"Importance of WhatsApp-Based Services in the College Libraries during the Pandemic Time"

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Abstract: A MIM tool that facilitates real-time connections is WhatsApp. Sending messages and exchanging data across mobile devices doesn't incur any additional costs. It can be a useful tool for libraries to offer improved user services via smartphones. Effective library services are aided by the much simpler and quicker exchange of texts, photos, data, music, and video clips. The research study intends to analyse WhatsApp's use and implementation in college libraries, as well as its key benefits during the epidemic, other advantages, and challenges faced by library staff when providing services to customers. The study found that the goal of using WhatsApp media is to establish a flexible platform that aids all users in developing their professional abilities after taking into account the opinions of 112 college librarians. According to the report, all library professionals use WhatsApp in their various libraries and are highly at ease utilising it to provide high-quality library services. The study paper explains how a college librarian can use WhatsApp to its fullest potential in order to give customers prompt, effective service.

KEYWORDS: Pandemic, Information Communication Technology, Library Services, Whatsapp, College Libraries.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic phase has made people more technologically sophisticated, which has increased their use of social networking sites for communication and to close the gap between teaching and learning processes. It greatly aids in the prompt transmission of information. Social media networking is seen as a 21st-century power, and its popularity among students, academics, and researchers is soaring at an accelerated rate. With distance learners, social media is fostering a flexible environment for information delivery. The numerous social media platforms have greatly simplified the process of communication. WhatApp is one such crucial social media platform. Jan Koum and Brian Acton created it in

2009. WhatsApp is an extremely successful software for exchanging research findings and qualitative data. On a smartphone, WhatsApp is easily installable using the Play Store app. It is one of the most capable devices that is inexpensive compared to other communication tools. It can be used to converse via WhatsApp whenever and wherever there is a strong internet connection because it is portable. What's App feature was picked by the researcher to promote library services using its features since it is very easy to carry everywhere and has many capabilities that people use in their daily lives to connect with others. Due to its distinctive features, such as instant messaging, broadcast messaging, phone and video calling, sending voice messages, audio, video, and documents to a single recipient or to numerous recipients in a WhatsApp group, as well as built-in mapping capabilities, WhatsApp is incredibly popular. Since the interactions are protected from beginning to end by encryption, it is fully secure. Currently, WhatsApp is utilised in practically every industry across the globe. WhatsApp encourages collaboration and effective communication between library professionals, employees, and their users. It also boosts engagement and interactions between library personnel and users and serves as a useful tool for providing feedback on the services and resources offered by libraries. The level of acceptance and utilisation will depend on the understanding of WhatsApp among librarians; if they have comprehensive knowledge of WhatsApp, they will adopt it and utilise it to improve their services. If they are unaware of it or have limited awareness of it, they will continue to provide their consumers with services in the conventional way, which may not be the most efficient way to serve many users at once. Especially during this key epidemic era, it is crucial to improve the technical skills and knowledge necessary to deliver effective library services. It is crucial to take the patrons' information-seeking habits into account and make an effort to meet those demands by making the necessary information and other library services available. In the modern era, the customer's perspective and awareness of the usage of WhatsApp for the improvement of Services is crucial.

WHATSAPP USE IN COMMUNICATION: IMPORTANT BENEFITS

➢ Affordable and simple to use: Because a smartphone with WhatsApp installed on it is portable, it is far more convenient to use at any time than other communication technologies. The WhatsApp application is simple to use, and one can benefit much from all of its capabilities. WhatsApp is a relatively simple tool for efficient communication.

➢ Efficient communication tool: WhatsApp enables the sharing of text, audio, video, and document files as well as video calling. It has aided in bridging the communication gap between the library professional and his or her patrons during this important pandemic phase, allowing for communication from any location at any time. You can communicate with many users at once using WhatsApp's broadcast feature, which is quite time-efficient.

➢ WhatsApp is a useful technology that has aided libraries in communicating with their clients and delivering efficient library services. By sending unlimited messages, video clips, charts, photos, and other content to a single recipient or a large group of people in a WhatsApp group, a library can use the app to inform their clients about various services and offer current awareness services.

➢ Delivery Status: Having the delivery status function in WhatsApp is one of its main advantages. The librarian can check the recipient's reading status and be certain that their message was sent by using the delivery status.

➢ End-to-End Encryption: On WhatsApp, every chat you have is completely secure. This means that only you and the person with whom you are interacting can read or view your communications, which are safe. Your communications are hidden from WhatsApp even. This crucial function guarantees security when transferring sensitive documents using WhatsApp.

Objectives of the Study

➢ To examine WhatsApp's potential for delivering high-quality library services.

➢ To determine why Whatsapp is being used in libraries

➢ To determine the challenges that librarians have when utilising WhatsApp.

➢ To comprehend WhatsApp's practicality and usefulness amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

➢ To creating User awareness use of e- resources

➢ To provide user education effective use of web-based resources

'SCOPE OF THE STUDY'

Only the use of WhatsApp in academic college libraries is the subject of the research study. Professionals in library and information science are the only participants in the current study. The primary goal of this study is to evaluate the expertise of library

staff in offering appropriate library services to users of the social media platform WhatsApp. The survey also addresses questions on librarians' opinions on using WhatsApp, their level of knowledge, the services they provide via WhatsApp, and any challenges they encounter when doing so.

RESEARCHER METHODOLOGY

The study's target audience is librarians who work in academic college libraries. Google Forms was used to create a structured online questionnaire to gather information from library professionals. In the month of June 2021, Academic College Librarians received the online survey over WhatsApp. 112 college librarians in all answered the survey. To make the analysis of the data obtained and the interpretation of the findings simple to grasp, frequency tables and percentages were used.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table No. 1. Use of WhatsApp to connect with Patrons

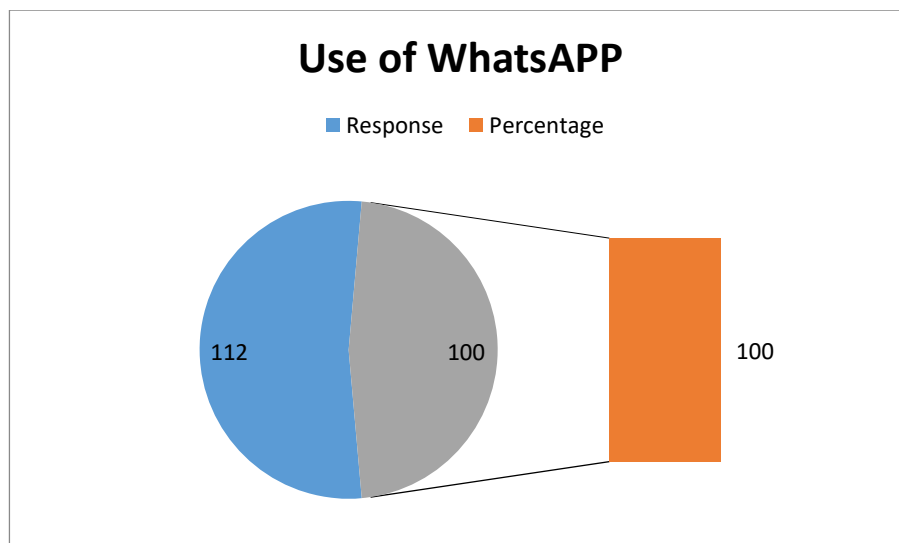| Use of WhatsApp	Response	Percentage
Yes	112	100
No	0	0

Chart No-1

WhatsApp has ingrained itself into our daily lives and is well-liked by users of all ages, but particularly the younger generation. According to Table No. 1, all library staff members utilise WhatsApp to interact with customers, offer them helpful library services, and meet their informational needs. The fact that LIS professionals are utilising WhtsApp is encouraging because it has greatly aided them in providing library services during this pandemic.

Table No. 2: Expertise level of Using WhatsApp

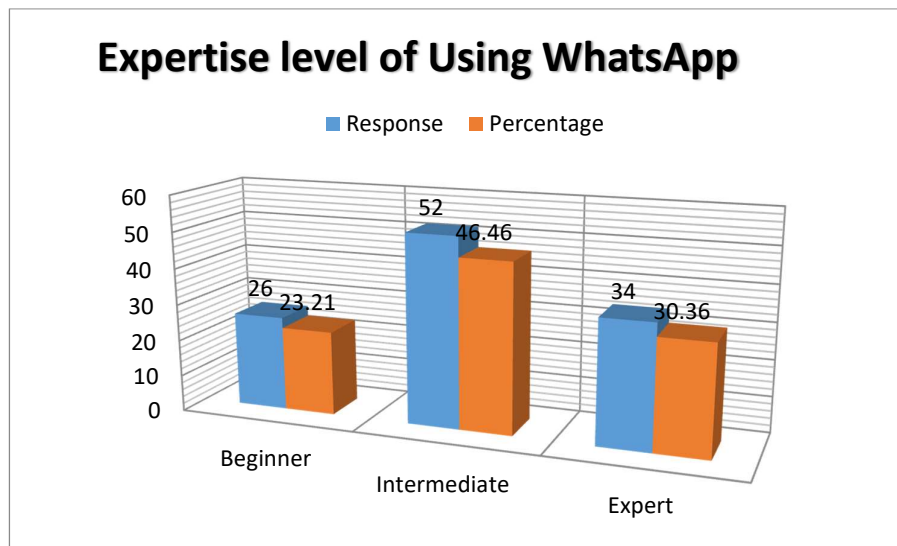| Expertise Level	Response	Percentage
Beginner	26	23.21
Intermediate	52	46.46
Expert	34	30.36

Chart No-2

The respondents were asked a question on their level of WhatsApp proficiency. Table 2 shows that the bulk of respondents, or 46.43%, are intermediate users of WhatsApp, followed by 30.36% experts and only 23.21% beginners. The data unambiguously shows that the LIS community is aware of WhatsApp's capabilities and services and is using it to the fullest extent to communicate and provide library services to the public.

Table No. 3: Awareness of latest features of WhatsApp

Opinion	Response	Percentage
Yes	90	80.36
No	22	19.64

The respondents were asked if they were familiar with WhatsApp's most recent features. Only 19.64% of respondents who were asked this question said that they were unaware of the most recent features that are now accessible. Eighty-three percent of respondents said as much. It is evident from the foregoing that the majority of LIS professionals are aware of the most recent developments occurring in the WhatsApp application and are utilising it to its fullest potential.

Table No. 4: Frequency of using of WhatsApp

Frequency	Response	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	24	21.42
More than 1 hour	44	39.29
2 to 3 hours	30	26.79
More than 3 hours	14	12.50

When asked how much time they spend using WhatsApp, 39.29% of respondents indicated they use it more than once a day, followed by 26.79% of respondents who use it two to three times a day. Only 12.5% of respondents use WhatsApp for longer than three hours, while 21.42 % use it for less than an hour. According to the usage described above, WhatsApp has benefited those who work in library and information science.

Table No. 5: Level of difficulty in using WhatsApp

Level of Difficulty	Response	Percentage
Very easy	46	41.07
Easy	50	44.65
Neutral	14	12.50
Difficult	2	1.78

Very difficult	0	0

The level of WhatsApp usage difficulty is shown in Table 5. According to the study, the majority of respondents, or 44.65%, believe that using and offering services through the WhatsApp programme is simple, while another 41.07% believe that operating WhatsApp is very simple. 12.50% of respondents are neutral, while only 1.78% find it challenging to work. The information in the table above makes it very evident that LIS professionals have no trouble using WhatsApp.

Table No. 6: Reasons for using WhatsApp (Multiple options)

Reason(s)	Response	Percentage
WhatsApp can be used for daily communication	100	89.28
Messages reach faster as compared to other social networking sites/applications	86	76.78
Providing information services/delivering required information easily	94	83.92
One message can be sent to Many at once in a class WhatsApp group	88	78.57
Helps to inform about Programmes/Activities	16	14.28
App is more secured and comfortable	2	1.78
User friendly features, it's simple, easy to use and convenient	6	5.35
Real Time Communication between Library and Users	4	3.57
WhatsApp is very cost effective	4	3.57
Others	0	0

An effort was made to understand the respondents' motivations for using the WhatsApp application in the table 6 above. The majority of respondents, or 89.28%, stated that WhatsApp can be used for daily communication, followed by 83.92% who said they can easily deliver information. In a class WhatsApp group, 78.57% stated they can message

numerous individuals at once, 76.78% said messages reach their recipients more quickly than on other social networking sites or applications, and 14.28% agreed that WhatsApp informs students about programmes, activities, webinars, etc. Response to the alternative choice was extremely low.

Table No. 7: Will WhatsApp enable Librarians to perform better than earlier in the Covid 19 pandemic digital era?

Opinion	Response	Percentage
Yes	**102**	**91.08**
No	**10**	**8.92**

The respondents were asked if WhatsApp would help librarians operate better than they had in the Covid-19 pandemic digital era. Table No. 7 clearly demonstrates that the majority of respondents (91.08%) answered affirmatively to the statement that WhatsApp has improved their performance throughout the Covid-19 epidemic period. Due to the global work-from-home situation, WhatsApp has greatly aided library personnel in providing services to its users when nothing else was working. The WhatsApp app has been used to its fullest potential by librarians to connect and communicate with users during the pandemic. Only 8.92% of users claim that the use of WhatsApp services has not changed in this time period.

Table No. 8: WhatsApp helps to provide Quick reference Service

Opinion	Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	40	35.71
Agree	68	60.72
Neutral	4	3.57
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0

The respondent's perspective on the claim that "WhatsApp helps to give quick reference service" is expressed in Table No. 8. According to the data acquired, table 8 shows that

60.72% of respondents, or the majority, agree with the statement. Only 3.57% are impartial, while 35.71 percent strongly agree. The data unmistakably shows that whtsApp's rapid reference service is incredibly beneficial to its customers.

Table No.9: WhatsApp enables to provide current awareness service and education easily

Opinion	Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	**38**	**33.94**
Agree	**70**	**62.5**
Neutral	**2**	**1.78**
Sisagree	**2**	**1.78**
Strongly disagree	**0**	**0**

The most important service provided to students and the research community, current awareness service informs them of the most recent advancements in their subject. Because WhatsApp is a real-time service, it can be a big aid to librarians while providing CAS to their clients. The majority of respondents, or 70 (62.5%), concur with the statement that WhatsApp permits the provision of current awareness services and user education, with 38 (33.94%) following closely behind. Only 1.78% of respondents were neutral on the statement and 1.78% disagreed.

Table No. 10: WhatsApp aids in communicating with the patrons about (Multiple options)

Classification	Response	Percentage
Library new arrivals	108	96.42
Library Activities/Programmes	108	96.42
Webinars	92	82.14
College Notices/Circulars	102	91.07
Academic matters	90	80.35
Others	0	0

10 above. According to the results, 96.42% of respondents use WhatsApp to inform users about new arrivals at the library and library activities and programmes, respectively. 82.14% of the respondents said that WhatsApp has greatly aided them in informing the patrons about the various webinars and sharing the link and details of the webinar to a large mass of patrons very easily and quickly. 91.07% of the respondents said that WhatsApp is a very efficient tool for communicating about the important college notices. WhatsApp is used by 80.35% of the respondents to share information, documents, photos, etc. about academic topics. Sheds light on WhatsApp's significance and how it has made it simple and quick for library workers to interact and offer services throughout the pandemic.

Table No. 11: Library Services offered via WhatsApp (Multiple options)

| Library Services	Response	Percentage
Online database/journals	64	57.14
Indexing Services	14	12.5
Newspaper Clipping Services	80	71.42
Scanning pages of the reference books/Text book	64	57.14
Old question papers	86	76.78
Syllabus	72	64.28
Current Awareness Service	74	66.07
Reference Service	74	66.07
Updated General Knowledge	50	44.64
Support for research work	48	42.85
User orientation	56	50
Announcements	74	66.07
Inter-library loan service	10	8.92
Document Reservation:	12	10.71
Others	0	0
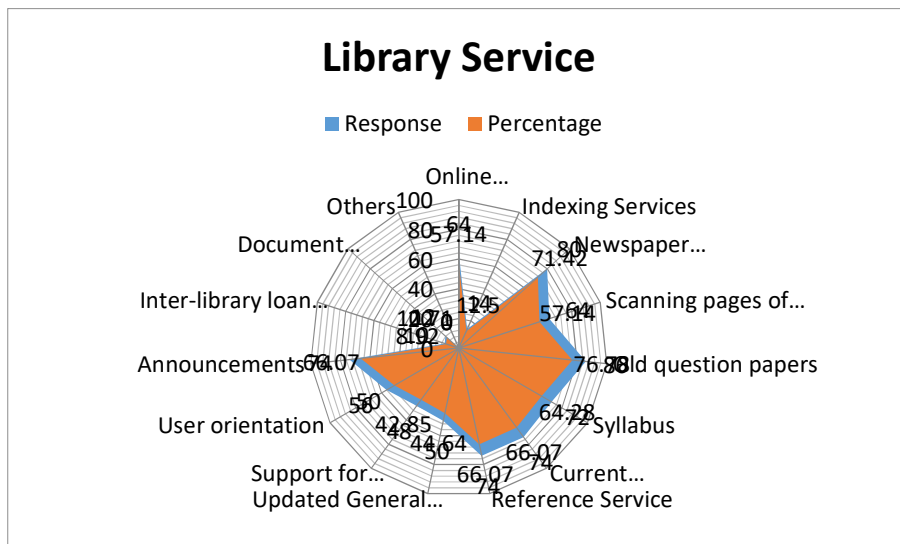
Chart No-3

librarians through WhatsApp are listed in Table No. 11 of the table. The majority of responders (76.78%) said they offered their clients a scanned copy of old test questions in the form of an image or PDF file via WhatsApp, followed by a newspaper clipping service (71.42%). A ratio of 66.07% responses is shared by CAS, Reference service, and announcements. WhatsApp is used to exchange syllabus with users, according to 64.28% of respondents. Giving users information on online journals for their benefit during the pandemic and scanning and distributing the information they need has gotten 57.14% each, respectively. Only a small percentage of LIS professionals use WhatsApp to provide indexing services (12.5%), inter library loans (8.92%), and document reservations (10.71%). About 44.64% share current events information to keep patrons' general knowledge current. About 42.85% help users by providing services via WhatsApp for research work. About 50% prefer it for user orientation. One responder from the others category indicated that links to online resources are shared using WhatsApp.

Table No. 12: Challenges faced while using WhatsApp (Multiple options)

Difficulties Faced	Response	Percentge
Bulk forwarded messages	72	64.28
Information overloaded	58	51.78
Internet service isues	62	55.35
File Size Limitation	72	64.28

Lack of confidence in encrypted Security and private messages	34	30.35
Sometimes device isn't supporting	40	35.71
Others		

Results from table no. 12 showed that when sending files or movies to customers, the majority (64.28%) of respondents experience issues with file size limitations and receiving mass forwarded messages. In order to deliver services promptly, 55.35% of respondents report having problems with their Internet connection. In addition, 51.78% of respondents report having problems with information overload, and 35.71% report that their devices occasionally fail to work. 30.35% of the respondents reported having little faith in encrypted security and private messages.

Table No. 13: Knowledge upgradation on the use of WhatsApp

Opionion	Response	Percentage
Yes	108	96.43
No	4	3.57

The respondents' opinions on whether they would like to increase their knowledge about the use of WhatsApp to improve library services are shown in Table No. 13. 96.43% of the respondents gave a positive response, which is a very good indication of their interest in improving their digital literacy and knowledge of WhatsApp's newest features, functions, and uses, all of which are crucial for effective communication and service delivery, particularly during the pandemic period. Learning new things and keeping current are highly crucial.

Table No. 14: Awareness workshop on WhatsApp

Opinion	Response	Percentage
Yes	16	14.28
No	96	85.72

We asked the respondents if they had ever held a session for customers to increase their awareness of and knowledge of using WhatsApp. Only 14.28% of respondents—who made up the majority, or 85.72%—had held a session on WhatsApp awareness, according to data from Table 14. Professionals in the library have a responsibility to educate users on WhatsApp's various capabilities so they may use it wisely and get the greatest benefits from the library services made available through WhatsApp.

SUGGESTIONS

Following are some tips for librarians while providing services over WhatsApp:

- ❖ Using WhatsApp to deliver library services to its user population would help LIS professionals advance their careers.
- ❖ Staff members at libraries ought to be encouraged to use WhatsApp to improve their offerings.
- ❖ The community of WhatsApp users should receive frequent training from librarians on the app's numerous functions.
- ❖ Libraries should be provided with uninterrupted, high-speed internet connectivity so they may encourage the use of WhatsApp in academic libraries and quickly and easily supply the necessary information.
- ❖ WhatsApp should be utilised to communicate with users, but LIS professionals need to be mindful of issues like authority, copyright, and privacy.
- ❖ ☐ Fair usage of WhatsApp is necessary to enable the LIS community to provide better services to end users.
- ❖ ☐ It will be highly practical and simple to notify the user community effectively and efficiently if librarians use WhatsApp to deliver library services.

CONCLUSION

According to the research report, a large majority of librarians are using WhatsApp to contact with one another and offer helpful library services to customers during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has had a profoundly positive effect on the LIS community's use of WhatsApp in libraries. Because academic institutions are closed due to the Covid outbreak, it is difficult for customers to physically access adequate library

services. At this crucial juncture, WhatsApp has played a significant role in the dissemination of information to its user community, thereby meeting their information needs. The primary goal of using the social media platform WhatsApp is to develop a flexible platform that enables all users to develop their professional abilities and reap the full benefits of it. According to this study's findings, all library professionals use WhatsApp in their individual libraries and are highly at ease providing high-quality library services via it. The majority of respondents stated that using WhatsApp is very easy for them. Among librarians, WhatsApp is proving to be a valuable tool for their professional development and as a quick way of communication. The LIS community benefits greatly from WhatsApp's efficiency and effectiveness in providing library services by being able to give timely and relevant information to library users.

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