WhatsApp Messenger Use by Students of Library and Information Science Department, Niger Delta University, Nigeria

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Abstract:- **The study focused on WhatsApp messenger use among students of Niger DeltaUniversity, using students in the Department of Library and Information Science as a case study. Objectives of the study was to: investigate WhatsApp use experience among the students; know the frequency and time spent in use of WhatsApp; examine the purpose of WhatsApp use among Students; discover the benefits of using WhatsApp messenger by students; determine the negative effect of using WhatsApp messenger; explore the positive effect of WhatsApp among its users; identify the influence on Students Academic Efficiency and examine the level of satisfaction with WhatsApp use. Descriptive survey method was employed. Fifty-one students of the Department were the sample/respondents. A self-designed questionnaire was the instrument of data collection, while frequency count and percentages were method of data analysis. The major findings of the study were: Majority of the students have 1 – 2 years WhatsApp use experience; Most students use WhatsApp messenger anytime they are free; Students use WhatsApp for academic and social purpose; WhatsApp messenger use is beneficial to student; WhatsApp use has some negative side on users; WhatsApp has positive effect on students' studies; WhatsApp use has influence on Students Academic Efficiency and NDU LIS students were highly satisfied with WhatsApp use. The study concluded thatthe positives outweigh the negative effects of WhatsApp use, and recommended that students should be enlightened thus.**

Keywords: **WhatsApp, MIM, Mobile Application, LIS Students, Niger Delta University,**

I. INTRODUCTION

Our information society defined by the world of communication is massively witnessing changes due to the advances in information and communication technologies, which has led to studies and researches to discover possible approaches in its applications. One of the vital functions played in new technology is the development of smart phones. The smart phones are utilized as a process of communication, accessing social media which plays a very important role in socialization, particularly through WhatsApp (Veena and Lokesha, 2016).Ibrahim, Sulaiman, Nordin, Ze and Yuan (2014) opined that since the Smartphones became very popular, numerous messaging services were initiated but WhatsApp has become most popular among them. WhatsApp is one of the revolutionized app in technology that is normally used on specific mobile phones and computers.

WhatsApp has developed into a communication application that individuals find it difficult to do without, it is irresistible to those who know the value. They keep in touch with friends and family members, and use it for the sharing of ideas, thoughts and emotions for satisfying their information, entertainment and learning requirements (Jisha and Jebakumar, 2014).Ansari (2016) stated that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have changed the life of people. The uses of Internet through mobile phones and smart phones increased rapidly. Mobile Instant Messaging (MIM) applications made them connected with each other. These applications are also useful for information generation, information gathering and information dissemination in a timely and cost effective manner. WhatsApp is an MIM application which makes people connected in real time. It has no additional cost to message and data exchange among mobile devices. Currently many people are utilizing this application, not only for every day communication but also for discussion on their educational tasks (Hashim, Mat, and Abdullah,2015).

In addition, Etebu and Orumah (2019) affirmed that in some tertiary institutions like the Niger Delta University, there are a lot of WhatsApp groups of students who are in the same academic programme, in the same level of study, department, faculty, peers, etc,. The administrators (Admins) of these groups have added librarians to their group for the purpose of information dissemination. Many of the students do snap cover and other pages of information materials and forward same to other students and even paste on forum pages. Most times they chat with reference librarians to do same with them in real-time. WhatsApp messenger offers free texting and try to shift mobile consumers' preference from the conventional short messages service (Tawiah, Nondzor, and Alhaji, 2014).

Furthermore, Joicy and Sornam (2018) stated that WhatsApp was established by Brian Anton and Ian Koom in 20091, as 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.WhatsApp

messenger works with internet connectivity and assists its users to keep on in touch with friends, teachers and relatives in the contact list. It helps users to create groups, send unlimited message, sharing images, video and audio messages, exchanging ideas, thoughts and emotions to any other user. Today WhatsApp is the most popular MIM service used by tertiary institution students, lecturers and staffers.

Consequently, Meenakshi, Anitha and Lakshmi (2019)postulated that WhatsApp has positive and negative effects on their users. Positively, it is an effective tool for education. It creates awareness and information about the happening around the world. Spreads information to many people at a time by sending message in a group. It helps us to communicate and chat with people in abroad. It helps us to connect with friends, relatives and helps to make new friends. Negatively, they affirmed that Students are becoming victims of cyber bullying. Hacking of personal contacts. Students get addicted to WhatsApp and they fail to concentrate on their studies. More usage of WhatsApp affects the physical and mental health of the students, fail to communicate directly. Face to face interaction has been reduced due to WhatsApp.

The Niger Delta University Department of Library and Information Science was established in 2018 alongside other eight Departments in different Faculties. The pioneer undergraduate students were admitted into the 2019/2020 academic session. Out of ninety candidates offered admission, only fifty-one registered. A WhatsApp forum named "Department of LIS NDU" for lecturers only and "LIS Students Info Group" was created by the Head of Department, to which all Departmental members and students were added to the forum for the purpose of tutorials, information dissemination and announcements. Another forum was created by the students for students alone for purpose of academic matters. For the purpose of studies and tutorials outside classroom, five other WhatsApp groups were created according the class being broken into five study groups.

Students in all Departments in the University belong to several WhatsApp group forums. Most of the courses taught in the university have WhatsApp group forums between the courses lecturers and the students. Communication via WhatsApp is becoming the other of the day in the university community as it is very common the hear people say "add me to your WhatsApp contact", "let's do things on WhatsApp", "are you on WhatsApp", "please WhatsApp me". It is on this premise that this study looked at WhatsApp Messenger Use by students Library and Information Science Department, Niger Delta University, Nigeria.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To investigate WhatsApp use experience among the students.
- To know the frequency and time spent in use of WhatsApp.
- To examine the purpose of WhatsApp use among Students

- To discover the benefits of using WhatsApp messenger by students.
- To determine the negative effect of using WhatsApp messenger
- To explore the positive effect of WhatsApp among its users.
- To identify the influence on Students Academic Efficiency.
- To examine the level of satisfaction with WhatsApp use.

III. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey method was employed for the study. A self-structured questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. A total of 51 questionnaires were distributed to students of Library and Information Departments. The collected data were classified, analysed and tabulated by using statistical methods such as frequency counts and simple percentages.

IV. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Amry (2014) carried out a study to explore the effect of using WhatsApp mobile learning activities on the achievements and approaches of online students by using mobile devices at the university. It was found out from the study that mobile learning based WhatsApp social networking has a high positive impact on the achievement test of students. The study further suggested that WhatsApp instant messaging makes learning easy,favour problem solving and resolves learning difficulties related to the learning process or to learning content distributed through WhatsApp, knowledge sharing, etc.

Bouhnik (2014) studied the effect of WhatsApp on classroom communication between teaching faculty and high school students. The study identified that the main purposes of using WhatsApp groups are low cost, easy to communicating with Students, encouragement the social atmosphere; creating dialogue and encouraging sharing among students. Findings of the study shows that teachers were not aware of using WhatsApp, they did not share their experience with other teachers.

In Cetinkaya (2017) research work, the purpose of the study was to explore the effects of WhatsApp use for education and determined the opinions of students towards the process. The analysis indicated that both learning environments have different effects on the success of students and that supporting the traditional environment by using WhatsApp are more effective for the increase of success. For the qualitative aspect of the study, content analysis techniques were employed to analyse the data which were collected by open-ended question forms. The analysis showed that students developed positive opinions towards the use of WhatsApp in their courses. Finally, it was suggested that use of WhatsApp in education process be encouraged as a supportive technology.

Sarker (2015) alsostudied the impact of WhatsApp messenger with reference to the students of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh in the year 2015. The study revealed that WhatsApp has a profound negative impact on students and adversely affects their education, behaviour and routine lives. It messes up much of study time of students and distracts them from completing their assignments. This app has been found to be highly addictive. The study concluded that time management is essential for online activities. Students should give priority to their life and career building instead of giving priority to the WhatsApp

Yeboah and Ewur (2014) conducted a study to identify the impact of social network (WhatsApp messenger) on the performance of tertiary students in Ghana. The study reveals that 48% of respondents spends over 8 hours every day engaged in using WhatsApp on their mobile phone followed by 4 % spent 1-2 hours,17%spent 3-5 hours per day, 31% spent 6-7 hours. The findings of the study reveals that majority of respondents 76% percent said the use of WhatsApp has more negative effect on their studies followed by only 24% of respondents said it has positive impact on their studies. It is found from the study that most of the students wasted much of their precious time on WhatsApp, chatting with friends.

Also, Maheswari (2014) conducted a study to analyse the frequency of using WhatsApp Messenger by college students in Salem District, Tamil Nadu. It was found out from the study that majority of respondents using WhatsApp Messenger usually send images, videos and do group chatting with minimum number of friends and long-time users usually send images, videos and do group chatting with maximum number of friends. The study identified that majority of respondents using WhatsApp Messenger usually do chatting through WhatsApp messenger. It is recommended that, awareness could be created between all the people irrespective of their age, educational surroundings, sex, profession etc. If this could be done, not only the college going students but all the people could reap the benefit of using WhatsApp Messenger.

In addition, Alsaleem (2014) carried out a study to find out the effect of WhatsApp electronic dialogue journaling on writing development as marked in a rubric specifically scoring vocabulary word choice and voice of undergraduate students at AlImam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University in Saudi Arab. The study pointed out that WhatsApp electronic journaling showed significant improvement towards writing. The results of the study indicates that university EFL instructors need to be alert that WhatsApp electronic dialogue journaling methodology could be a useful method of helping their students to improve their writing scores. The study suggested that initiating training programmes for less experienced teachers that centre primarily on ways of using new applications such as WhatsApp successfully in students' classrooms.

Furthermore, Shambare (2014) conducted a study to examine the factors influencing the acceptance of WhatsApp in a developing country, specifically between young South Africans. In this study majority (70 %) of the respondents indicated that they used WhatsApp. It found that almost half (47 per cent) of the respondents use WhatsApp for at least 3 hours a day, followed by 35% of respondents 1-3 hours and 33% spent less than one hour a day on WhatsApp. 70% of respondents reported using WhatsApp on a daily basis. 67 % of respondents reported WhatsApp to be useful.

From the review of related literatures, it can be seen that there are a lot of issues concerning the use of WhatsApp messenger in schools, outside the school environment and in the society at large. Different aspects of this MIM has been studied by various researchers and a lot of findings, both positives and negatives associated with the use discussed. The essence of the review is for this present study to either support or counter existing ones.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by Gender

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	20	39.21%
Female	31	60.79%
Total	**51**	**100.00%**

Table above table shows that 31(60.79%) of the respondents were female and 20(39.21%) were male. This simply means that there are more female than male students in the Department

Table 2: Familiarity with WhatsApp use

WhatsApp User	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	51	100.0%
No	0	0%
Total	**51**	**100.0%**

It shows from the above table thatall the respondents were familiar with WhatsApp messenger use and they all use WhatsApp.

Table 3: Experience of WhatsApp Use

Experience	Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 year	12	23.52%
1-2 years	31	60.80%
2-3 years	3	5.88%
More than 3 years	5	9.80%
Total	**51**	**100.00%**

Table above table indicates that 31(60.80%) of the respondents have between 1 - 2 years' experience in usingWhatsApp, followed by 12(23.52%) with less than 1years' experience, 5(9.80%) with more than 3 years' experience, while 3 (5.88%) had 2 – 3 years' experience with WhatsApp. This revealed that most of the students were aware of WhatsApp and familiarized themselves with WhatsApp use before gaining admission into the University.

Table 4: Frequency of WhatsApp Use

Frequency	Respondents	Percentage
1-2 hours	11	21.57%
3-5 hours	5	9.80%
When less busy	35	68.63%

The above table indicated that majority of the respondents. 35(68.63%) use WhatsApp anytime they are less busy with their academic activities. 11(21.57%) spend between 1-2 hours daily using WhatsApp, while 5(9.80%) spent 3-4 hours daily, using WhatsApp0.

Table 5: Purpose of WhatsApp Use

Purpose	Agree	Disagree	Rmks
Academic Works	51(100.00%)	Nil	Agreed
General Information	51 (100.00%)	Nil	Agreed
Chatting with friends and classmates	51 (100.00%)	Nil	Agreed
Chatting with family members	51(100.00%)	Nil	Agreed
Sharing videos, images, photos, etc.,	51(100.00%)	Nil	Agreed
Information update	51 (100.00%)	Nil	Agreed

Table 5 revealed that all the respondents agreed that their purpose for using WhatsApp messenger are for Academic Works, General Information,Chatting with friendsand classmates,Chatting with family members, Sharing videos, images, photos, etc., and getting Information updates

Table 6: WhatsApp Use Benefits

Messenger Benefits	Agree	Disagree	Rnrks
User friendly interface	51 (100%)	Nil	Agreed
Groups chatting	51 (100%)	Nil	Agreed
Speed	51(100%)	Nil	Agreed
Cross-compatibility (apple, android, blackberry's, windows phone, laptops)	51(100%)	Nil	Agreed
Free of charge (no extra cost to message)	51 (100%)	Nil	Agreed
Convenient and user friendly (e.g., sharing multimedia like videos and photos easily).	51 (100%)	Nil	Agreed
Instant communication even with a group of people at any time at anywhere	51(100%)	Nil	Agreed
Express feeling through emoji without words.	51(100%)	Nil	Agreed

The above table showed that all highlights items (User friendly interface, Groups chatting, Speed, Cross-compatibility (apple, android, blackberry's, windows phone, laptops), Free of charge (no extra cost to message), Convenient and user friendly (e.g., sharing multimedia like videos and photos easily). Instant communication even with a group of people at any time at anywhere, Express feeling through emoji without words)as benefits for WhatsApp use were agreed to by all the respondents.

Table 7 Negative WhatsApp use

Messenger Negativism	Agree	Disagree	Rmrks
Hacking of personal contacts	51(100%)	Nil	Agreed
Addiction to WhatsApp at the expense of concentration on studies	32(62.75%)	19(37.25%)	Agreed
More usage of WhatsApp affect the physical and mental health of the students	5(9.80%)	46(90.20%)	Disagreed
Face to face interaction has been reduced due to WhatsApp	51(100%)	Nil	Agreed
Unsolicited irrelevant posts from some group members	51(100%)	Nil	Agreed
Waste of Megabytes on irrelevant videos and images	51(100%)	Nil	Agreed

Table 7 showed that 51 (100%) of the respondents indicated that Hacking of personal contacts is a negative side of WhatsApp use. 32 (62.75%) agreed that Addiction to WhatsApp at the expense of concentration on studies is a negative, while 19 (37.25%) disagreed. 46 (90.20%) Disagreed that More usage of WhatsApp affects the physical and mental health of the students, while 5 (9.80%) agreed. 51 (100%) agreed that Face to face interaction has been reduced due to WhatsApp. 51 (100%) agreed that Unsolicited irrelevant posts from some group members is a negativism, while 51 (100%) also agreed that Waste of Megabytes on irrelevant videos and images is a negative side of WhatsApp use.

Table 8: WhatsApp Effect on student's studies

Effect	Respondents	Percentage
Positive	51	100%
Negative	0	0%
Total	51	100.0%

Table 8 indicated that all respondents were of the opinion that WhatsApp messenger use has a positive effect on students' studies.

Table 9: Influence of WhatsApp use on Students Academic Efficiency

Influence	Agree	Disagree	Remarks
Easy sharing of academic activities	51(100%)	Nil	Agreed
Easy to solicit responses from others on topics	51(100%)	Nil	Agreed
Fast responses to questions asked by group members	51(100%)	Nil	Agreed
Keeps one abreast with class work and assignments	51(100%)	Nil	Agreed
Exposure to wide study	51 (100%)	Nil	Agreed
Increase access to current information	51 (100%)	Nil	Agreed
Improves academic competence	51 (100%)	Nil	Agreed

Table 9 revealed that all the respondents 51 (100%) agreed to all the items (Easy sharing of academic activities, Easy to solicit responses from others on topics, Fast responses to questions asked by group members, keeps one abreast with class work and assignments, Exposure to wide study, Increase access to current information, improves academic competence) highlightedas Influence of WhatsApp use on Students Academic Efficiency

Table 10: User Satisfaction with the WhatsApp

Level of Satisfaction	Agree	Disagree	Remarks
Highly satisfied	43(84.31%)	Nil	Agreed
Satisfied	8(15.69%)	Nil	Agreed
Neutral	Nil	Nil	
Dissatisfied	Nil	Nil	
Highly dissatisfied	Nil	Nil	

Table 10 showed that majority of the respondents, 43 (84.31%) indicated that they were highly satisfied with WhatsApp, while 8 (15.69%) were satisfied.

VI. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings of the study were:

- Majority of the students have 1 – 2 years WhatsApp use experience
- Most students use WhatsApp messenger anytime they are free
- Students use WhatsApp for academic and social purpose
- WhatsApp messenger use is beneficial to student
- WhatsApp use has some negative side on users
- WhatsApp has positive effect on students' studies
- WhatsApp use has influence on Students Academic Efficiency
- NDU LIS students were highly satisfied with WhatsApp use

VII. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

a). WhatsApp Messenger Use Experience

The study revealed that most of the students have using WhatsApp messenger for between 1 and 2 years. This finding confirmed that of Veena and Lokesha (2016) which noted that their study revealed that most of the students were aware of WhatsApp and familiarized themselves with WhatsApp use before gaining admission for their respective academic programmes. In Nigeria the use of Smartphones and social media is quite common among secondary students and school leavers. News are easily circulated through these mechanisms both for societal, cultural, educational, political and social purposes. Not having a Smartphone to be current and catch up with much needed information is responsible for some candidates missing out on acceptance and registration after gaining tertiary admission.

b). WhatsApp Frequency Use experience

Majority of the students indicated that they use the WhatsApp messenger when they are less busy. This could be as a result of having classes some days from 8am – 6pm, sometimes they have to change class venues in-between lectures, and sometimes they have to move from campus to another to attend General Studies (GST) classes and faculty courses. This finding slightly varied from that of Veena and Lokesha (2016) which found out that their study points out that an average student spends 1-2 hours every day engaged in using WhatsApp on their mobile phones. The reason for this variance could be that the students of Library and Information Science Department might not be able to calculate or quantify the actual time spent each day on social media use.

c). WhatsApp Messenger Use Purpose

The study found out that all the students use WhatsApp for academic and social purposes. This finding is in line with that of Bouhnik (2014) which studied the effect of WhatsApp on classroom communication between teaching faculty and high school students. The study identified that the main purposes of using WhatsApp groups are low cost, easy to communicating with Students, encouragement the social atmosphere; creating dialogue and encouraging sharing among students.The study is also heralded by Veena and Lokesha (2016) that majority of their respondents152 (80.85%) use the WhatsApp application for academic purpose

d). WhatsApp messenger use benefits to student

The study revealed that WhatsApp messenger use is beneficial to students in their educational pursuit. This is in corroboration of Amry (2014) which carried out a study to explore the effect of using WhatsApp mobile learning activities on the achievements and approaches of online students by using mobile devices at the university. It was found out from the study that mobile learning based WhatsApp social networking has a high positive impact on the achievement test of students.

e). WhatsApp use has some negative side on users

The study found some negativisms associated with WhatsApp use.It aligns itself with the works of Sarker (2015) which studied the impact of WhatsApp messenger with reference to the students of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh in the year 2015. The study revealed that WhatsApp has a profound negative impact on students and adversely affects their education, behaviour and routine lives. It messes up much of study time of students and distracts them from completing their assignments. This app has been found to be highly addictive.However, 46 (90.20%) of the respondents disagreed that More usage of WhatsApp affects the physical and mental health of the students, as opined by Meenakshi, Anitha and Lakshmi (2019).

f). WhatsApp has positive effect on students' studies

This study also found out some positive effects in students use of WhatsApp messenger. With WhatsApp, LIS students are highly connected to the Departmental lecturers, Faculty lecturers and university wide courses lecturers for academic purpose. Students do not easily miss out on information when classes are shifted, postponed or cancelled. This is supported by Shambare (2014) which conducted a study to examine the factors influencing the acceptance of WhatsApp in a developing country, specifically between young South Africans. In this study majority (70 %) of the respondents indicated that they used WhatsApp. It found that almost half (47 per cent) of the respondents use WhatsApp for at least 3 hours a day, followed by 35% of respondents 1-3 hours and 33% spent less than one hour a day on WhatsApp. 70% of respondents reported using WhatsApp on a daily basis. 67 % of respondents reported WhatsApp to be useful.

g). WhatsApp use has influence on Students Academic Efficiency

The study revealed thatWhatsApp use has influence on Students Academic Efficiency. There are some LIS students who expresses themselves easily and participate fully during group discussions or chats on WhatsApp group forums than they do in class. This is in line with Veena and Lokesha (2016) which posited that it is clear that the use of WhatsApp messenger has positively influenced the academic efficiency of the respondents. The results reveals that most of their respondents thatInfluence of WhatsApp usage has improved their professional competence.

h). NDU LIS students were highly satisfied with WhatsApp use

This study found out that students were highly satisfied with WhatsApp messenger use.The findings show that although there was high rate of satisfactions from the App use, there appears to be mix reaction towards the use. There are positive and negative aspects to the App use. The positives outweigh the negatives and this is where the high rate of satisfaction comes from. This confirmed Veena and Lokesha (2016) that majority of their respondents are highly satisfied with

WhatsApp messenger usage. But it should be notedthat time management is essential for online activities. Students should give priority to their life and career building instead of giving priority to the WhatsApp.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WhatsApp Messenger is easy, quick and reliable. Of all the social media applications for communication, it looks the most suitable to students use. The study highlighted the frequency of use of the App, the students' experience, the benefit, the positives and negatives of using the App in school, and the satisfaction level of the App use by students in the Department of Library and Information Science at the Niger Delta University. The findings show that although there washigh rate of satisfactions from the App use, there appears to be mix reaction towards the use. There are positive and negative aspects to the App use. The positives outweigh the negatives and this is where the high rate of satisfaction comes from.

Based on the forgoing, it is highly recommended that students should be enlightened on the positives and negatives of WhatsApp messenger use for academic and social purposes. This is to guide against sacrificing valuable time for pleasure while using the App.

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