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The WhatsApp group in an Academic Prospective: Exploring its usage

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Abstract

The present study explores the uses of WhatsApp groups in the education context. It examines utilities and access associated with educational WhatsApp groups. The study also finds out how the presences of students in the groups can influence the educational aspect. The results of this study show that the major functions these WhatsApp groups serve are mostly education-related. However, apart from academic uses, communicating with instructors, friends and classmates do use this platform for wishes and congratulations, for extra curricular activities as well as for entertainment purposes. In addition, the results show that the presence of the students influences the group conversation significantly. Though students reported that sometimes these WhatsApp groups become mandatory and kill lot of time, and they also believe that it is unavoidable since these WhatsApp groups not only provide them with important information related to the classes, exams, syllabus, class updates, holidays, etc., but also connect with others and involve in non-academic activities.

Keywords: WhatsApp, WhatsApp Groups, Students, Teachers, Educational Institutions, Multimedia Learning, Collaborative Learning, Educational Purpose and Smartphones.

Review of Literature

Malecela (2016)9 carried out a study entitled "Usage of WhatsApp among Postgraduate Students of Kulliyyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia". The study explored the impact of using WhatsApp among postgraduate students' learning at the Kulliyyah of Education (KOED), at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The study resulted into that using WhatsApp as a learning tool is useful to both students and instructors. The study suggested that electronic etiquette should be applied to teacher-student learning processes 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, Vijayapura identifies PG students' conceptualization and usage of WhatsApp Messenger. He explored that

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WhatsApp messenger is used by a greater majority of post-graduate students quite regularly for educational purposes. The study discussed the role of the library in mobile learning. He suggested that universities must integrate mobile technology into the learning process so that a platform can be created to share 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 on students such as the destruction of students' spelling 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., Tarighat and Khodabakhsh (2016) found that WhatsApp can be useful in language assessment. The students can use WhatsApp to record their speech and share their recordings with their teachers and other students. Alsaleem (2013) examined the effect of the use of WhatsApp on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student in written vocabulary tasks in Saudi Arabia. The author found that WhatsApp had a positive effect on students' performances. The students enjoyed using WhatsApp as a learning tool. They perceived the use of WhatsApp as a game rather than a formal class requirement.

Ngaleka and Uys (2013) reported that WhatsApp can be used to facilitate mobile learning. In their study, the students used WhatsApp as a communication tool outside the classroom to exchange information about meetings and projects. Barhoumi (2015) found that the use of WhatsApp to facilitate blended learning had a positive and significant impact on students' learning performance and their attitudes towards blended learning. Bansal and Joshi (2014) examined college of education students' experiences of WhatsApp mobile learning and found that the use of WhatsApp increased students' social interactivity with each other and with the instructor; and this facilitated collaborative learning. In addition, the authors found that students had positive attitudes toward the use of WhatsApp in their learning. Bere (2013) found that WhatsApp could be useful to "create alternative dialogic spaces for student collaborative engagements in informal contexts, which can gainfully transform teaching and learning" (p.544). Tang and Hew (2017) reported that WhatsApp had been used in different academic disciplines to support students' learning. In Hong Kong also (2016) found that university students who had experienced with the formal use of WhatsApp to support their learning, and those who had no experience with the use of WhatsApp for learning had positive perceptions of its use to support teaching and learning in higher education.

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The students agreed that WhatsApp can be a useful learning tool. Examples of reported possible advantages of the use of WhatsApp for students' learning included: providing immediate messaging support, bringing new opportunities for learning, facilitating communication between students and teachers, enabling fast feedback in learning, fostering flexible learning, multimedia learning and collaborative learning. However, the participants said that the use of WhatsApp in their learning might interfere with their private lives. Smartphones and their apps can be beneficial for disadvantaged universities and for countries that suffer from limited budgets and a shortage of computer labs. WhatsApp is a commonly available, popular and affordable electronic tool. It has been integrated into university students' learning in different ways to accomplish diverse educational tasks. It provides several educational advantages for university students.

Purpose Of the Study

The aim of this study was two-fold:

1. To investigate students' use of WhatsApp for personal and educational purposes.
2. To examine their perceptions of the formal integration of WhatsApp in their education.

Statement of Problem

Nowadays, most students have recently been using a common tool for communication and chatting with friends, peers and relatives i.e WhatsApp. Its commonality may possibly result from its easy installation as a mobile application on mobile devices which these students move around every each second. Educators also are beginning to explore its potential towards seeing how it can help students in their learning. Since it is apparently a novel tool in the education arena, its usefulness in improving the performances of teachers as well as student offerings is to be ascertained. This study's problem is to ascertain if students who continuously concentrate on studying and acquiring knowledge with the WhatsApp group discussion platform can outperform students taught the same course via face-to-face discussion strategy and to determine the student's perceptions towards using WhatsApp for learning.

Objectives of the study

To study the use of WhatsApp groups in educational institutes.

To perceive students' attitudes during the use of WhatsApp.

To find out the challenges and possibilities of WhatsApp usage in the teaching and learning process.

To evaluate the significant role of WhatsApp groups in the academic growth of universities.

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Research Methodology

A qualitative research method was used in this study. Data was collected using a questionnaire instrument to measure students' use and perceptions of the formal integration of WhatsApp in their education. The data collection tool was an online-based questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two sections i.e were designed to collect the following data: Demographic characteristics and students' use of WhatsApp for personal purposes and for educational purposes, and its perceptions.

Sampling:

The sample for the present study was collected from the students of Dr. B R Ambedkar University, Etcherla in Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh. The researcher expected a 150 percent sample but the received sample size of the study is 130 students.

Survey Methodology:

The data-gathering method used in the study was an online survey. It is the most widely used method for researching the usage of WhatsApp Groups. Random sampling is applied in this case. The primary technique for collecting data from varied respondents is the questionnaire. This survey was conducted using a self-designed internet survey. It allowed people the option to respond to questions and reflect in a confidential manner, saving money and time while doing the survey. In this study, the qualitative research method was applied. An online survey was done using the qualitative technique to obtain the opinions of the students.

Babonea&Voicu (2011) Synodinos (2003) focus on the art of questionnaire construction and pretesting eg. establishing the research aims and objectives, data collection methods, questionnaire design, pretesting, and reviewing the questionnaire for production surveys. Findings from the group of studies suggest that these considerations are critical in developing a high-quality survey questionnaire.

The researcher adopted a survey design to assess the coverage of the use of WhatsApp groups in educational institutes, perceive students' attitudes during the use of WhatsApp, challenges and possibilities of WhatsApp usage in the teaching and learning process, and the significant role of WhatsApp groups in the academic growth of universities using consecutive online questionnaire. The participation selection criterion in this study was the researcher was instructed to complete the online questionnaire, on Nov 3rd Jan, 2022. The language of all the online questionnaires was English, and all the questionnaires used in this study have been validated in previous studies. All the participants were asked to complete and submit the online questionnaire on time on 30th Nov, 2022 up to this period receiving 130 questionnaires from the respondents. The researcher waited for another 3 days. The researcher gave detailed information about this study was posted at the top of the questionnaire. The survey participants were asked to sign a consent form before completing the questionnaire form.

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Before the survey, the researcher used Google Forms for the questionnaire in this and gave an attempt for filling the online questionnaire. Hence, the final sample size induced in the study analysis was 130 respondents. For this study, the questionnaire was created on Google forms and a link to the questionnaire was posted online via email, SMS, whatsApp groups, etc., to women and provided a link to the questionnaire online. The questionnaire consisted of only closed-ended questions. The recent developments in the field of communication technologies have given the choice of survey method. Now with the help of the internet, one can do survey through e-mail, web-based tools and Media. An online survey has faster responses and save time Llieva, Baron and Healey researcher can get data even from a distant location.

In recent years, an increase in online surveys has been noticed for online studies, presenting scholars with new challenges in terms of applying traditional survey research methods to the study of online behaviour and internet use. Internet survey advantages like Speed and Cost Effectiveness, Respondent Participation and Cooperation, Accurate Real–Time Data Capture, Visual appeal and Interactivity, Callbacks, Respondent Anonymity, Personalized and Flexible questioning, and Survey Research that mixes modes.

Data Analysis

1. How long do you use your WhatsApp or WhatsApp group
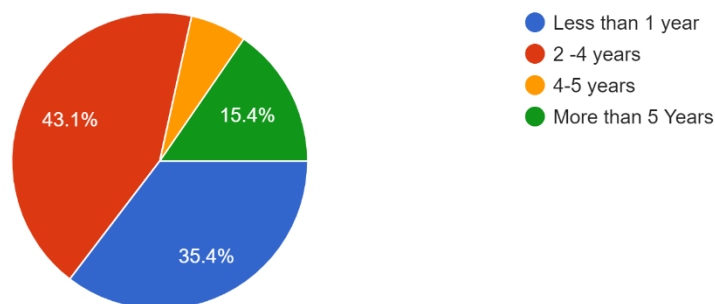
Figure

The Figure shows the percentage of how long respondents who use their WhatsApp group. 43.4percent of respondents have been using 2-4 years, 36.1 percent of respondents (4-5years), 15.4 percent of respondents have used it for more than 5 years andat least 6.1 percent of respondents have used it for less than 1 year.

Figure 2. Does Daily spend on WhatsApp?

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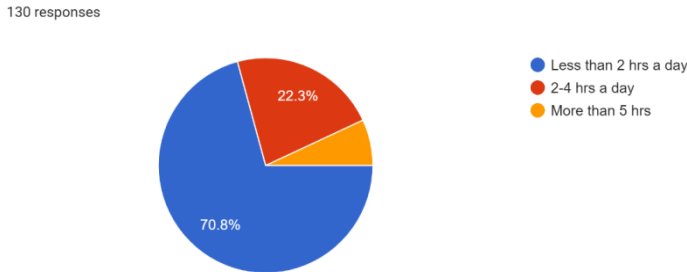
The above figure shows how daily spending on WhatsApp i.e. 70.8 percent of respondents spend less than 2 hours a day.

Figure 3. Which time do you prefer?
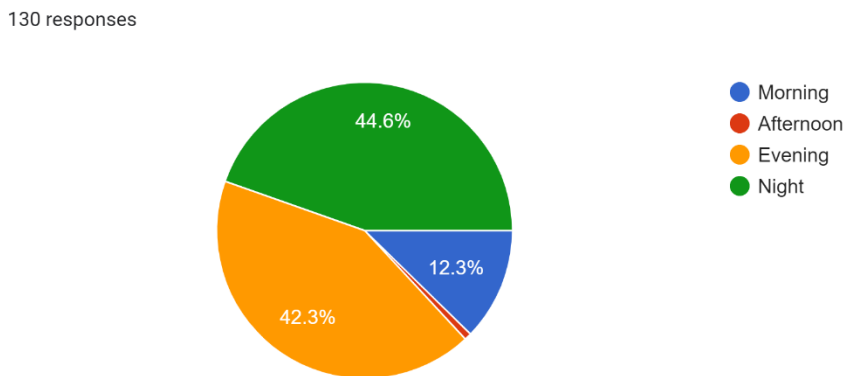
The result indicated that the following 44.6 percent of respondents prefer to use night, 42.3 percent of respondents to use evening, 12.3 percent of respondents to use morning, and only 0.8 percent of respondents.

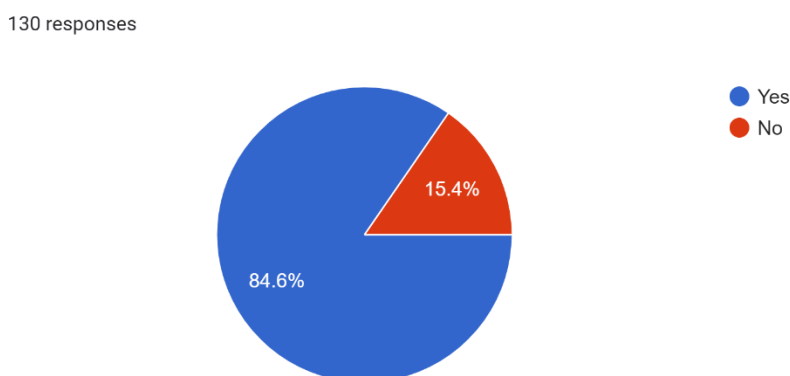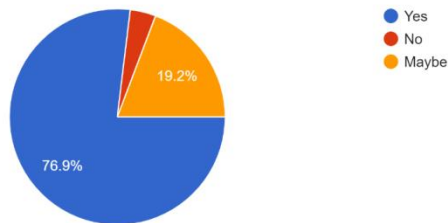Figure 4. Have you added your faculty to your WhatsApp account?

Figure 5. Have you used WhatsApp for exchanging notes or materials?

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130 responses

The figure indicates,76.9 percent of respondents said 'Yes' to WhatsApp for exchanging notes or materials. 19.2 percent said 'Maybe' and only 3.9 said 'No' toWhatsApp for exchanging notes or materials

Figure 6. Do you believe WhatsApp is the right source for sharing, acquiring, and watching information?
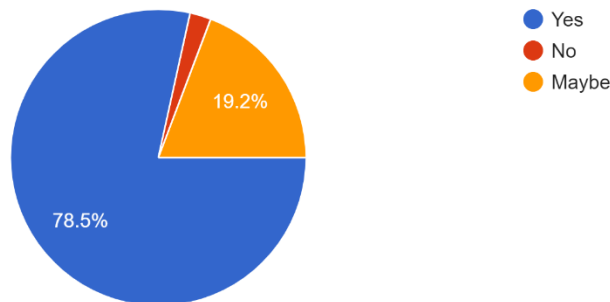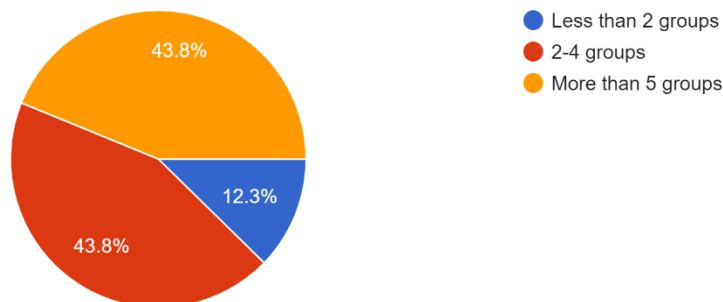
130 responses
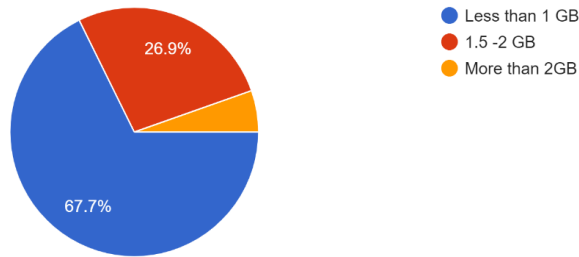

Figure 7. How many groups are you associated with?

130 responses

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The above figure shows the respondents gave the same percentage 43.8 percent to 2-4 groups and more than 5 groups and 12.3 percent of respondents said less than 2 two groups to associated with groups.
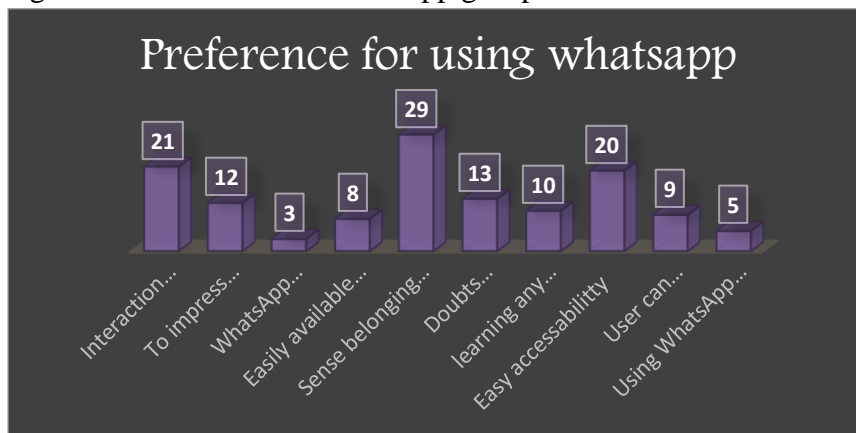
Figure 8. How much data do you spend per day?

130 responses

The figure explained, their use of data per day i.e. 67.7 percent of respondents used less than 1 GB, 26.9 percent of respondents used 1.5 to 2 GB and only 5.4 percent of respondents used more than 2GB.

Figure 9. Preference for WhatsApp group?

This figure shows, the highest 29 percent of respondents gave preference for using WhatsApp Sense belonging to the group, and only 3 respondents gave the least priority to WhatsApp requires the fewest steps possible to accomplish what I want to do with it.

Figure 10. Usage of features of WhatsApp?

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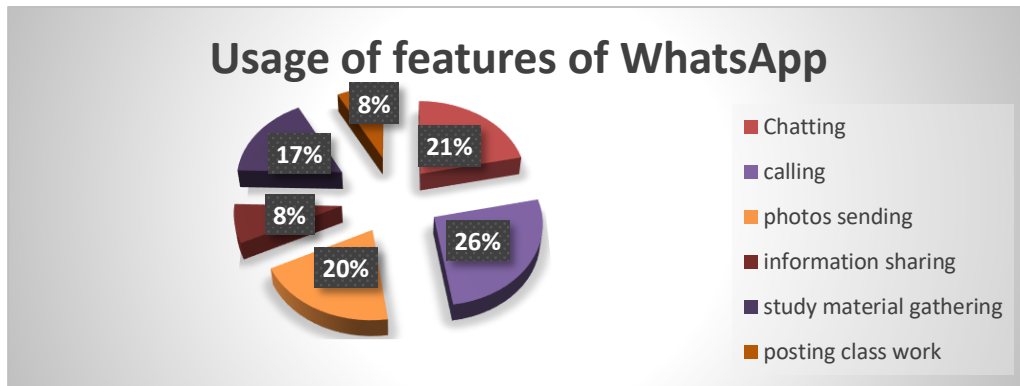
The above figure shows that the usage of features WhatsApp is followed by 26 percent for Calling, 21 percent for Chatting, 20 percent for photo sending, 17 percent for study material gathering, and 8 percent for respondents' information sharing and posting class work both are given same percent.

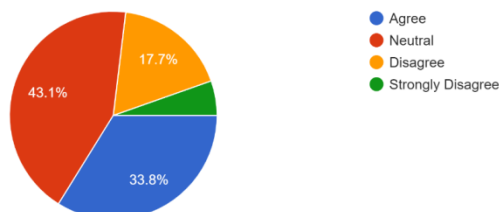Figure 11. How do you feel at the time of using WhatsApp?
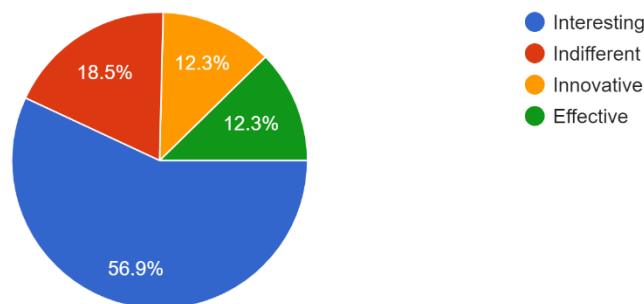
This figure shows respondents' feelings about using WhatsApp, 56 percent of respondents feel interested, 18.5 percent of respondents feel indifferent, and respondents gave these two innovative and effective same 12. 3 percent.

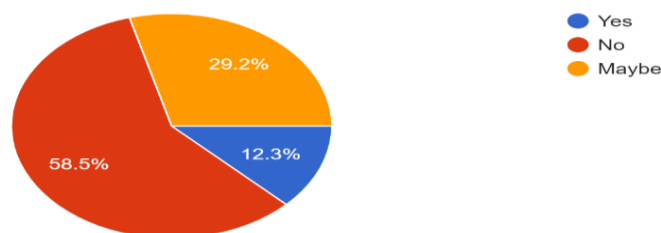Figure 12. Do you feel WhatsApp directs your physical and mental stature?

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The figure shows that 43.1 percent of respondents said neutral, 33.8 percent agree, 17.7 percent disagree, and 5.4 percent of respondent strongly disagree.

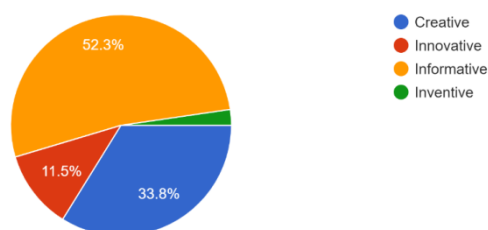Figure 13. Are you anxious or stressed while using WhatsApp?

This graph shows that 58.5 percent of respondents said "No' while using WhatsApp they felt anxious. 29. 2 percent of respondents gave 'Maybe ' and only 12. 3 percent of respondents said yes while using WhatsApp they felt anxious.

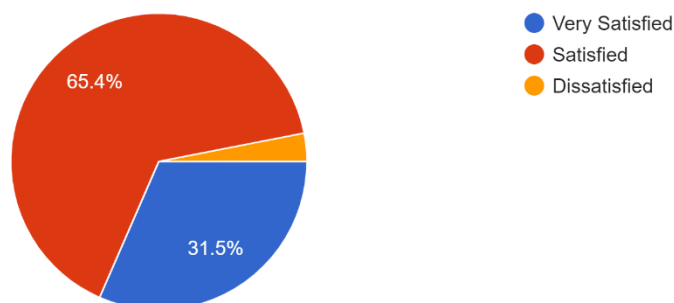Figure 14. How does WhatsApp enrich your teaching-learning process?

The above figure shows, in all, a total of 130 respondents, 52.3 percent informative, 38.8 percent creative, 11.5 percent innovative, and 2.4 percent inventive.

Figure 15. How do you rate WhatsApp for your educational purpose?

The figure shows, 65.4 percent of respondents said satisfied with WhatsApp for their educational purpose. 31. 5 percent of respondents given satisfied with WhatsApp for their

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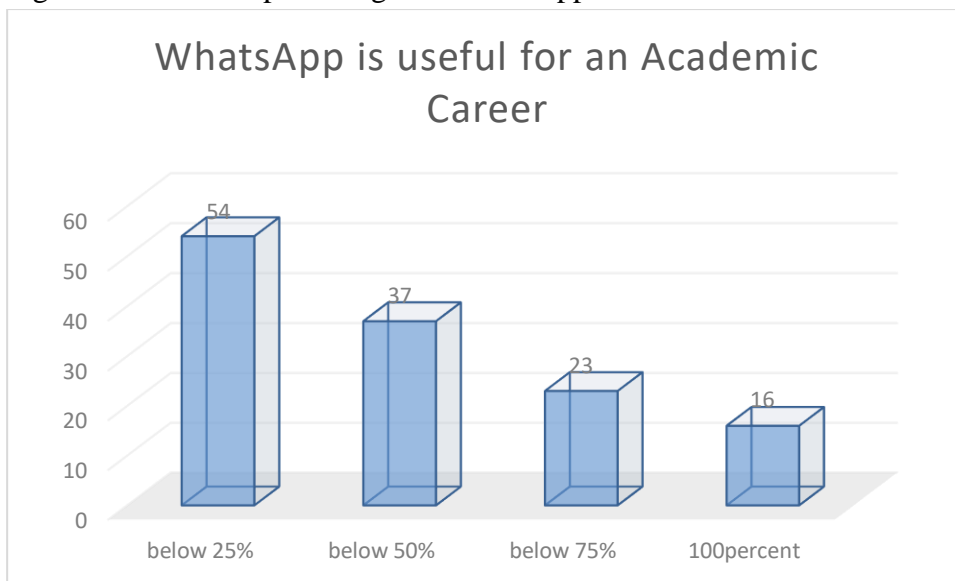_____

educational purpose. Only 3.1 percent of respondents were dissatisfied with WhatsApp for their educational purpose.

Figure 16. Is WhatsApp useful for your academic career?
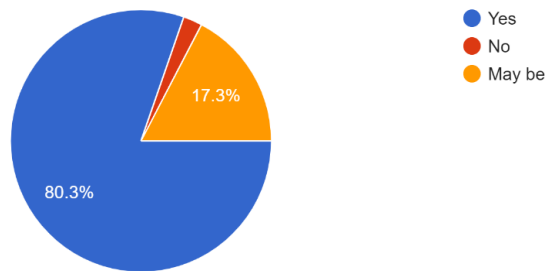
The graph identifies 80.3 percent of respondents who said WhatsApp is useful for their academic careers.

Figure 17. Give the percentage of WhatsApp is useful for an Academic career.

The above figure shows, 54 Respondents were given below 25 percent of WhatsApp is useful toan Academic career. Only 16 respondents said 100 percent of WhatsApp is useful to an Academic career.

Figure 18. Students' perception of WhatsApp

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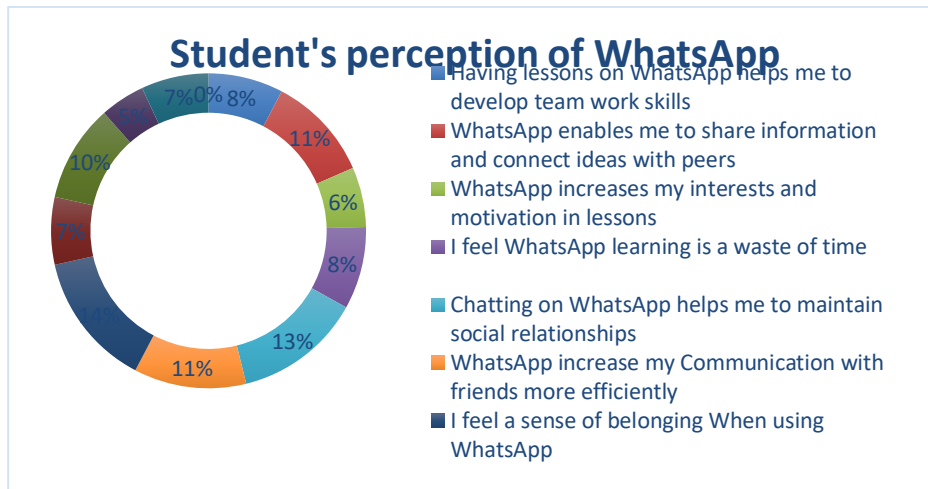
The above figure shows that students' perception of WhatsApp respondents were given different percentages their perception like highest percentage of respondent they gave I feela sense of belonging when using WhatsApp. the second highest 13 percent of respondents took chatting on WhatsApp helps them to maintain social relationships, and the least one 5 percent my grades would be better if could contract teachers.

Findings

- 43.4 percent of respondents have been using 2-4 years, 36.1 percent of respondents (4-5years), 15.4 percent of respondents have used it for more than 5 years and at least 6.1 percent of respondents have used it for less than 1 year.

- 43.8 percent to 2-4 groups and more than 5 groups and 12.3 percent of respondents said less than 2 two groups to associated with groups.

- 70.8 percent of respondents spend less than 2 hours a day spent on WhatsApp.

- 65.4 percent of respondents said satisfied with WhatsApp for their educational purpose. 31.5 percent of respondents given satisfied with WhatsApp for their educational purpose. Only 3.1 percent of respondents were dissatisfied with WhatsApp for their educational purpose.

- 56 percent of respondents feel interested, 18.5 percent of respondents feel indifferent, and respondents gave these two innovative and effective same 12.3 percent.

- 67.7 percent of respondents used less than 1 GB, 26.9 percent of respondents used 1.5 to 2 GB and only 5.4 percent of respondents used more than 2GB.

- 26 percent for Calling, 21 percent for Chatting, 20 percent for photo sending, 17 percent for study material gathering, and 8 percent for respondents' information sharing and posting class work both are given the same percentage.

- while using WhatsApp they felt anxious. 29. 2 percent of respondents

- 29 percent of respondents gave preference for using WhatsApp Sense belonging to the group, and only 3 respondents gave the least priority to WhatsApp requires the fewest steps possible to accomplish what I want to do with it.

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- 54 Respondents were given below 25 percent of WhatsApp is useful to an Academic career. Only 16 respondents said 100 percent of WhatsApp is useful to an Academic career.
- 52.3 percent informative, 38.8 percent creative, 11.5 percent innovative, and 2.4 percent inventive.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that WhatsApp is widely used by college students and that they do it frequently for a variety of social and educational goals. The present research revealed that WhatsApp users had access to cell phones. Every day, students utilize WhatsApp for social, intellectual and personal reasons. For instance, participants most frequently communicated with one another on topics relating to their educational perspectives when using WhatsApp for educational purposes. Yet, the participants anticipated that the integration of WhatsApp into their education would be simple, enjoyable and more useful. Although the students reported that these WhatsApp groups can every once in a while, become required tool and take lot of time, they also believe that this is unavoidable because these groups not only give them access to essential information about the class, exams, the syllabus, class updates, holidays, etc., but some members are also able to connect with others and participate in extracurricular activities.

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