37	5.692	T= .135 Df= 78 P= .893 P>0.05 – not significant
2.	Science	42	31.21	4.486	

3. Difference between Aided and Self-Finance Students with Regard to their Perception towards WhatsApp

TABLE XI T – TEST

S.No	Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistical Inference
1.	Aided	48	30.50	5.473	T= 1.725 Df= 78 P= .088 P>0.05 – not significant
2.	Self-Finance	32	32.47	4.181	

When the above hypothesis was tested using students „t” test, it is found that there is no significant relationship between Aided and Self-Finance students with regard to their perception towards WhatsApp, hence the null hypothesis for the above table is accepted.

account with regard to perception towards WhatsApp; hence the null hypothesis for the above table is accepted.

5. Difference between use of WhatsApp with Regard to their Perception

TABLE XIII ANOVA

q8	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Result
Between Groups	116.322	4	29.080	1.143	.343	P> 0.05 – not significant
Within Groups	1908.066	75	25.441			
Total	2024.388	79				

When the above hypothesis tested using student’s anova test, it is found that there is no significant relationship between uses of WhatsApp with regard to their perception; hence the null hypothesis for the above table is accepted.

IX. FINDINGS

1. Majority of the respondents were women (60 %).
2. A significant majority of (60%) respondents are from the aided stream, compared with the response received from self-finance stream.
3. It has been found that all the respondents are using WhatsApp (100%).
4. A significant majority of (52.5%) of respondents from science discipline and 47.5% of the respondents from arts departments.
5. More than half of students (57.5%) have been using WhatsApp because it is convenient and user friendly.
6. Majority of the respondents (71.0 %) think WhatsApp is important for educational learning.
7. A large majority of (68.8 %) respondents have agreed and strongly agreed of having lessons on WhatsApp helps me to develop team work skills.
8. Majority (86.3%) of the respondents agree with the usage of WhatsApp, which enables me to share information and connect ideas with peers.
9. 36.3% of the respondents agree that WhatsApp increases their interests and motivation in lessons and 22.5% of the respondent’s undecided of it.
10. 32.5% of the respondents disagree and 30.0% were still undecided in WhatsApp learning is a waste of time.
11. More than three fourths (i.e.,) 78.8% of the respondents agreed that chatting on WhatsApp helps me to maintain social relationships.
12. More than half (55.0%) of the respondents agreed that WhatsApp increase they Communication with friends more efficiently.
13. 36.3 % of the respondents were undecided with the stress created by WhatsApp use.
14. More than half (53.8%) of the respondents agreed that their grades would be better if they could contact their teachers through WhatsApp after college hour.
15. It was concluded that most of the students have been satisfied with WhatsApp.
16. It is observed the overall level of perception of students regarding WhatsApp is medium level.

X. CONCLUSION

This paper has found out that WhatsApp is an effective and affordable platform of communication. Now a day’s people

use WhatsApp frequently to remain in touch with their friends and family members. Most importantly organizations have also created WhatsApp group for communicating with their employees. This study has played a key role to let us know about the preferences of the student of Bishop Heber College. Students use WhatsApp for communication with their friends and family members. The students publish course announcements, discuss ideas about courses with classmates, seek help from the students who had already taken courses, post links to topics and resources related to courses, form groups for study purposes, organize meetings with classmates, and organize times to study. The findings showed that a limited number of students used WhatsApp for educational purposes, and that these students used WhatsApp for informal learning activities. They share information, pictures and videos in an easy way. New ways of communication has been laid by WhatsApp which is helping students share content of their use in a limited span of time.

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