Social Media in Teaching Learning Process: Exploring the use of WhatsApp in Teaching and Learning Process in University of Sargodha

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Abstract

The role of technology and communication in modern times is eminent. The world is moving towards globalization. Communication has become faster and easier. Social Media is yet another tool to communicate across the globe. Social Media platforms are playing a vital role in all the fields of life. WhatsApp is the most frequently used social media tool, it is not only being used for the purpose of sending and receiving messages but it has also been used for educational purposes. Many universities across the globe are using WhatsApp as a tool for online instructions. It offers students enhanced opportunities and choices from the perspective of online education. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the use of WhatsApp in the teaching and learning process at the University of Sargodha. The study also tried to find out what ratio of students and teachers is using WhatsApp for instant messages and how many of them are actually using it for educational purposes. This research is descriptive in nature, the population of the study comprises 35 teachers and 166 students. The research questionnaires from both teachers and students were filled online and thus analyzed, using statistical measures to answer the required research questions. The results showed that the majority of teachers and students are using WhatsApp for the purpose of instant messages and for educational purposes as well. It is also revealed that teachers have been assigning tasks to students through WhatsApp and sharing research papers and other study material.

Keywords: Descriptive, Learning, Social Media, Teaching, Technology, WhatsApp

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Introduction

It is human nature that he needs to communicate with other people to sustain in the society. It was an important issue to how to interact with people living across the globe. Some tool was needed to communicate with others to strengthen communal relations. Therefore, the technology
and its advances have empowered many methods of communication and social media is the most significant tool among these. It has gained much popularity as it is not used as a tool to communicate but also as a tool to impart education.

Consequently, social media interaction has increased and flourished massively in recent times. In developed countries, the use of mobile technology and its use in the teaching-learning process is evident and frequent. It is gaining worldwide significance as a healthy tool to build a relationship between teachers and students. Students are using various online tools to cater to different requirements. It will not be wrong to say that social media and education go hand in hand in the modern world. (Willbold, 2019)

Social media has billions of users on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp and they are mainly youth and teenagers. Now the trend of using social media is also increased among middle-agers and senior citizens. They can also be seen using Facebook or WhatsApp to be in contact with their friends and families.

Social media is an important part of daily life, it cannot be excluded so it is better to get something better out of it by introducing it for educational purposes. Social media is a big part of our day to day life and there’s no point in keeping it away from the education process. School, college, and university staff should be encouraged to make use of technology for student and parent communication.

The use of social media, especially WhatsApp has become so common among the masses. The youth of Pakistan has been seen using WhatsApp for communicative purposes and are actively engaged in online groups. It is evident that almost all the teachers and students have mobile phones with internet connections and not a lot of them would find it difficult to engage in the online communicative process. To observe the use of social media among teachers and students, it became necessary to investigate what is majority doing on social media, for what purpose they use WhatsApp the most, and how often they use it for the educational process. The effect of using social media on students’ academic results should also be considered. Due to the ability of social media to enhance connections by making them easily accessible, social media can yield many benefits for the youth, including providing a virtual space for them to explore their interests or problems with similar individuals, and academic support, while strengthening online communication skills and knowledge. Saini, 2015.
The emergence of social networks encourages students to be active in learning and research; at the same time giving them the opportunity to develop collaboration and communication skills, as well, as creating a learning environment to be self-directed learners. (Nassar, 2016). The atmosphere suggests that there is a positive outcome among students by the use of technology as sharing information has become quite easier. WhatsApp helps students and teachers to share information, connect and share their opinions at a platform without leaving their places. The use of WhatsApp for academic purposes reveals that it has a great impact on the students.

Advantages of learning with the help of social media are many. It increases students’ ability to communicate with others, to share the views, to collaborate with other students. It has also increased the interaction between teachers and students that is the best outcome of learning and teaching through social media. So, it is clear now that WhatsApp is being used by all and sundry, therefore, the question arises that how to use it effectively for the learning and teaching process. There has always been a question regarding the use of social sites, “Do these numerous social network sites have any educational value?” (Oriji, Amadi, 2016). It is thus to investigate that do students are making effective use of social media or if they are using it just for fun and wasting their time in meaningless activities.

Yes, social media has come to stay with us, but what positive effects is it having on us, especially on our youth, who are engrossed in it with regards to their academic performances? (Ta'amneh, 2017). In Pakistan, most of the teachers and students have been seen as quite comfortable with the use of WhatsApp and sharing documents with students by using this platform. In 2020, Social media is not something that is not accessible to everyone. In Pakistan, people are using social sites excessively. So the purpose of this study is to analyze that when there is an excessive use of social media so what is the ratio of using it for educational purposes.

What is Social Media?

Social Media is a collective term for websites and applications which focus on communication, community-bases input, internet, content-sharing and collaboration. Different types of social media are normally dedicated to forums, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis.

A large number of people use social media to be in contact with
friends and family. Social media is now being used as a tool to promote businesses and to collaborate with others to promote their goods. Social media has become larger and more accessible with the accessibility to mobile phones and mobile applications like WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook.

YouTube, one of the most used social networking sites are used as a tool to convey the message across the globe. Numerous people record their videos, convey a message, deliver a speech, deliver a lecture on some topic or do any other productive activity that can help people enhance their knowledge. It is evident that YouTube is a strong tool for the instructors to record their lectures on the topics of their respective fields so that people may watch these videos when they need to learn these subjects.

Furthermore, another social media site, Twitter is so common among intellectuals. Great ideas are being shared by people on this site, and debates and discussions on these ideas is so like a routine for the users of Twitter. Your idea, of some grandeur, can spread like fire in the bush if you post it on Twitter and relative people connect to your idea. All the great minds share their opinions on different issues over there and people learn and get motivation from them. So, it can be said that Twitter is also a strong social site to impart ideas and learn novel things.

Moreover, Facebook is also a social media site that is most commonly used to connect to people worldwide and to share their views on current affairs and other issues. It is a platform where people post their pictures, write their thoughts, share their opinions, and quote about them. Facebook has helped the world in connecting together and growing together.

**What is WhatsApp?**

The story of WhatsApp started with Brian Anton and Jan Koom (former Yahoo employees) when the duo launched the application in 2009. “WhatsApp” in English phrase stands for what’s up?” meaning “What’s new? "WhatsApp, which was later acquired by Google for 1 billion dollars in April 2013, has over 400 million active monthly users (Barhoumi, 2015) and now Mark Zuckerberg has bought WhatsApp from its makers and is the owner of WhatsApp and Facebook as well.

WhatsApp is the most used social media platform these days. It is so easy to use and helps people in getting connected by their phone numbers. It helps in sharing information of any kind, be it pictures, text, documents and links. WhatsApp has made the world a complete new
thing. Everyone has access to WhatsApp through the mobile phones and its easy use has connected a large number of people.

**Importance of WhatsApp in Teaching-Learning Process**

Technology has made the life easier and so many tools are being introduced for academic purposes too. WhatsApp is also one of the strongest tool to communicate and share the knowledge. It is the easiest way for students and teachers to interact and exchange ideas for the effective outcome of this platform. Therefore, the question is that if WhatsApp is this easy and everyone has access to this, then how people are making use of it. How often it is used for some academic purpose? Have students ever used it for asking help from teachers? Have teachers used it to share a document with students? WhatsApp is the most frequently used application so it should be used for some serious matters too. This research is going to explore how many people use WhatsApp just for fun and interacting with others and how many use it for teaching-learning process.

WhatsApp can be used by both teachers and students for teaching and learning. Groups can be created for classes where they can send messages, comment, and share ideas. It will help those who are unable to attend the physical classes and do not want to miss the lecture. If the documents are shared there, students will have access to them any time. Teachers can start group discussions to have the outcome of students on a certain topic. Students can get help from teachers in their homework and assignments. There would be a constant teacher student connection outside the classroom that will be beneficial for the students. It is the best platform to share documents and papers on different topic and comment on them. It is a sort of all-day leaning process that is so helpful for students to keep in touch with the teachers and keep learning new things every now and then. Teaching and learning with the use of mobile technologies is a shift from traditional to modern way of life. E-learning is the new trend worldwide that will help students get access to the universities of the whole world via online technologies. This is another great step towards the globalization of the world.

**Problems in Using Social Media**

There is no doubt in the fact that social media has changed our lives in so many good ways and it has brought many advances yet the demerits of social media cannot be overlooked. Overuse of social media is one of the main demerits. People spend a lot of time on it scrolling and chatting aimlessly. It has become a sort of addiction for the younger
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generation. Having so much in the phone with regard to social media like pictures, memes, audio messages, video calls and much more, people often do not search anything for their academic needs and they do not go for sharing research papers with other fellows. Students often avoid sending messages to their instructors to ask for help in learning a lesson or to discuss some topic.

Furthermore, the consumption of data is another challenge that we have to face while using social media for teaching and learning purposes. WhatsApp consumes a lot of data to operate especially to download or upload pictures, files and documents. The use of these technologies also puts a question on the credibility of students when they claim to have done some work. Teachers are never sure if students have done it all by themselves or there is some cheating involved as the traditional way are totally different from these new online systems.

These are some of the challenges that students and teachers face in online teaching-learning process.

Theoretical Framework

The theory on which this paper is based is Social Constructivist Learning Theory by Vygotsky. Social constructivist learning theory seeks to improve social interactions between students and to construct and share knowledge. (Vygotsky, 1978). According to this theory students should have access to learning anywhere, any time as this helps in them ability to learn more and it enhances students learning capabilities and allows students to have their own view on everything. The theory emphasizes that students learning capabilities enhance with social interactions and experiences and online platform gives all this access to students. Online learning will definitely help the students grow better and it will help teachers to share their ideas with students at any time.

The level of actual development is the level of development that the learner has already reached, and is the level at which the learner is capable of solving problems independently. The level of potential development (the “zone of proximal development”) is the level of development that the learner is capable of reaching under the guidance of teachers or in collaboration with peers. The learner is capable of solving problems and understanding material at this level that they are not capable of solving or understanding at their level of actual development; the level of potential development is the level at which learning takes place. It comprises cognitive structures that are still in the process of maturing, but which can only mature under the
guidance of or in collaboration with others. (Vygotsky, 1978)

**Research Objectives**

1. To find out the access to the internet and WhatsApp among students and teachers
2. To investigate the usage of WhatsApp for teaching-learning purposes.
3. To analyze the challenges faced by students and teachers on the use of WhatsApp for academic purposes

**Research Questions**

1. How long do students and teachers use WhatsApp on their phones?
2. To what extent do students and teachers use WhatsApp for educational purposes?
3. What are some of the challenges faced by teachers and students in the use of WhatsApp for the teaching-learning process?

**Significance of the Study**

The study analyzes the scope of online teaching at University of Sargodha, it also helps in finding out the usage of WhatsApp in the teaching-learning process.

The study will further enhance the interest of students, teachers and educational institutes as well to adopt technology and its implementation in schools, colleges and universities. Learning through WhatsApp will build in students’ confidence to interact with others to share knowledge.

**Methodology**

This research aims at examining the extent to which online teaching a leaning is productive among the teachers and students of University of Sargodha. This study researches the use of WhatsApp in teaching-learning process. Descriptive survey research was adopted to conduct the study to collect and analyze the data. This study will help in making a generalization of the entire population with the help of those who participated in the research process and filled the online questionnaire for this study. Descriptive and quantitative research method was chosen for the study to collect and analyze the information collected from teachers and students of university of Sargodha under the topic, “Use of Social Media in teaching-learning process.

**Results and Discussion**

The population of the study is from university of Sargodha and it comprises of 35 teachers and 166 students. The tool used for this research was a 10 item questionnaire for both teachers and students, titled:
“Use of WhatsApp in Teaching and Learning process”.

The questionnaire was administered to students and teachers online and only 35 teachers and 166 students submitted their responses on this study. The information received was summarized along the results. The data collected was analyzed on statistical basis to answer research question of the study.

Responses to Questionnaires

Research Question 1
Do you have WhatsApp on your phone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, it can be concluded that all the participants except one have access to WhatsApp and it is not something novel for them. But the point that we need for our research purpose is to know to what extent WhatsApp is being used for the teaching and learning process in the educational institutions.

Research Question 2
Can you send and receive messages through WhatsApp?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>197</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows to what extent students and teachers have the ability to send and receive messages via WhatsApp. The results show that the majority of the participants is well aware of the use of WhatsApp and they know how to send messages through it.
Research Question 3

Can you upload and download information (attachments) to and from your WhatsApp?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the help of results stated in the table, it can be concluded that a large number of participants can download and upload attachments via WhatsApp. It is evident that most of the participants have enough knowledge about the technology and its use that downloading and uploading files or other attachments is not a tricky task for them rather they can do it quite easily.

Research Question 4

Have you ever given or been given an assignment via WhatsApp for academic purposes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above-mentioned table suggests that the majority of teachers and students have given or been given an assignment via WhatsApp. Hence, it can be said that most of the teachers use WhatsApp to give assignments to students and most of the students have been assigned tasks via WhatsApp. This shows that the use of WhatsApp among University of Sargodha’s students and teachers is so frequent.

Research Question 5

Have you ever been trained on the use of WhatsApp in the education process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOCIAL MEDIA IN TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS: EXPLORING THE USE OF WHATSAPP IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS IN UNIVERSITY OF SARGODHA

The result of the question how many of the participants has been trained on the use of WhatsApp for educational purposes shows that 55.5% agreed on being trained on how to use WhatsApp for the learning-teaching process and 44.5% that they have never been trained. This shows that more than half of the participants have had training on using social media for educational needs and it means they do not face any problems on using technology to enhance the learning-teaching process.

Research Question 6

How often do you log on to the Internet for academic research purposes using your mobile phones?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To the answer to a question that how often the participants use the Internet and technology for academic research using their cell phone, 56% of people responded that they use the Internet for academic research regularly, 40.5% responded that they use it occasionally for academic research, and just 3.5% replied that they never use the internet for academic research purposes.

This shows that more than half of the participants are regular users of technology and the internet and they use it for their academic research purposes, the second majority among the participants are those who do not use the internet regularly for academic research but occasionally whenever they have to find out something for educational needs, and just 3.5% people are those who never use the internet for their learning-teaching processes. This concludes that the majority of the participants are active in using the internet for academic research.

Research Question 7

Are your teachers/ students available on WhatsApp and respond quickly?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Most of the Time</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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| 50 | 25.1 | 94 | 47.2 | 52 | 26.1 | 3 | 1.5 | 201 | 100 |

The answer to the question that how frequently the students and teachers are available on WhatsApp and do they respond quickly was categorized for the convenience of participants. The first category is that students and teachers are sometimes available and respond quickly, 25.1% agreed to this that they get responses quickly sometimes. The second category is they are most of the time available and respond quickly, 47.2% of participants said yes to this and that they get responses quickly most of the time. The third category is that they get quick responses always, and 26.1% agreed with this. The fourth and last category is that they do not at all receive responses quickly and only 1.5% of participants agreed to this. Hence, it is proven that the teachers and students are good at using technology, especially WhatsApp for educational purposes and they are having good interactions via WhatsApp. The result shows that social media is doing well at providing a channel between teachers and students.

Research Question 8

Despite making calls, sending, and receiving messages, for what other purposes do you use your mobile phones most in pursuance of your academic research?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharing Documents</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Searching Articles</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>All of the Above</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>None of These</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The answer to question number 8 is that for what other purposes do participants use their mobile phone except sending and receiving messages, falls into four categories. The first category is that they use their mobile phones for sharing documents and more than half 62.8% population said that yes they use their mobile phones for sharing documents. The second category is that they use their phone for searching articles and 13.6% of participants said that they use their phones for searching articles. The third category is that they use their phone for all the
above-mentioned subjects and 17.6% population said that they use their mobile phones for both searching for articles and sharing documents. Only 5.5% of participants responded that they use their phones for neither of the above-mentioned categories. The result makes it clear that the students and teachers of the University of Sargodha are so good at using technology for their academic research ad for the learning and teaching process. It shows the positive attitude of our teachers and students towards the use of technology for academic purposes.

**Research Question 9**

How helpful is WhatsApp in your learning/teaching processes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Helpful</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Little Helpful</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Not Helpful at All</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of question number that asked how helpful is WhatsApp in your teaching and learning process, shows that WhatsApp is really so helpful for the students and teachers of the University of Sargodha as 68.8 people responded that WhatsApp is very helpful for their academic purposes, 28.6 participants responded that it is little helpful and only 2.5% of the population responded that WhatsApp is not at all helpful for the teaching and learning process. It can thus be said that the majority has agreed that WhatsApp is helping them in enhancing their teaching and learning purposes.

**Research Question 10**

Which of these challenges limit your effective utilization of WhatsApp?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Cost of Data</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Lack of Training &amp; Skills</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Lack of Time</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>None of These</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The question about challenges faced by teachers and student shows that the main hindrance in using WhatsApp for the teaching and learning process is the high cost of data as 38.7% of participants responded that this is the biggest challenge they have to face when learning and teaching online. Another challenge they have to face is a lack of training and skills on how to use WhatsApp for the teaching-learning process. 19.1% of participants said they have a shortage of time for using WhatsApp for academic purposes and 27.1% said that they do not face any challenge in using WhatsApp for their teaching-learning process.

Discussion on Findings

Based on the results collected from the research survey, it has been proven that teachers and students have internet-enabled mobile phones with WhatsApp applications installed on it. Almost all the participants are aware of how to download and upload attachments on WhatsApp. The results show that students and teachers are utilizing WhatsApp for their learning and teaching process frequently ad this is not something novel for them, rather they are regular users of the internet and WhatsApp especially for sharing documents and searching for research and articles.

The findings clearly show that both students and teachers are active users of WhatsApp, they remain available on WhatsApp and respond quickly to the queries asked by students and students respond swiftly to the tasks assigned by teachers via WhatsApp.

Future Possibilities for Digital Education

With the world being globalized and the use of technology is increasing around us, we strongly foresee a better future with the use of technology. As today’s world is suffering from a pandemic COVID19 and the world is paralyzed due to lockdown, it can be seen that technology has made it easier for teachers and students to connect via different apps. They have been interacting and continuing their semesters and classes with the help of mobile and laptop apps and this shows the attitude of Sargodha University’s students and teachers towards accepting modern ways. Having seen this, I can be said that the future of digital education for the said university is really bright. Once more, new technologies are emerging that allow devices to come together and communicate among themselves and as well enabling anything to be connected to the Internet from
anywhere and anytime; still more thrilling are those advances that we have yet to imagine that will revolutionize teaching and learning in the years to come (Sharpe, 2006)

Conclusions

The world has become modern and with the help of technologies, most countries have initiated the concept of online or digital learning. A considerable number of universities in Pakistan have also started an online education system that is successfully continued. WhatsApp is one of the most used applications across the world, it is easy to use and learn it quickly. To initiate the concept of online learning, universities should introduce learning and teaching via WhatsApp.

The results of the study show that participants from the University of Sargodha do not find it difficult to use WhatsApp rather it is very easy for them to share documents and download and upload information via WhatsApp. It can therefore be concluded that WhatsApp has been found to be one of the most beneficial applications and it is the easiest way for learning online. Hence, it can be said that there is a dire need of utilizing WhatsApp for academic purposes.

Recommendations

For further digitalization of the educational process, the cost of data consumption must be reduced to provide better learning and teaching process as the main challenge faced by the teachers and students on the basis of results gotten from the online survey is the high cost of data. Another point that needs to be considered is training sessions on how to use WhatsApp and other applications for educational purposes must be held as the basic concept of digital or online education is yet not clear to many. The training sessions will help teachers to convey their concepts and messages efficiently and it will also help the students to learn in a better way. As the concept of online education is yet new in our country, the basic education on this will be supportive for all.

Consequently, with the initiative of online education, the time that students waste on meaningless activities on the internet, will be saved by engaging them in productive activities by assigning them different tasks or by initiating discussions on different topics.

The university should adopt the use of technology and social media by making it mandatory for teaching and learning process to get benefit out of it. Seminars and trainings should be arranged on the use of social media
and WhatsApp in teaching and learning process.

References


