

DISCOURSE IN WHATSAPP:

A Study on the contents shared by users in Coimbatore district

R. Venkatesh Aravindh¹, S. Sree Govind Baratwaj²

¹Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Periyar University, Salem, TN, India,

²Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Periyar University, Salem, TN, India.

Email - rvenkatesharavindh@gmail.com, baratwazamj@gmail.com

Abstract: Whatsapp is one of the instant messaging application used by a wide variety of users across the world. Whatsapp is one of the most downloaded application for instant messaging in the app stores of various mobile phone platforms. WhatsApp is also one of the applications that has a huge following in India with a strong user base of people using it compared to other markets it has in the world. It is for this very reason that the developers decided to make the app free for lifetime for users in India. Whatsapp gives people a varied platform for sharing text, contact numbers, links, pictures, videos, etc. which helps them in providing multiple features such as being cost effective, sharing rich media content etc. Content sharing by users is so high among users. Also, there are a variety of categories of content and information that the users share. In such aspect, it would be really inappropriate if there is no research study in understanding how users use Whatsapp to share their opinions and contents. The research will examine the various opinions and contents shared by users in Tamil Nadu.

Key Words: Social media, Users, Whatsapp, Content sharing.

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Social Media

Several past research studies have focused on the effects of electronic word-of mouth communication on consumer behavior. Hu, Liu, & Zhang (2008) discovered a positive relationship between products with good online reviews and the sales of that product. The more a reviewer was exposed to the product and the more credibility the reviewer had the more influential the individual's feedback became. This word-of-mouth communication had an impact on potential buyers' decisions. This study was augmented by Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Wlask, and Gremler's 2004 study. Their research explored why consumers partake in electronic word-of-mouth communication. A sense of belonging, potential payment, and a desire to aid others are a few of the reasons they discovered.

1.2 Social Networking Site

Students are increasingly utilizing these social networks for friends' news feeds, personal updates, events and activities, notes, and messages. According to an extensive study by the Office of Communications (Ofcom) of the United Kingdom, almost half (49%) of children aged 8-17 who used the Internet had set up their own profiles on a social networking site Ofcom, (2008a). Positive perceptions obtained from users of social networking sites i.e. effective learning which has resulted in an easy learning climate among students Mazer, et al., (2007). In another study conducted by Keenan and Shirii, (2009) they explored how social networking sites encourage friendliness through the use of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The study concluded that numerous approaches can be used to encourage amiability among students which leads to a positive effect from SNSs user's point of view.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

2.1 Social media and users

Erik Qualman (2009) deals with social media in his book "Socialnomics". He describes an age of instant communication, transparency (we live in what he terms "glass-house effect"), narcissism and participation. It is a landscape where authenticity is a currency of exchange and mass communications do not work, as audiences go back to trust in close persons and traditional media decline. He also explores Obama's rise to power and explores future implications with expressions like "what happens in Vegas stays in YouTube" or "we will no longer look

for the news, the news will find us". Qualman looks at the social media phenomenon and assesses its impact on interpersonal relationships. His book shows how strategy, marketing and markets are influenced and explores how some brands feel very comfortable in such a context. In his opinion, social media are more revolution than ephemeral fashion.

2.2 Social Media & Interactivity

Tapscott and Williams (2006) consider social networks as a part of a wider trend in communication landscapes. They characterize it as "mass collaboration". In their opinion, transparency, peer collaboration, audience participation and globalization are changing markets and companies and social networks like YouTube or MySpace are crucial. A new type of market is being shaped: copyright, communication strategy and message control by hierarchical management structures is increasingly under attack. Wikipedia is described as symbol of this process that is influencing the communication of brands, fashion, markets, ideas and ideology.

Jenkins (2006) describes three concepts that shape what he calls "convergence culture": media convergence, participatory culture and collective intelligence (Jenkins, 2006: 2). By media convergence, Jenkins deals with the content flow between multiple content platforms and audience's migrating behaviour: people are fundamentally looking for entertainment experiences. With the term "participatory culture", he underlines the contrast with the idea of a passive viewer in a time when producers and consumers do not show clearly different roles but interact with rules we don't seem to understand fully yet. By collective intelligence, he elaborates on a trend to turn consumption into a collective process, sharing our knowledge to cope with the sheer volume of available information. Social media develop in this unique convergence, participation and "crowd sourcing" environment.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- To analyze the types of content shared by users in Whatsapp.
- To analyze the political contents shared and expressed by users in Tamil Nadu through Whatsapp.

4. METHODOLOGY:

The methodology adopted for this study is Quantitative content analysis. The Analysis is done over social networking mobile application WhatsApp and the text and media contents shared by a random sample of 100 users belonging to various regions of Tamilnadu and the analysis as follows

Table 1: Age of respondents

Age	Total	Percentage %
17-20	53	53
21-24	47	47
Total	100	100

Table 2 :Gender of users

Gender	Total	Percentage %
Male	54	54
Female	46	46
Total	100	100

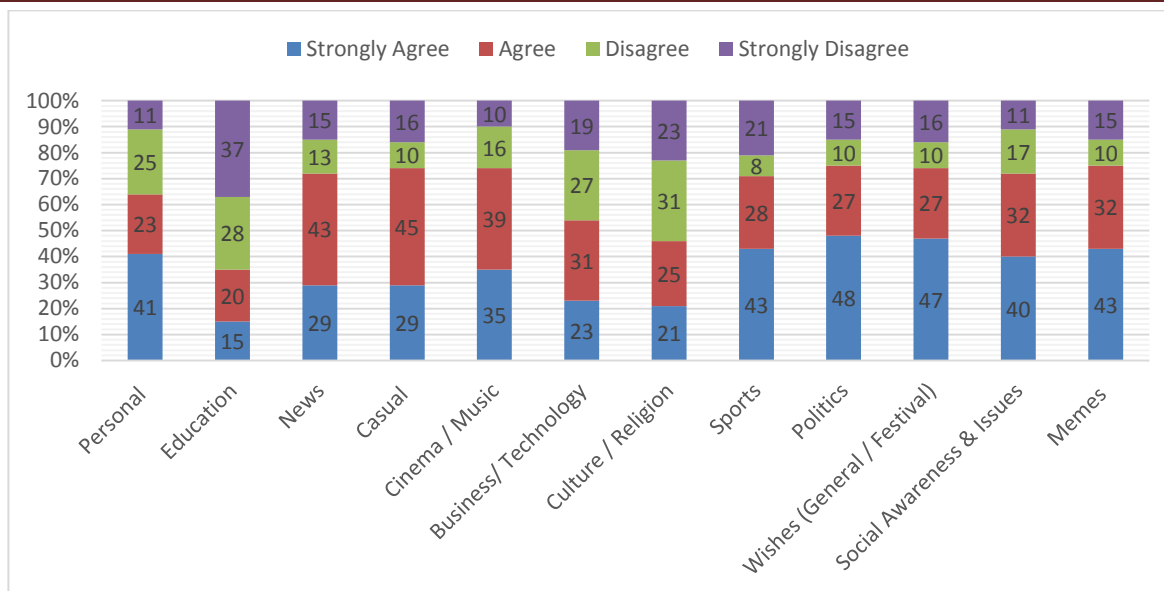


Figure 1: Respondents view on types of Content shared in WhatsApp

Table 3 :Whatsapp contents shared by Respondents

Particulars	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cartoons	40	21	26	13
Jokes	15	22	29	34
Birthday	31	19	28	22
Festival	49	33	10	8
Cinema / Music	42	28	20	10
Business	23	31	27	19
Culture / Religion	28	18	31	23
Social Awareness & Issues	43	28	8	21
Memes	36	28	21	15
Agriculture	50	27	7	16
Obituary	27	32	17	24
Photographs	40	32	10	18

Table 4 : Whatsapp Pictures with text contents shared by users

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cartoons	25	29	25	21
Jokes	15	22	36	27
Birthday	17	25	37	21
Festival	48	34	10	8
Cinema / Music	39	42	9	10
Business	31	23	27	19
Culture / Religion	28	18	31	23
Social Awareness & Issues	39	32	12	17
Memes	40	39	9	12
Agriculture	50	27	7	16
Obituary	23	32	24	21
Photographs	40	32	10	18

Table 5 : Whatsapp Videos & Audio contents shared by users

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cartoons	41	23	25	11
Jokes	15	20	28	37
Birthday	29	43	13	15
Festival	29	45	10	16
Cinema / Music	35	39	16	10
Business	23	31	27	19
Culture / Religion	21	25	31	23
Social Awareness & Issues	43	28	8	21
Memes	48	27	10	15
Agriculture	47	27	10	16
Obituary	40	32	17	11
Photographs	43	32	10	9

5. ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION & FINDINGS:

- The age of social networking site users were obviously between age (17-20) with about 53%, which clearly states the maximum users were higher school & college students , the next majority users were between age (21- 24) with 47 %. Users when growing up reduces the use of social networking site and at very young age they are using maximum.
- In case of gender, female social networking site users seems to be low with 46 % comparatively to male social media site users with about 54 % of users.
- Regarding the types of content shared in WhatsApp, 41% of respondents strongly agree for sharing personal content, 37% respondents strongly disagreed that they do not share Education based content, 43% respondents agreed that they share news based content, 45% respondents agreed that they shared Casual content, 39% respondents agreed that they share Cinema based content and 35% respondents strongly agreed that they share Cinema based content, 31% respondents agreed that they share Business / Technology based content,25% respondents agreed that they share Culture / Religion based content, 21% strongly agreed that they share Culture / Religion based content, 43% strongly agreed that they share sports based content, 48% respondents strongly agreed that they share Political content, 47% respondents strongly agreed that they share Wishes(General / Festival) based content,40% respondents strongly agreed that they share content based on Social Awareness / Issues, 43% respondents strongly agreed that they share Memes as content.
- Picture contents shared in WhatsApp, 40% respondents strongly agree that they share cartoons, 34% respondents strongly disagreed that they do not share Jokes based pictures, 31% respondents strongly agreed that they share birthday based pictures, 49% respondent strongly agreed that they share festival pictures, 42% respondents strongly agreed that they share Cinema / Music based pictures, 31% respondents agreed that they share Business based pictures, 31% respondents disagreed that they do not share Culture / Religion based pictures, 43% respondents strongly agreed that they share Social Awareness / Issues based pictures, 36% respondents strongly agreed that they share Memes based pictures, 50% respondents strongly agreed that they share Agriculture based pictures, 32% respondents agreed that they share Obituary pictures, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they share Photographs and 32% agreed that they share Photographs in WhatsApp.
- Pictures with text and content shared in WhatsApp, 29% respondents agreed that they share Cartoons with text and content, 36% respondents disagreed that they share Jokes pictures with text and content, 37% respondents disagreed that they share Birthday pictures with text and content, 48% respondents strongly agreed that they share Festival pictures with text and content, 42% respondents agreed that they share Cinema / Music pictures with text and content, 31% respondents agreed that they share

Business pictures with text and content, 31% respondents disagreed that they do not share Culture / Religion pictures with text and content, 39% respondents strongly agreed that they share Social Awareness / Issues pictures with text and content, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they share Memes related pictures with text and content, 39% respondents agreed that they share Memes related pictures with text and content, 50% respondents strongly agreed that they share Agriculture related pictures with text and content, 32% respondents agreed that they share Obituary related pictures with text and content, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they shared Photographs with text and content, 32% respondents agreed that they shared Photographs pictures with text and content in WhatsApp.

- Number of Videos and audios shared by users in WhatsApp, 41% respondents strongly agreed that they shared Cartoon video and audio content, 23% respondents agreed that they shared Cartoon video and audio content, 37% respondents strongly disagreed that they share Jokes based video and audio content, 28% respondents agreed that they shared Jokes based video and audio content, 43% respondents agreed that they share Birthday based video and audio content, 45% respondents agreed that they share Festival based video and audio content, 35% respondents strongly agreed that they share Cinema / Music based video and audio content, 39% respondents agreed that they share Cinema / Music based video and audio content, 31% respondents agreed that they share Business based video and audio content, 31% respondents disagreed that they share Culture / Religion based video and audio content, 43% respondents strongly agreed that they share Social Issues / Awareness based video and audio content, 48% respondents strongly agreed that they share Memes based video and audio content, 47% respondents strongly agreed that they share Agriculture based video and audio content, 40% respondents strongly agreed that they share Obituary based video and audio content, 43% respondents strongly agreed that they share Photographs based video and audio content in WhatsApp.

CONCLUSION:

WhatsApp is now one of the most preferred apps for users. WhatsApp has been a user-friendly medium of access and a new platform to voice their opinions over various issues like social, cultural, religion, sports, economics, politics, entertainment, business, government policies etc for various categories of people across age groups. The users have an absolute the freedom and access to provide their feedback, ideas and opinions. According to the research study, the maximum users of social networking site were users above 16 yrs and below 20yrs, also they tend reduces social media usage when getting older, and moreover male users seems to be typically high than women users comparatively. Users are eager in sharing their personal content like picture, text, videos, etc., where the self-marketing parameter among users in Tamil Nadu seems increasing in internet, and study also reveals the users also show interest in sharing social awareness content, which shows the users' social responsibility factor in social media. Studies reveals more surprising factor in this aspect, such that users in Tamil Nadu shows very low interest in sharing neither contents related to jokes nor birthday.

Maximum numbers pictures shared by users in Tamil Nadu were Agriculture. Users in Tamil Nadu possess interest in sharing more social awareness and agriculture content & few jokes frequently which reveals that users prefer sharing more content on agriculture and photographs indicating their preference being on the higher side for these types of contents.

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