

**USES AND CHALLENGES OF WHATSAPP
FORUM AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL AMONG
STUDENTS OF KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC,
ILORIN**

BY:

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ND/23/MAC/PT/0781

**BEING A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO:
THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION, INSTITUTE OF
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (IICT),
KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC, ILORIN**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF NATIONAL DIPLOMA (ND) IN MASS COMMUNICATION**

JULY, 2025

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the project was read and approved as meeting the requirements of the department of Mass Communication, Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin for the award of National Diploma in MASS COMMUNICATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to those who believed in me even when i doubted myself.

To my parent, whose unwavering love and sacrifices shaped the person I am today.

To all my mentors and teachers, whose guidance lit the path before me.

And to all the dreamers—may you never stop chasing what sets your soul on fire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, i am deeply grateful to God for His endless grace, strength, and guidance throughout this journey.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor (Mr. Ibrahim A.F), whose support, encouragement, and wisdom were invaluable. Your belief in me meant more than words can say.

To my father (Afolabi Abubakri)—thank you for your unconditional love, endless patience, and constant encouragement. You have been my anchor and my inspiration.

To my dear friends, thank you for standing by me, cheering me on, and reminding me to laugh even on the toughest days.

Lastly, to everyone who played even the smallest part in this journey—your kindness and support have not gone unnoticed. This accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine.

With all my heart, thank you.

ABSTRACT

The advent of digital communication platforms has revolutionized the way information is shared and disseminated in educational institutions. WhatsApp, a widely used instant messaging application, has gained significant traction as a communication tool among educators worldwide. This study explores the use and challenges of WhatsApp as a communication tool among lecturers at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. The research investigates how lecturers utilize WhatsApp for academic and administrative purposes, examines the benefits and limitations of its usage, and identifies the challenges faced in its adoption as a formal communication medium. A mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews, was employed to gather data from a sample of lecturers across various departments within the polytechnic. The findings reveal that WhatsApp is predominantly used for disseminating information, coordinating meetings, sharing educational materials, and facilitating collaborative discussions among lecturers. The platform's ease of use, accessibility, and real-time communication features are identified as significant advantages, enhancing the efficiency of communication among faculty members.

However, the study also highlights several challenges associated with the use of WhatsApp in an academic setting. These challenges include issues related to information overload, privacy concerns, lack of formal recognition of WhatsApp communications, and the potential for distractions caused by non-academic content. Furthermore, the reliance on mobile devices and internet connectivity poses limitations for some lecturers, particularly in areas with inadequate network infrastructure. The study concludes that while WhatsApp offers numerous benefits as a communication tool, its effectiveness is hindered by several challenges that need to be addressed to optimize its use in educational settings.

Recommendations include developing guidelines for professional use, integrating WhatsApp with formal communication channels, and providing training for lecturers to enhance their digital communication skills. By addressing these challenges, Kwara State Polytechnic can leverage WhatsApp to foster a more collaborative and efficient academic environment.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Communication is essential in maintaining healthy relationships among people. Through communication, people can share ideas, opinions, and expectations effectively. Recently, new communication tools have been used due to technological advancements (Dogan, 2019). People use technology for communication because it has come in handy in facilitating the smooth transmission of information (Alhadlaq, 2016). With the invention of internet and mobile communications, the nature of communication has changed significantly over the past few decades (Deane et al., 2016).

Social media is often lauded as a potentially transformative information resources. Information is the powerhouse of the present emerging technological driven society. Today, information has been seen as heavily stressed factor that shapes the society. Information is a life blood of present society; it is accepted as a key issue in today's viable world (Prabhavathi, 2011). Over the last several years, information increased significantly in a large variety of formats. This information overload gave the foundation to the idea of studying the information searching or seeking behaviour of users or human information behaviour (Fasola & Olabode, 2013).

WhatsApp is a communication technology. It is a smartphone application that functions on nearly all types of devices and operating systems, enabling various means of individual and group communication (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014). The application has become the most popular messaging platform worldwide (Jayanthi & Sheshasaayee, 2015). It has more than a billion users and is rated as the most frequently downloaded application in more than 127 countries (Aharony, 2015; Cohavi, 2013). Cathcart (2021) estimated the exchange of 100 billion messages on the WhatsApp platform per day, and more than 100 million voice calls are made through this application Tzuk, 2013). WhatsApp is free and easy to use. It offers messaging and calls in a simple, safe, and reliable way. The operation scheme makes

the app accessible to various people of different ages and backgrounds. WhatsApp enables communication with anyone who possesses a Smartphone that has been installed with the application and an active internet connection (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014).

Technically, WhatsApp is viewed as a social network application that allows people to access information rapidly (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014). The App allows users to send and receive information, including text, emotions, images, voice notes, videos, and web links, while offering users a relatively high level of privacy (Addi- Racciah & Yemini, 2018). The application also enables the participants to receive an alert for each message sent or to mute the incoming alerts for a duration of 8 hours, a day, or a whole week (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014).

One of the unique features of WhatsApp is the option to create a group and communicate within its boundaries (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014). WhatsApp groups are formed to communicate with people who share common interests. The app enables users to communicate asynchronously in groups that are created spontaneously or those that exist over a long period (Seufert et al., 2016). According to Seufert et al., group communication is a conversation of a fixed group of users who can equally participate in the dialogue. Group-based communication has adopted instant messaging, and people use WhatsApp to keep in contact with family and friends, as well as for information, entertainment, and academic work (Fernandez-Robins et al., 2019; Irfan & Dhimmar, 2019; Figueroa et al., 2018; Sultan, 2014). Similarly, Baishya and Maheshwari (2019) noted that WhatsApp not only helps people to communicate but has also provided a platform for people to exchange information relating to academics, news, politics, and so forth.

A WhatsApp group administrator is the person who creates a group for discussion and sharing information by adding or deleting members (Arora & Singh, 2022; Venter et al., 2020) every chat group has one or more group administrators who control the participation of members (Arora & Singh, 2022). In a WhatsApp group setting, the administrator does not have prior knowledge of what will be published until it is shared in the group. In addition, the administrator does not have the power to regulate, moderate or censor the

content before it is posted in the group (Arora & Singh, 2022). However, administrators can be considered responsible for all content posted, even if it originated from other group members, with or without the administrator(s) approval (Sadlier & Harrion, 2019). According to Venter et al need to act decisively by commenting on the inappropriateness of the post, deleting the post, or removing the offending member from the group

Consequently, WhatsApp is becoming a significant means of communications within several organization setting particularly the academic settings. Academic staff communicate with students and within the co-academic lecturers. Rapid interactions and quick updates may lead to effective communications among the students and co academic lecturers for more circulating news and others. Improving academic performance, it is essential that influence of WhatsApp as a means of communication among lecturers of Kwara state polytechnic is examined.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is no doubt that social media has gained wider acceptability and usability and is also becoming probably the most important communication tools among both the lecturers and students especially at the higher level of educational pursuit. However, it has been observed that the rate at which students use social media is critically affecting their information behaviour either positively or negatively (Christopher, 2010). Additionally, several studies have been carried out by some researchers like Lenhart and Madden (2007); Boyd (2009); Madge, Meek, Wellens and Hooley (2009); Christopher (2010); Virkuss (2010); Wang, Chen and Liang (2011); Kumar (2012); Ndaku (2013); Kumar and Kumar (2013); Eke, Omekwu and Odoh (2014) on the use of WhatsApp among undergraduate students.

It is therefore evident that these studies were conducted on WhatsApp usage but focuses of those studies were mainly on adoption, utilization and challenges in using WhatsApp. However, there is more to explore in terms of influence of WhatsApp on information seeking behavior of lecturers of Kwara state polytechnic, particularly among co-lecturers and students in Kwara state Polytechnic. In line with this proposition, this study seeks to

investigate the influence of WhatsApp on the information behavior of undergraduate students in Kwara State.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To examine the use of WhatsApp forum in disseminating information among lecturers of Kwara state polytechnic.
- ii. To identify the impact of WhatsApp in information processing among lecturers of Kwara State Polytechnic
- iii. To identify the challenges of WhatsApp forum in information dissemination

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. To what extent does the use of WhatsApp forum in disseminating information among lecturers of Kwara state polytechnic?
- ii. What is the impact of WhatsApp in information processing among lecturers of Kwara State Polytechnic?
- iii. What are the challenges of WhatsApp forum in information dissemination?

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of WhatsApp usage on the information behavior among lecturers of Kwara state polytechnic, Ilorin. Specifically, the scope of this study is limited to lecturers and students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. The variables of interest for this study are restricted to WhatsApp utilization and information behavior.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

According to Ikoja-Odongo (2000), the importance of a study can be measured by the contributions that it makes to the people under investigation and the society as a whole. It is anticipated that this study will be useful in understanding the influence of WhatsApp usage information behavior of undergraduate students in the surveyed universities.

It is hoped that the results of this study will assist the management of the university and library, to take note of the WhatsApp usage pattern of undergraduate students and how they can capitalize on it to achieve the institutional objectives findings from this study will add to the existing body of knowledge in WhatsApp utilization and information behavior. Hence, it is expected that study will provide a rich source of empirical data for other studies that are related to WhatsApp and information behavior.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

Information Behavior: Information behavior encompasses information seeking as well as the totality of other unintentional or passive behaviors as well as purpose behavior that do not involve seeking, such as actively avoiding information.

- Social media: social media is generally defined as "forms" of electronic communication as web sites for social networking and microblogging through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content such as pictures, videos etc.
- Social media: These are technological products that allow ones to be able to use social media. Examples are internet, smart-phones, modem, etc.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Over the years, many scholars have been able to distinctively define and clarify the concept of social media. In their definition and clarification, the concepts of social media has been used interchangeably with social networking sites. Likewise in this section the word will be used interchangeably. In definition social media Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) gave a general definition of social media in consideration of web 2.0 and user generated contents according to them social media is a group of Internet based application that build on the ideological technological foundation of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content Nwanton, Odomemalamn. Orji egwu Nwanko and Nweze (2013) define social media as those Internet based tools and service that allow user to engage with each other generate content, distributes and search for information online.

2.1.1 BACKGROUND OF WHATSAPP

WhatsApp was founded by Jan Kuum and brain action, both former workers of Yahoo. They both left Yahoo and applied jobs at Facebook however, both were rejected at that point of time with very little direction on wherever his next career path would take him, in 2009 though, when buying iPhone, Jan Koum has the vision to envision that on entire business was closed to mostly around mobile phone app, trying to exploit this business Jan Koum began to explore the possibility of creating an app which may let mobile users, sensible, move with their friend relatives and business contact. They both manage to influence five employee from yahoo. To invest in the app with \$250,000. Finally, WhatsApp was launched in 2009. It's had been a rocky begin for WhatsApp when various crashes (up) and failures (down), Koum grew pissed off with the app's development and reportedly thought about giving up entire business. It had been act on that inspired to stay it out. Fortuitously, for the both of them, the pair did so stick it out and saw the app through to its final success. After few months WhatsApp was boom in the market. By Feb of 2013,

WhatsApp boasted fifty staff members and two hundred million users. In Feb 2014, social network Facebook acquired WhatsApp for nineteen billion U.S. dollars, a staggering amount even for the social networking large. At that point, WhatsApp had regarding 450 million monthly active users and 315 million daily active users, in keeping with business Insider (Background of WhatsApp, 2017).

WhatsApp messenger is one amongst the popular and flourishing messaging apps to date with an amazing growth story that relied on very little promotion. In Oct 2009, WhatsApp accumulated \$250,000 funding (Jan Koum Built WhatsApp into Facebook, 2014). The app formally released for the apple App Store and in few months later it was released for all major mobile application systems. In 2011, it has become a high marketer on iPhone, android and Blackberry while not abundant promoting. In April 2011 the company raised \$8m from Sequoia Capital (Jan Koum Built WhatsApp into Facebook, 2014). In Oct 2011, one billion messages were being sent every day by its users. By Feb 2013, the app reached two hundred million active users. In Jan 2015 Sequoia again invested another \$50m, valuing the company at \$1.5bn. In same year it hit 600million active users and creating it the most well-known messaging app up to now and rose to 900million by Sept this year. In Feb 2014, the company was acquired by Facebook for \$19bn and creating it the biggest venture-backed exit throughout that year (Richter, 2015). In the line of success Citigroup has forecast that WhatsApp might generate revenue of \$1bn by 2017(Ray, 2015). Asian country and African nation are high markets for WhatsApp (WhatsApp Messenger most popular in India & Malaysia, 2014).

2.1.2 EFFECTIVE USE OF WHATSAPP

It helps in lowering production costs and increasing the efficiency of internal business operations, People use WhatsApp to interact with colleagues, supervisors, and/or other that saves them time or increases productivity during the day. Improving customer service, the most common reasons customers use WhatsApp to communicate with businesses includes, making or confirming an appointment or reservation, placing an order or making a purchase, and asking for information on products or services (e.g., price, inventory, return

policy). By making communication faster and more efficient, WhatsApp may enable businesses to lower their labor costs and attract more customers. Lowering marketing costs, Affordable and fast communication decreases costs for businesses, thus potentially increasing profits and contributing to growth. Making communications with investors more efficient, WhatsApp users communicate with business partners, investors, shareholders, or financial contributors. Rapid interactions and quick updates may lead to higher investments for a firm or business, resulting in increased output and long run growth. Improving public sector services, WhatsApp improves communications between the public and the social sector.

2.1.3 ADVANTAGES OF WHATSAPP

WhatsApp is free: ‘Free’ is the biggest advantage of WhatsApp. It is easy to use; simply enter the mobile number in the device into this app. WhatsApp is one of the most popular application which emerges like the culture of MacDonald that create a new taste in social networking market and majority of youth crazy for this. It enables users to have multimedia downloads text messaging without having to pay short messages service (SMS). This is the feature that makes WhatsApp quite popular among youth. With the help of this application, an Individual can chat with family, friends beyond the limit of seas and creates familiar environment for it. It also helps to keep contact to everybody at one time. No doubt, this amazing app is useful for us from many ways. One instance can be given in respect of this; we are buying something and have confusion about the item. Then to remove confusion we can take the picture of this and send it to our dear one on WhatsApp to get suggestion Bhatt & Arshad, 2016).

2.1.4 WHATSAPP GROUP USES AND CONTENT SHARED

WhatsApp groups are formed to communicate with people who share common interests, and members can equally participate. People use WhatsApp to keep in contact with family and friends, as well as for information, entertainment, and academic work (Fernandez-Robins et al., 2019; Irfan & Dhimmar, 2019; Figueroa et al., 2018; Sultan, 2014). Similarly,

Baishya and Maheshwari (2019) noted that WhatsApp not only helps people to communicate but has also provided a platform for people to exchange information relating to academics, news, politics, and so forth.

In the school context, the use of social media such as Facebook, e- mail lists, or websites is common. Many schools employ digital means, and some establish their own social networking site through which they can create groups to connect with parents, share learning materials, and post updates about events (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Olmstead, 2013) On the same note, Bouhnik and Deshen (2014) stated that class WhatsApp groups are used for four main purposes: Communicating with students, nurturing a social atmosphere, creating dialogue, and Encouraging sharing among students and as a learning platform.

2.1.5 ACADEMIC FUNCTIONS OF WHATSAPP

WhatsApp offers educational and non-educational functions for its users. These functions include the following:

1. Text Messages/Mean of Communicating with Students and Colleagues

They are concerned with permitting clients to send text messages to individuals or groups who are on their contact lists through the use of the internet (Helderman, 2003; Lenhart, Madden, Macgill, & Smith, 2007; Rambe & Bere, 2013; Aal, Parmar, Patel, & Sen, 2014). In this regard, WhatsApp has continued to develop personal and group texting abilities through consistent receiving and texting as a reply to messages. The texting message is an essential academic skill that facilitates the student's mastery of the act of typing and sharing knowledge. Maintaining texting competences and proficiency in texting messages require consistent interaction with individuals or groups as contacts.

2. WhatsApp voice calling

This is concerned with making calls to individuals or groups when the individual is incapable of texting a message or feels that the message is better conveyed orally.

Users of WhatsApp voice calling make calls for educational and non-educational purposes. WhatsApp voice calls involve knowledge of what to say and how to say it to ensure that the intended message is appropriately communicated to the individual or group which the information is targeted at. The clarity of the audio call is important to connection, communication, and interaction.

3. WhatsApp Group Video Calling/Uploading

This is concerned with the uploading of videos, images, documents and audio media messages used for both educational and non-educational messages (Olson, 2013; Albergotti, MacMillan & Rusli, 2014; Amry, 2014; WhatsApp Voice Calling, 2015). Uploading audio and visual videos to individuals or groups is a function of WhatsApp which is important for daily communication and educational purposes.

The literature reveals that texting messages, making voice calls and uploading videos, documents as well as images promote and advance connection and communication within a specific context (situated cognition theory) (Myers & Wilson, 2000) to build the capacity to acquire and share knowledge through active interaction with a community of learning or social group (distributed cognition) (Bell & Winn, 2000). The activities of users of WhatsApp are connected to their ability to connect, communicate cooperatively and collaboratively share knowledge in a specific context (Brown & Cole, 2000) or diverse context.

2.1.6 MECHANISMS OF CONTROLLING WHATSAPP CONTENT FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

With the emergence of the Internet, social networking platforms, and smartphones, the focus of gatekeeping shifted from traditional media editors, producers, reporters, and directors to the public (the gated) (Brems et al., 2017). Information does not remain in the hands of a specific group of individuals, and conventional gatekeepers no longer have as much control over the content as they had in the past (Bennett, 2004). In the digital era, anyone accessing the internet can produce and disseminate content on social media by using traditional content as a reference, package it using digital media and release it on the

internet without understanding the quality of the content used. (Brems et al., 2017; Sulianta, & Supriatna, 2019). According to Sulianta and Supriatna, most people make and launch digital information by just digitizing it without considering other important factors. As a result, there is an abundance of non-quality content that does not have a positive contribution to society.

Further with the development of new communication technologies, the nature of communication channels, production, and sharing of information has changed (Palka-Suchojad, 2021; Potnis & Tahamtan, 2021). For instance, every day, millions of users across the world seamlessly upload and share quintillions of information in the form of videos, text, audio, and images on social media. This high volume of different information shared with high velocity on social media leads to 'information overload' (Tang *et al*, 2019), making it challenging for users to benefit from relevant information. To make users better process and benefit from the high volume of variant information, it is now possible for anyone to be a gatekeeper (Potnis & Tahamtan, 2021). Consumers and producers of information often take over the role of gatekeepers in deciding what is worth publishing and sharing (Palka-Suchojad, 2021).

In a WhatsApp group setting, the administrator does not have prior knowledge of what will be published until it is shared in the group. In addition, the administrator does not have the power to regulate, moderate or censor the content before it is posted on the group (Arora & Singh, 2022). However, in cases where unacceptable content is shared in the group, the administrator would need to act decisively by commenting on the inappropriateness of the post, deleting the post, or removing the offending member from the group. Further, Venter *et al.* (2020) recommended that WhatsApp group administrators should regularly post guidelines on the group chat for the members to read and implement.

An analysis on the use of WhatsApp groups as a medium for maintaining intercultural friendships among people with different cultural backgrounds, namely, the alumni of the Ship for Southeast Asia and Japanese Youth Program (SSEAYP) batch 89, was conducted by Turistiati (2020). Findings revealed that to maintain their friendship, the WhatsApp

group members implicitly agreed to an unwritten rule that they must respect each other and be tolerant and open-minded. They also agreed that topics related to politics and religion were not to be posted and discussed in the group, except for greetings on religious occasions. In addition, humor that caused unnecessary laughter and pictures and videos that were pornographic or demeaning to women would not be posted in the group. Also, the discussion about football was not to be too deep to avoid fanaticism with certain teams or players, which would result in division or enmity among the group members.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two key theories formed the foundation for this study. They are:

- Diffusion of innovation theory
- Uses and gratification Theory

2.2.1 DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION THEORY

Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DIT) developed by E. M Rogers in 1962, is one of the oldest social science r. It originated in communication to explain how over time an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses (spread) through a specific population or social system. Doing something differently than what they had previously. The key adoption is that the person must perceive the idea, behavior or product as new or innovative. It is through this that diffusion is possible. Diffusion is the process of spreading a given idea or practice over time, via specifiabale channels, through a social structure such as Neighborhoods (Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch, 1974) Their work on the diffusion of innovations records that for a new idea or innovation to diffuse, there must be;

- i. Awareness stage
- ii. Interest stage
- iii. Evaluation stage
- iv. Trial and adoption stage.

Different types of innovations require different kinds of adoption units; Bittner (1989) recognizes that the media can lead someone into getting aware of the existence of an item from there he gets interested in, makes attempt to evaluate it, and gives it a trial touch before making up his mind to acquire it. The diffusion of innovation theory by Rogers (1983) was set to examine how new ideas are spread among people through media. It is a theory that seeks to explain how, why and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures. Adoption of a new idea, behavior, or product does not happen simultaneously in a social system; rather it is a process whereby some people are more apt to adopt the innovation than others. Everett Rogers, a professor of rural sociology popularized the theory in his 1962 book: Diffusion of innovation. The categories of adopters are; innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards (Rogers, 1962).

The change agent center's around the conditions which increases or decreases the likelihood that a new idea would be adopted or not. That is to say, they help the audience in deciding on the best idea to adopt by influencing their option about a particular situation. Goodhart et al 1975 and Barwise et al 1982 think that a great deal of media use is actually habitual and unselective. It relates the usefulness of the media and to what extent it can affect man.

2.1.2 USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY

Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs. It was originated in the 1970 by Blumler and Katz as a reaction to traditional mass communication research emphasizing the sender and the message. It focuses on the question, 'what media do to people' but rather 'what people do with the media'. It discusses how users deliberately choose media that will satisfy given needs and allow one to enhance knowledge, relaxation, social interaction, diversion or escape.

Uses and Gratification theory also called functional theory is concerned with the social and psychological origin of needs, which generate expectation of the mass media which leads to different patterns of media exposure, resulting in need gratification and other consequences, mostly unintended ones. (Katz, 1974). It is purely audience centered and addresses needs like surveillance, excitement, guidance, relaxation, tension release, socialization, escape and integration. To be able to gratify these needs, it must be able to realize that the mass media audience may belong to the low, middle or high post brow group. (Savary & Carico, 1971). These uses (exposure to the media) and gratification (benefits) are determined by the needs of members of the audience. Such needs may include information, entertainment, self-esteem and prestige. Through the uses and gratifications research, communication scholars have shown that everywhere, people selectively expose themselves to mass media content, choosing only those media messages that would serve the function of satisfying or gratifying their needs (Rosengren 1985).

Therefore, uses and gratification approach emphasizes audience members motive for making specific consumption choices and the consequences of that intentional media use. That's to say, they choose the content, make meaning of it and act on the meaning. It embraces the interactive nature of media and its audience. It is audience centered and addresses needs such as surveillance, identity, and socialization and information acquisition. Therefore, people's needs are generated by their individual differences. It could be based on sex, ethnic group, and educational qualification. Because the needs are determined by who or what they are, and people use the mass media for the purpose of gratifying these needs (Okunna, 1988).

2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Esharenana and Blessing (2023) explored work related WhatsApp groups as knowledge sharing platforms among librarians in selected federal universities in Nigerian. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. A total of 58 librarians who received and filled

questionnaire in five federal universities constituted the sample of the study. Data were collected through questionnaire while frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the data obtained. Findings revealed that a majority of the librarians were members professional association WhatsApp group, followed by group that serves the entire library, staff union group and group created by colleagues; ICT ranked highest as area the librarians shared work related knowledge followed by job opening/vacancies and publication/research; ease of use, immediate feedback, sharing knowledge with wide audience and available always were key reasons for sharing work related knowledge via WhatsApp groups; videos, audios and texts were the major formats of sharing knowledge through work related WhatsApp groups while non-adherence to group guidelines was a major drawback to knowledge sharing via the WhatsApp groups. Adhering to guidelines by members, frequent visits to WhatsApp group platforms to keep track of shared knowledge as well as increasing WhatsApp group contact limit from the current 256 members are recommended in the light of the results of the study.

Meity, Grace and Desie (2022) The Function of WhatsApp Group as a Medium of Communication Government and People in Sinisir Village South Minahasa regency this study used qualitative research methods. For this reason, data collection was carried out using in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document studies. The informant of this research are Government and Society. To answer the focus of this research, the theory used in this study is the theory of communication media function. This research is also to develop mass media courses and development communication courses. The results showed that the function of WhatsApp Group as a medium of communication between the government and the community in Sinisir Village, South Minahasa Regency, is effective in implementing, realizing and improving services to the community, as well as a means of exchanging information between the government and the community. Efficient in time and cost, because in just one message can reach many people. Concrete as a medium or application that is seen, heard, read that governments and communities use to convey and

receive messages. Able to motivate the community to support government programs with high enthusiasm.

Mohammad and Sonali (2022) focused on the impact of WhatsApp on the university level students, with reference to youth of Surat and Navsari, Gujarat. A quantitative approach was used to conduct research, data were collected from 105 respondents with structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 25 items. The factor analysis was extracted the four factors from the data i.e. negatively affected, helpful, psychological change and essential. The outcome of study will reveal that WhatsApp is a medium of making communication easier and faster thereby by enhancing effective flow of information, idea sharing and connecting people easier. It is found that WhatsApp has also a profound negative impact on youth and adversely affects their education, behavior and routine lives. Diganta and Suragbh, (2019) explored the uses of WhatsApp groups in the education context. It examines utilities and burdens associated with educational WhatsApp groups.

The study also explores how the presence of teachers in the groups can influence the group functioning. In the first study chats of four WhatsApp groups of one year, where two groups were included teacher and two groups were without teachers, were analyzed. In the second study, interviews were conducted with two participants from each group, a total of eight participants. The results of the studies show that the major functions these groups serve are mostly education related. However, apart from academic uses, students do use this platform for wishing/congratulations, for extra curriculum activities as well as for entertainment purposes. In addition, the results show that the presence of the teacher influences the group conversation significantly. Though students reported that sometimes these WhatsApp groups become burden and take a lot of time, but they also believe that is unavoidable, since these WhatsApp groups not only provide them, important information related to class, exam, holidays, etc., but members are also able to connect with others and involve in non-academic activities.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explained the approaches the researcher used to get information on the research problem and included the research design, study population, sample size and selection, sampling techniques and procedure, data collection methods and instruments, procedure of data collection, data analysis and measurement of variables. It also indicated the problems encountered in the study.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is a framework for conducting a study guiding the collection and analysis of data.

The study would be qualitative in nature, employing both descriptive and exploratory approaches. This design allows for an in-depth understanding of the uses and challenges of WhatsApp forums as communication tools among lecturers of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of a study refers to the entire group of individual, items or element that the researcher aim to understand, describe or analyze.

The population of the study consists of all lecturers employed at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, who actively use WhatsApp forums for communication purpose.

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Sample size: the sample size refers to the number of individual, items or element selected from a population to participate in a study.

Sampling techniques: A sampling techniques, also known as sampling method is a procedure used to select a representative subset of individual or element from a population.

The sampling size will be determined on the total number of student who meet the criteria for inclusion in the study. A convenience sampling techniques will be employed due to the accessibility of participant.

3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

A research instrument is a tools or device used to collect data in a study. It can be:

Survey/Questionnaires: Self-respect measure with open-ended or closed-ended question.

Interviews: Structured, semi structured, or unstructured conversation

Observational Checklist: Systematic record of behavior or event

This will consist of a structured questionnaire designed to collect data on the uses and challenges of what forum among students. The questionnaire will include both closed-ended and open-ended questions.

3.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

Validity: Refers to the extent to which a research instrument accurately measure what it is supposed to measure.

Reliability: Can be define as the consistency and dependability of the instrument measurement

The questionnaire will be reviewed by experts in the field of communication and educational technology to ensure its validity. A pilot test will be conducted with a small sample of lecturers to assess the reliability of the instrument, using techniques such as Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency.

3.6 METHOD OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The method of administration of an instrument refers to the way in which a research tools, such as a survey questionnaire, or test is delivered to participant to collect data.

The questionnaire will be administered electronically via WhatsApp or email to the participants. Instructions for completing the questionnaire will be provided to ensure consistency in responses.

3.7 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The method of data analysis refers to the systematic process of organizing, summarizing and interpreting data to extract meaningful insight and pattern.

The data collected will be analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages to summarize the responses to closed-ended questions. Qualitative data from open-ended questions will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION

This chapter is about the analysis and interpretation of data collected through the questionnaire administered to the respondents. The questionnaires were presented in two sections, the demographic and basic question relevant for the study. A total of 100 questionnaires were administered. - The study answered the research questions in chapter one.

Section A: Demographic of Respondent

Table 1: Age of respondent

Age	No of respondent	Percentage
1-22 years	38	38%
23-27 years	62	62%
28-31 years	0	0%
31 years above	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 1 shows that 38 respondent representing 38% fall within 1 and 22 years. While 62 respondent representing 62% are within 23-27 years. This table shows that majority of the respondent are within 23-27 years.

Table 2: Sex of respondents

Sex	No of respondent	Percentage
Male	50	50%
Female	50	50%
Total	100	100%

Source research, 2025

Table 2 show that 50 respondent representing 50% are male. While 50 respondent representing 50% are female. This table show that majority of this respondent are male and female.

Table 3: Marital status of respondents

Marital status	No of respondent	Percentage
1-22 years	56	56%
23-27 years	44	44%
28-31 years	-	-
31 years above	-	-
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 3 shows that 56 respondent representing 56% are single. While 44 respondent representing 44% are married. This table shows that majority of the respondent are single.

Table 4: Religion of respondents

Religion	No of respondent	Percentage
Christianity	52	52%
Islam	48	48%
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 4 shows that 52 respondent representing 52% are Christianity. While 48 respondent representing 48% are Islam. This table shows that majority of the respondent are Christianity.

Table 5: Occupation of respondents

Occupation	No of respondent	Percentage
Student	96	96%

Lecturer	4	4%
Other	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 5 shows that 96 respondent representing 96% are students. While 4 respondent representing 4% are lecturers. This table shows that majority of the respondent are student.

Table 6: Academic qualification

Academic qualification	No of respondent	Percentage
SSCE	2	2%
ND/NCE	26	26%
HND/BSC	69	69%
MSC/PGD	-	-
PHD	3	3%
Other		-
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 6 shows that 2 respondent representing 2% are SSCE, 26 respondent representing 26% are ND/NCE, 69 respondent representing 69% are HND/BSC, While 3 respondent analysis are PHD. This table shows that majority of the respondent are HND/BSC.

Table 7: How frequently do you use WhatsApp forums for communication within the academic community?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	100	56%
Weekly	-	-
Occasionally	-	-
Rarely	-	-

Never	-	-
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 7 shows that 100 respondent representing 100% are daily. This majority of the respondent are daily that how frequently do you use WhatsApp forums for communication within the academic community.

Table 8: What types of information do you typically share or receive on WhatsApp forums?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Announcements	23	23%
Academic updates	77	77%
Discussion topics	-	-
Event notification	-	-
Administrative notices	-	-
Other	-	-
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 8 shows that 23 respondent representing 23% are announcements, while 77 respondent representing 77% are academic updates this majority of the respondent are academic updates that what types of information do you topically shares or receive on WhatsApp forum?

Table 9: On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the effectiveness of WhatsApp forums in facilitating communication among lecturers.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very ineffective	40	40%
Ineffective	60	60%
Neutral	-	-

Effective	-	-
Very effective	-	-
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2024

Table 9 shows that 40 respondent representing 40% are very ineffective, while 60 respondent representing 60% are ineffective. This shows that majority of the respondent are ineffective that on a scale of 1 to 5 rate, the effectiveness of WhatsApp forums in facilitating communication among lecturer.

Table 10: What features of WhatsApp forums do you find most useful for communication within the academic community?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Chatting	100	100%
Voice call	-	-
Video call	-	-
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 10 shows that 100 respondent representing 100% are chatting. This shows that majority of the respondent are chatting. That what feature of WhatsApp forums do you find most useful for communication within the academic community.

Table 11: Have you encountered any challenges in using WhatsApp forums for communication?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	83	83%
No	17	17%
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 11 shows that 83 respondents representing 83% Yes, while 17 respondents representing 17% are No. This table shows that majority of the respondent are Yes, that have you encountered any challenge in using WhatsApp forum for communication.

Table 12: How has the use of WhatsApp forums influenced your ability to process information related to your academic duties?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Improved efficiency	68	68%
Enhanced collaboration	29	29%
Quicker decision making	-	-
No significant impact	3	3%
Other	-	-
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 12 shows that 68 respondent representing 68% are improved efficiency, 29 respondent representing 29% are enhanced collaboration, while 3 respondent representing 3% are no significant impact. This table shows that majority of the respondent are improved efficiency that how has the use of WhatsApp forum influenced your ability to process information related to academic duties?

Table 13: To what extent do you believe WhatsApp forums have contributed to better communication with colleagues and students?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Significantly	82	82%
Moderately	15	15%
Slightly	3	3%
Not at all	-	-
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 13 shows that 82 respondent representing 82% are significantly. 15 respondent representing 15% are moderately, 3 respondent representing 3% are slightly. This table shows that majority of the respondent are significantly that to what extent do you believe whatsapp forum have contributed to better communication with colleagues and students.

Table 14: Have you noticed any changes in your workload or productivity since using WhatsApp forums for communication?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	90	90%
No	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 14 shows that 90 respondents representing 90% Yes, while 10 respondents representing 10% are No. The majority of the respondent are Yes, that have you noticed any changes in your workload or productivity since using WhatsApp forum for communication.

Table 15: Do you think WhatsApp forums have helped in fostering a sense of community among lecturers? Why or why not?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	93	93%
No	7	7%
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 15 shows that 93 respondents representing 93% Yes, while 7 respondents representing 7% are No. This table shows that majority of the respondent are Yes, that do you think whatsapp forum have helped in fostering a sense of community among lecturer? Why or Why not?

Table 16: What are the main challenges you encounter when using WhatsApp forums for information dissemination?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Information overload	38	38%
Privacy concerns	62	62%
Technical issues	-	-
Distractions from non-academic discussion	-	-
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 16 shows that 38 respondent representing 38% are information overload, while 62 respondent representing 62% are privacy concerns. This table shows that majority of the respondent are privacy concerns. That what are the main challenges you encounter using whatsapp forum for information dissemination?

Table 17: Have you ever experienced any conflicts or misunderstandings arising from communication on WhatsApp forums? If yes, please describe.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	69	69%
No	31	31%
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Table 17 shows that 69 respondents representing 69% Yes, while 31 respondents representing 31% are No. This table shows that majority of the respondent are Yes

Table 18: Do you believe there are any security risks associated with using WhatsApp forums for academic communication?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	50	50%

No	50	50%
Total	100	100%

Source research survey, 2025

Lastly, Table 18 shows that 50 respondents. (50% believed there were security risks associated with using WhatsApp for academic communication, while 50 respondents (50%) did not believe there were any security risks.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question 1: To what extent does the use of WhatsApp forum in disseminating information among lecturers of Kwara State Polytechnic?

The data from Table 7 reveals that WhatsApp is widely used among the lecturers at Kwara State Polytechnic for academic communication. Specifically, 100% of respondents reported using WhatsApp daily, 0% used it weekly, and 0% used it occasionally. This indicates that a significant majority (100%) rely on WhatsApp as a daily tool for communication, highlighting its importance in the academic community.

Table 8 further elaborates on the types of information shared on WhatsApp forums. The data shows that academic updates are the most frequently shared type of information, with 77% of respondents reporting this usage. Announcements (23%), discussion topics (0%), event notifications (0%), administrative notices (0%), and other types (0%) are also shared. This variety indicates that WhatsApp is a versatile platform used for a range of academic-related communications.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of WhatsApp in information processing among lecturers of Kwara State Polytechnic?

Table 9 addresses the perceived effectiveness of WhatsApp in facilitating communication among lecturers. A substantial 40% of respondents rated WhatsApp as very effective, 0% found it effective, 0% were neutral, and only 0% (0% very ineffective, 60% ineffective)

rated it negatively. This overwhelmingly positive feedback underscores the platforms ineffective in improving communication within the academic community.

Table 12 provides insights into the impact of WhatsApp on academic duties. Half of the respondents (68%) reported that WhatsApp has improved efficiency, 29% mentioned enhanced collaboration, and 3% indicated quicker no significant. None of the respondents felt there was no significant impact, suggesting that WhatsApp has positively influenced information processing and academic workflow.

Table 13 shows that 82% of respondents believe WhatsApp has significantly contributed to better communication with colleagues and students, 15% believe it has moderately contributed, and 3% believe it has slightly contributed. No respondents felt it had no contribution at all, further reinforcing the positive impact of WhatsApp on academic communication.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges of WhatsApp forum in information dissemination?

Table 11 highlights the challenges encountered when using WhatsApp for communication. A significant 83% of respondents reported facing challenges, while 17% did not. This indicates that while WhatsApp is effective, it is not without its difficulties.

Table 16 delves deeper into the specific challenges faced. Information overload was cited by 38% of respondents and privacy concerns by 62. These challenges are critical as they can hinder-the effective use of WhatsApp for academic purposes.

Table 17 further supports this by showing that 69% of respondents have experienced conflicts or misunderstandings arising from communication on WhatsApp, indicating that while the platform facilitates communication, it can also lead to miscommunication and disputes.

Finally, Table 18 addresses security concerns. Half of the respondents (50%) believe there are security risks associated with using WhatsApp for academic communication, while the

other half do not perceive such risks. This split suggests a need for better security awareness and possibly enhanced security measures for using WhatsApp in academic contexts.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study set out to, examine the use of WhatsApp forums in disseminating information among lecturers at Kwara State Polytechnic, to identify the impact of WhatsApp on information processing among these lecturers, and to uncover the challenges associated with using WhatsApp forums: for information dissemination. The data collected provides significant insights into these areas, contributing to the broader understanding of the role of instant messaging applications in academic settings.

The findings indicate a widespread adoption of WhatsApp for academic communication among lecturers at Kwara State Polytechnic. According to Table 7, 68% of respondents use WhatsApp daily, suggesting that it has become a crucial tool for routine communication.

This high level of daily usage aligns with previous studies highlighting the increasing reliance on instant messaging apps in academic settings for their convenience and immediacy (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014; Church & de Oliveifa, 2013).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

The increasing integration of digital technologies into educational settings has significantly transformed communication dynamics among academic staff. WhatsApp, a popular instant messaging application, has emerged as a vital communication tool in educational institutions worldwide, including Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. This study aims to explore the use and challenges of WhatsApp forums among lecturers of Kwara State Polytechnic, focusing on three specific objectives: examining its use in disseminating information, identifying its impact on information processing, and highlighting the challenges faced in using this platform for information dissemination. The use of WhatsApp forums among lecturers at Kwara State Polytechnic serves as a crucial medium for disseminating information. This platform allows for instant communication, facilitating the quick exchange of academic schedules, meeting notifications, and other pertinent updates. Lecturers benefit from the ability to share documents, images, and links efficiently, ensuring that essential information is accessible to all members.

The real-time nature of WhatsApp enhances the coordination and collaboration among lecturers, promoting a more cohesive academic environment. WhatsApp significantly impacts the way information is processed among lecturers. The immediacy of messages enables prompt responses and decision-making, which is critical in an academic setting where timely communication can affect teaching and administrative activities. The app's features, such as group chats and broadcast lists, allow for organized discussions and targeted information dissemination. This structured communication helps lecturers stay informed about institutional developments, academic requirements, and collaborative opportunities, thereby enhancing overall productivity and engagement. Despite its benefits, the use of WhatsApp forums for information dissemination among lecturers at Kwara State Polytechnic presents several challenges. One major issue is the potential for information

overload, where the high volume of messages can overwhelm users and lead to important information being missed. Additionally, the informal nature of WhatsApp communication may result in misinterpretations or misunderstandings. Privacy and security concerns also arise, as sensitive information shared on the platform may be at risk of unauthorized access. Furthermore, the reliance on smartphones and internet connectivity can pose accessibility issues for some lecturers, particularly those in areas with poor network coverage.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The study reveals that WhatsApp is a widely used and effective tool for communication among lecturers at Kwara State Polytechnic. It significantly enhances the efficiency, collaboration, and decision-making processes in academic settings. However, the platform is not without its challenges. Information overload, technical issues, privacy concerns, and security risks are notable drawbacks that can hinder its effectiveness. Additionally, the potential for conflicts and misunderstandings necessitates careful consideration and management.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the use of WhatsApp forums for academic communication while mitigating the associated challenges:

- i. **Training and Awareness Programs:** Implement training sessions for lecturers on effective use of WhatsApp, focusing on best practices for managing information overload, ensuring privacy, and addressing technical issues. Regular workshops can help users optimize the platform's features while minimizing drawbacks.
- ii. **Developing Clear Communication Guidelines:** Establish clear guidelines and protocols for using WhatsApp for academic communication. These guidelines should cover the types of information to be shared, appropriate communication etiquette, and conflict resolution mechanisms to prevent misunderstandings.

- iii. **Enhanced Security Measures:** Promote awareness about the security risks associated with WhatsApp and encourage the use of additional security measures. This can include enabling two-factor authentication, using encrypted messages for sensitive information, and educating users about potential security threats.
- iv. **Utilizing Complementary Communication Tools:** While WhatsApp is effective, it should be used in conjunction with other communication tools. Platforms such as email, Learning Management Systems (LMS), and official institutional communication channels can complement WhatsApp, providing a more balanced and comprehensive communication strategy.
- v. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish regular feedback mechanisms where lecturers can report issues, suggest improvements, and share their experiences using WhatsApp. This feedback can inform continuous improvements in the use of the platform.
- vi. **Support Systems:** Provide technical support to address any issues lecturers may encounter while using WhatsApp. This support can include dedicated IT personnel to assist with troubleshooting and resolving technical problems promptly.

In conclusion, while WhatsApp forums have proven to be highly beneficial for academic communication among lecturers at Kwara State Polytechnic, addressing the identified challenges through structured interventions and support systems will enhance its effectiveness and sustainability as a communication tool in academic settings.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A

1. Age of respondents
1 – 22 years (), 23 – 27 years (), 28 – 31 years (), 31 years above ()
2. Sex of respondents
Male (), Female ()
3. Marital status of respondents
Single (), Married (), Divorced (), Widow (), Separate ()
4. Religion of respondents
Christianity (), Islam ()
5. Occupation of the respondents
Student (), Lecturer (), Other ()
6. Academic qualification
SSCE (), ND/NCE (), HND/BSC (), MSC/PGD (), PHD (), Other ()
7. How frequently do you use WhatsApp forums for communication within the academic community?
Daily (), Weekly (), Occasionally (), Rarely (), Never ()
8. What types of information do you typically share or receive on WhatsApp forums?
Announcements (), Academic updates (), Discussion topics (), Event notifications (), Administrative notices (), Other ()
9. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the effectiveness of WhatsApp forums in facilitating communication among lecturers
Very Ineffective (), Ineffective (), Neutral (), Effective (), Very Effective ()
10. What features of WhatsApp forums do you find most useful for communication within the academic community?
Chatting (), Voice call (), Video calls ()
11. Have you encountered any challenges in using WhatsApp forums for communication?
Yes (), No ()
12. How has the use of WhatsApp forums influenced your ability to process information related to academic duties?
Improved efficiency (), Enhanced collaboration (), Quicker decision – making (), No significant impact (), Other ()
13. To what extent do you believe WhatsApp forums have contributed to better communication with colleagues and students?
Significantly (), Moderately (), Slightly (), Not at all ()
14. Have you noticed any changes in your workload or productivity since using WhatsApp forums for communications?
Yes (), No ()
15. Do you think WhatsApp forums have helped in fostering a sense of community among lecturers? Why or why not?
Yes (), No ()
16. What are the main challenges you encounter using WhatsApp forums for information dissemination?

Information overload (), Privacy concerns (), Technical Issues (), Distractions from non – academic discussions ()

17. Have you ever experienced any conflicts or misunderstandings arising from communication on WhatsApp forums? If yes, please describe

Yes (), No ()

18. Do you believe there are any security risks associated with using WhatsApp forums for academic communications?

Yes (), No ()