

Impact of Whatsapp messenger on the university level students: A sociological study

Md. Golam Rabbani Sarker

Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh

ABSTRACT

Whatsapp is an amazing application which occupies a major part of our day-to-day life. However, it has some harmful effect on the life of students. Hence, it is essential to know how it is affecting the life of students and the society at large. The present study is an attempt to study the impact of Whatsapp messenger with reference to the students of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh in the year 2015. This empirical study has been conducted upon 200 respondents with a questionnaire, which was used as a tool of data collection for the survey. The study has revealed that Whatsapp has a profound negative impact on students and adversely affects their education, behavior 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 impact is so powerful that users give up their real world interest. They cannot control themselves from constantly chatting, replying and sharing of ideas. The study concludes 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.

Key words: Whatsapp messenger, Impact, Skype, IMO messenger.

*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: grabbi27@gmail.com (MGR Sarker)

@2015 Int. J. Nat. Soc. Sci. all right reserved.

INTRODUCTION

Whatsapp started in the year 2009, is a mobile messaging app which allows the users to exchange messages without having to pay for SMS. The Whatsapp messenger was purposely created by Brian Acton and Jan Koum (2009) to make communication and the distribution of multimedia messaging more easily and faster. Whatsapp works with internet connectivity and helps its users to stay in touch with friends and relatives in their contact list. Whatsapp has done same for messaging what Skype and IMO messenger did for voice and video calls. Whatsapp is free on the Android, iphone and Windows phone, Nokia Symbian 60 and Blackberry. It is easy to get started. Simply enter the telephone number of the device into the app. It then sorts through the contacts (with your permission) on the phone to figure out who else also has the app already installed. Users can then invite more contacts or go

ahead and start sending messages to the ones that the app discovered.

With the help of this application, an individual can chat with family, friends beyond the limit of seas and keep contact to everybody at one time. This amazing app is useful for us from many ways. The students are increasingly utilizing this application for personal update, event activities, notes and messages and even now they can send documents upto 100 MB. But apart from this, it occupies their lives from all around and makes them addict of it which is difficult to control. Thus this paper will try to focus on the positive as well as negative impact of Whatsapp on students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Little works on Whatsapp have been done in Bangladesh. Some works are found in India and in other countries but most of them are on overall social networking site based. Whatsapp is an

application of social media therefore literary review of this paper can also be covered herewith.

According to Cox and Rethman (2011) social media can be defined as forms of electronic communication through which user can interact among people freely and can share, exchange and discuss the information, ideas, personal messages and other content between each other such as using multimedia messages, personal words, pictures, video and audio and utilizes online platform only by connecting to the Internet.

Anshu Bhatt and M. Arshad (2016) find out the impact of Whatsapp on youth. Data was collected from 100 samples of youth from Agra, India. Research shows that Whatsapp has positive as well as negative impact on youth. It affects their education, behavior and routine lives. It is highly addictive in nature. Findings show that youths are spending more time on this application rather than spending quality time with their family members.

Johnson Yeboah and George Dominic Ewur (2014) conducted a research to find out the impact of Whatsapp messenger on academic performance of youth and data was collected from 550 students of tertiary institutions of Ghana. The result indicates that Whatsapp has negative impact on the study of youth. It engendered procrastination related problem, error of spellings and grammatical construction of sentences. Therefore it is difficult to balance simultaneously the online activities and academic performance with Whatsapp.

Tsai and Lin (2012) suggest that internet addiction is an important concern among adolescents. In their study of 700 Taiwanese high school students, 88 were deemed internet addicts according to the Internet Addiction Scale which conducted for high school students in Taiwan. The research shows that ego-identity achievement in middle school students is negatively related to pathological and extreme Internet use. This research says that these students are getting addicted to Internet which is the serious problem for the adolescents in present age.

Neelamalar and Chitra (2009) identify the issues regarding the youth's social networking usage and

the resultant impact on their social interactions. The sample size was 100 (50 teens 17-19 yrs and 50 youths 20-22 yrs). The findings of the study include 98% of people who are the members in social networking sites in which 68% are strangers, 7% are those who have very intimate relationship with their online friends and 20% are good friends with the virtual strangers. Research shows that Indian youth are not only techno-savvy and socially active but they also possess social consciousness.

OBJECTIVES OF THE TUDY

- To examine the intensity of the usage of Whatsapp messenger among the university level students.
- To find out the purpose of using Whatsapp messenger.
- To investigate the way how it affects the education, psychology, routine life and family life of the students.
- To explore the positive as well as negative impact of Whatsapp messenger on students.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- The intensity of usage of Whatsapp messenger is very high among the female students of BRUR (Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur).
- Whatsapp messenger has negative impact on students.
- Whatsapp promotes unethical pictures, video clips and images among students.

METHODOLOGY

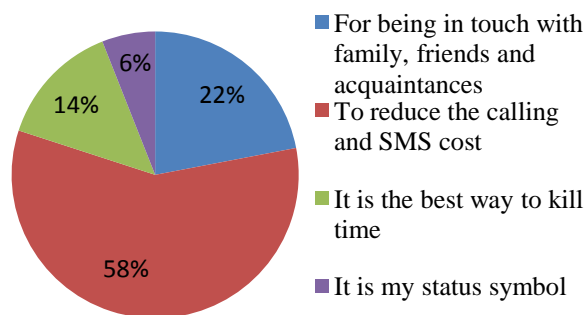
This research deals with qualitative approach with the help of quantitative analysis to find out in depth, how does it affect the psychology, routine life and family life of students.

The research has made the use of survey method. Survey was conducted among the Whatsapp user of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh with sample size of 200 students between the age group of 18-23 years. This age group of students (18-23 yrs) who have been chosen for the survey are the heavy users of social

media and early adopters of advanced technological application. The survey was conducted through interview schedule. Some data were collected through personal interview to get a deeper insight and more information regarding the research.

The researcher used judgmental sampling to identify the samples for the study. Students of BRUR, who possess smart phones and are users of Whatsapp messenger, were taken for the study. The population under study was all the students of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh (BRUR). Since the total student of BRUR is almost 7000 and it was impossible to get data from the whole population, so questionnaire was distributed among 200 students (Male 100 and Female 100).

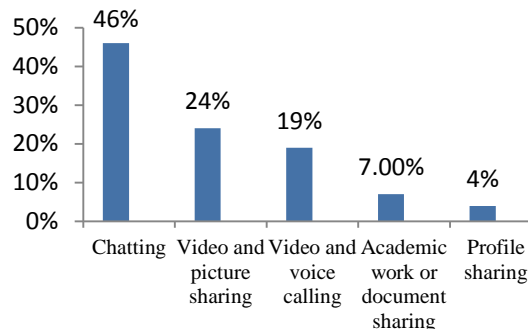
FINDINGS



Source: Survey data (2015)

Figure 1 Purpose of using Whatsapp messenger.

Students were asked about the purposes of using Whatsapp messenger on their mobile phones (Figure 1). The researcher was amazed at their responds. The finding of the survey revealed that majority of students which was 58% of the sample made a view that they used Whatsapp messenger because of its cheap cost which reduced the calling and SMS expenditure. And 22% of respondents had the opinion that they used Whatsapp for being in touch with family, friends and acquaintances. 14% of respondents said that it was the best way to kill time, while another 6% of respondents said that it was their status symbol.



Source: Survey data (2015)

Figure 2 Feature of Whatsapp that is mostly used by students.

Researcher asked to the respondents about the activities or feature of Whatsapp that is mostly used by the students (Figure 2). The study revealed that 46% of respondents used Whatsapp for chatting with friends on different issues rather than academic work on campus. 24% of respondents gave the reply that they remained engaged in video and picture sharing. In this case they shared comedy videos and joking pictures to remove their tension. Sometimes they shared unethical pictures also. 19% of respondents used the video and voice calling feature of Whatsapp mostly. Sometimes they call strangers just to know how the other person looks like. 7% of respondents used the application for academic work or document sharing and very low percentile of 4% students updated their status and saw the profile picture of others on Whatsapp. Research also showed that there was a link between usage of Whatsapp and poor academic performance of the students. A student who had a lot of friends on Whatsapp is most likely going to be responding to more people and thus spending more time in chatting.

Table 1 Time spent on Whatsapp.

Time spent on Whatsapp	No. of respondent	Percentage
1-2 hours	19	9.5%
3-4 hours	43	21.5%
5-6 hours	57	28.5%
Over 7 hours	81	40.5%
Total	200	100%

The finding of the survey revealed that 9.5% of total respondents spent 1-2 hours per day on Whatsapp (Table 1). This group of students knows how to do best use of time. 21.5% of respondents spent 3-4 hours per day on Whatsapp while 28.5% of respondents spent 5-6 hours per day. Most remarkable fact is that 40.5% of respondents spent 7 hours and more on Whatsapp. They check frequently their cell phone in spite of engaging in studying, eating or doing something important.

Table 2
Criteria to include in Whatsapp list.

Response	No. of respondent	Percentage
Close friends	92	46%
Acquaintances	58	29%
Closely connected communities	42	21%
Strangers	8	4%
Total	200	100%

Source: Survey data (2015)

The study showed that the more time a student spends using Whatsapp, the less time he or she has to attend to academic matters such as class work,

Table 3
Impact of Whatsapp on real relationship.

Response	Agree		Disagree	
	No. of respondent	Percentage	No. of respondent	Percentage
Whatsapp is overtaking your real relationship	138	69%	62	31%
Procrastinate work, assignment because of Whatsapp	142	71%	58	29%

Table 3 shows that the vast majority of students 69% say that Whatsapp is overtaking their real relationship. Now a day's most of the students take the well wishes from their friends, relatives and acquaintances on Whatsapp and avoid to visiting their home directly. They seem to stick with their cell phone which destroys their real relationship and reduce communication between family members. While 31% of the respondents have the positive opinion, they have the view that Whatsapp does not take over their real relationship because they think that it is desirable to check the

assignments, preparation for class test, mid-semester exams and final examination which account for the students poor grade points. If students bring their mobile phones to class, they get bored of the lesson and find their way into Whatsapp. This distracts their attention from the main lesson and they are not able to fully understand what is going on.

To better understand the effect of Whatsapp on students, it is analyzed that on what basis the students establish their virtual circle (Table 2). Then 46% of the respondents stated that they include only those person in their Whatsapp list on whom they have strong trust, hence they choose only close friends for it to share personal talks. 29% of the respondents revealed that they include only those people to whom they are well acquainted in real life, while 21% of the respondents choose closely connected community persons like family members and relatives and a very low percentile 4% of the respondents include strangers in their list. Thus the study revealed that students on Whatsapp gave high priority to their personal preferences and likeness rather than other logical reason.

app but you must not be addict to check again and again this app.

Another question was asked to the respondents whether Whatsapp procrastinate work or not. 71% of respondents agreed to this statement. They said Whatsapp creates serious interferences with their assignment, studies and normal social functioning. But low percentile about 29% respondents has the idea that this app does not affect them in negative way because they give first preference to their real activities instead of online activities.

Table 4
Psychological impact of Whatsapp.

Response	Agree		Disagree		Can't say	
	No. of respondent	Percentage	No. of respondent	Percentage	No. of respondent	Percentage
Have you been addict of Whatsapp?	136	68%	52	26%	12	6%
Do you feel psychological changes in yourself because of Whatsapp?	112	56%	62	31%	26	13%
Is Whatsapp occupying your privacy?	138	69%	54	27%	8	4%
Is Whatsapp responsible for social isolation?	114	57%	56	28%	30	15%

Students were asked whether they have been addict of Whatsapp or not (Table 4). 68% of the students stated the fact that at the initial level they use it to catch friends but ultimately spend too much time in chatting and sending pictures to the friends. They also said that many time they deleted the app but after some interval, they launched it again. Therefore they admit that they have become addict of this app which put an adverse impact on their mental health while 26% of respondents denied such fact. 6% of respondents were confused whether they have become addict or not.

In case of finding out the psychological impact respondents were asked if they feel any psychological changes in themselves because of Whatsapp. A majority of 56% was strongly agreed that their mood fluctuate with responses of Whatsapp message. Its impact is so powerful that users leave real world interest and even their entire emotions are dependent on this app. They become happy or sad on the reply of other users. They

have been hypnotized and controlled by other users while 31% of respondents were disagreed with this fact.

According to the finding 69% of the respondents said that Whatsapp occupies their privacy and personal life. But they feel helpless to control themselves from constantly chatting, replying and sharing information all the time. It is not good to know about each and every moment of other people's personal life. For involving others in their small decisions and also forcing their ideas on other's decision can be proved very dangerous and hazardous. On the contrary 27% of respondents did not agree with this fact in where 4% were confused about the answer.

57% of respondents agreed with this fact that Whatsapp is responsible for social isolation, 28% did not agree while 15% of respondents could not decide the answer (Table 4).

Table 5
Impact of Whatsapp on study.

Response	Yes		No		Can't say	
	No. of respondent	Percentage	No. of respondent	Percentage	No. of respondent	Percentage
Whatsapp is affecting your academic activities	104	52%	64	32%	32	16%
Whatsapp annihilates lavish time of career building of students	134	67%	48	24%	18	9%
Use Whatsapp during class lecture	46	23%	154	77%		
Can balance online activities and academic assignments	52	26%	148	74%		
Send SMS with proper spelling and grammatical construction of sentences	34	17%	166	83%		
Use Banglish on Whatsapp	164	82%	36	18%		

According to the survey 52% of the respondents stated that Whatsapp takes lots of time of their study and they cannot complete their assignment in time. Many times they strive to control themselves to view Whatsapp messages but they do not get satisfied until they check their app. While remaining 32% of respondents stated that Whatsapp affects their study positively because through this app they can connect to their faculty and classmates and get quick responses of their query. They can also share notes and purposive information through it. Another 16% of respondents were confused about the answer.

However, to better understand the impact of Whatsapp on study students were asked whether Whatsapp annihilates lavish time of career building of students or not. 67% of respondents were agreed with this statement, 24% did not agree while remaining 9% cannot decide the answer. While researcher asked to the respondents whether they can balance online activities and academic assignments, the researcher was amazed at their responses. Because majority of them about 74% of respondents give the reply that they cannot balance online activities and academic assignments, while 26% of respondents say that they give first preference to their academic activities instead of online activities.

In case of finding out the impact of Whatsapp on study, a majority of 83% respondents used short hand in their conversation which destroys their grammatical construction of sentences. Respondents also stated that Whatsapp is responsible for destroying their spellings. On the other hand, 17% of respondents send SMS with proper spelling and grammatical construction of sentences. From the survey it is seen that 82% of respondents admitted of the usage of Banglish during conversation that weakens their grammar, while 18% of respondents did not agree with the view.

Test of Hypothesis

To test the hypothesis researcher used chi-square (χ^2) test and to show the correlation or to test the significance of chi-square result researcher used Tschuprow's t test.

Hypothesis (1)

$H_{0=}$ The intensity of usage of Whatsapp messenger is not very high among the female students of BRUR.

$H_{1=}$ The intensity of usage of Whatsapp messenger is very high among the female students of BRUR.

Time spent	Male	Female	Total
1-2 hours	12	7	19
3-4 hours	26	17	43
5-6 hours	33	24	57
Over 7 hrs	29	52	81
Total	100	100	200

Source: Survey data (2015)

At 3 degrees of freedom (df) and 5% level of significance our computed chi-square (χ^2) value (11.16) is bigger than table value (7.81).

C. $V > T$. V
11.16 > 7.81

We therefore reject null hypothesis (H_0) and accept alternative one (H_1). It means the intensity of usage of Whatsapp messenger is very high among the female students of BRUR. From the significant test of chi-square result (11.16) by using Tschuprow's t test formula, we get t value equal to 0.14

It means there is a negligible correlation between the intensity of usage of Whatsapp messenger and female students of BRUR.

Hypothesis (2)

$H_{0=}$ Whatsapp messenger has no negative impact on students.

$H_{1=}$ Whatsapp messenger has negative impact on students.

Response	Male	Female	Total
Positive	26	44	70
Negative	74	56	130
Total	100	100	200

Source: Survey data (2015)

At 1 degrees of freedom (df) and 5% level of significance our computed chi-square (χ^2) value (7.12) is bigger than table value (3.84).

C. $V > T$. V
7.12 > 3.84

We therefore rejected null hypothesis (H_0) and accepted alternative one (H_1). It means Whatsapp messenger has negative impact on students. From the significant test of chi-square result (7.12) by using Tschuprow's t test formula, we get t value equal to 0.19

Therefore, it can be said that there is a negligible correlation between the usage of Whatsapp messenger and negative impacts on students.

Hypothesis (3)

H_0 = Whatsapp doesn't promote unethical pictures, video clips and images among students.

H_1 = Whatsapp promotes unethical pictures, video clips and images among students.

Response	Male	Female	Total
Agree	27	67	94
Disagree	62	28	90
Neutral	11	5	16
Total	100	100	200

Source: Survey data (2015)

At 2 degrees of freedom (df) and 5% level of significance our computed chi-square (χ^2) value (32.1) is bigger than table value (5.99).

C. $V > T$. V

32.1 > 5.99

We therefore, rejected null hypothesis (H_0) and accepted alternative one (H_1). It means Whatsapp promotes unethical pictures, video clips and images among students. From the significant test of chi-square result (32.1) by using Tschuprow's t test formula, we get t value equal to 0.28

Therefore, we can say that there is a low correlation between Whatsapp messenger and its promotion of unethical pictures, video clips and images among students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Time management is essential for online activities. Students must learn to balance between online activities and academic activities.

- Students should give priority to their life and career building instead of giving priority to the Whatsapp messenger.
- Unannounced quizzes should be conducted frequently by lecturers to compel students to sit up.
- Mobile phone should either be forbidden in lecture halls or switched off if allowed in, instead of the prevailing practice of allowing them in but must be put on silent mode.

CONCLUSION

The main goal of this paper was to find out impact of Whatsapp on students. Whatsapp is beneficial from many ways like to keep in touch with their dear ones, especially when they live far from their home. It is very helpful even for those people who feel shyness in social interaction. It is also a boom for those who are disable and unable to go to others homes. But through this they can deal with the world.

Whatsapp has also adverse impact on the life style and culture of students. Students are spending more time on this application rather than spending quality time with their family members. Many students are addicted to it and cannot abstain themselves from constantly chatting, replying and sharing of ideas or information. It also has negative impact on the study of the students. It encourages the grammatical mistakes, error in sentence constriction, lecture bunking. It annihilates lavish time of career building of students. Therefore Whatsapp is like a sharp knife, if you do not know the way of using it, you can cut yourself. Hence students must be careful while using Whatsapp.

REFERENCES

- Neelamalar, M and Chitra, P (2009). New Media and Society: A Study on the Impact of Social Networking Sites on Indian Youth. *Journal of Communication Studies*, 6(1): 125-145
- Sharma, Ashish and Shukla, Aditya Kumar (2016). Impact of Social Messengers Especially Whatsapp on Youth: A Sociological Study. *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*, 2(5): 367-375
- Bhatt, A and Arshad, M (2016). Impact of Whatsapp on Youth: A Sociological Study. *IRA- International*

- Journal of Management and Social Sciences, 4(2): 376-386
- Yeboah, Johnson and Ewur, George Dominic (2014). The Impact of Whatsapp Messenger Usage on Students Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Ghana. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(6): 157-164
- Kuppuswamy, S and Narayan, P (2010). The Impact of Social Networking Websites on the Education of Youth. *International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking*, 2(1): 67-79
- Church, Karen and Oliveira de Rodrigo (2013). What's up with Whatsapp? Comparing Mobile Instant Messaging Behaviors with Traditional SMS. *Mobile HCI (2013) Collaboration and Communication*: 352-361
- Tsai, Chin- Chung and Lin, Sunny S. J (2003). Internet Addiction of Adolescents in Taiwan: An Interview Study. *Cyber Psychology and Behavior*, 6(6): 649-652.