



Group-Based Communication: Contents And Practices Of Whatsapp Group Use

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Abstract

Our time is called digital era with the effects of developing and varying communication technology rapidly. While adoption of smart phones has been occurred worldwide in the last decade, instant messaging applications (IM apps) have also been diffused synchronously and they have become a prominent tool for communication among people. Internet-based instant messaging applications provide users to share any content (texts, videos, photos, links, video and voice calls) at any time both for dyad and group messaging with the opportunities of being free of charge and user-friendly. Hence, people have embraced the new way of communication and SMS has been substituted by instant messaging in time. So, the scope of this study focuses on practices and contents of group-based communication within the sample of WhatsApp, which have a vast adoption in many countries. In this direction, a questionnaire survey was conducted among 633 individuals having a range of backgrounds in Turkey. First of all, 83.3% of participants describe WhatsApp as the most frequently used communication tool. Furthermore, 48.5% of the participants agree with the statement that 'WhatsApp is indispensable'. In the context of contents, 73.6% of participants declare that the most frequently shared contents is about professional subjects both educational or business areas followed by personal issues and events (55.1%), chain-messages (caricatures, videos, photos, celebration messages) (52.2%) and gossips (44.5%). The most frequently used WhatsApp group is consisted of friends with 51.4% percentage followed by classmates/colleagues groups with 34.0%. As a result of the survey, the groups having the highest number of people are created for informing (47.9%) meantime the groups having the lowest number of people are created for chatting (69.0%). Finding of study confirms that WhatsApp is heavily used among Turkish users both for professional and personal life and it is accepted an essential communication way one cannot resist.

Keywords: Group-based communication, Instant messaging, Whatsapp groups.