

Chapter 11

The Effects of the Instant Messaging Application WhatsApp on the Efficiency of Employees Under Pandemic Conditions

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to investigate the impact of WhatsApp, an instant messaging application, on various aspects, particularly employee productivity and integration. To accomplish this, the authors formulated five hypotheses centered around the following question: “How does the utilization of instant communication tools influence employee productivity and integration?” To conduct this research, they conducted in-depth interviews with 17 individuals who were working remotely. Subsequently, the data from these interviews were analyzed using a descriptive analysis method. The findings of this research indicate that while instant communication technologies offer convenience in communication, they tend to diminish productivity. This is primarily attributed to their potential disruption of the work-life balance and their perception as informal means of communication.

INTRODUCTION

With the advancement of communication technologies, significant changes are underway on both individual and societal levels. Various interpersonal networks, including private, professional, and educational spheres, have experienced profound transformations. The decoupling of communication from temporal

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and spatial constraints, coupled with the proliferation of versatile communication tools, has altered the dynamics of numerous routine activities. Notably, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic forced many individuals to work remotely, leading to a heightened reliance on internet-based communication applications.

Numerous studies have recently explored the impact of instant messaging programs within organizations on employee productivity and cohesion. In a study conducted by Rajendran et al. (2019), it was observed that using instant communication applications in work environments correlated with improved communication quality and overall task performance. Other research endeavors have delved into the delicate equilibrium between using instant messaging applications and work-life balance. While promoting constant communication, these applications also blur the boundaries between professional and personal domains (Adisa et al., 2017). Wang et al. (2016) found that employees using instant messaging applications often struggle to maintain this balance, potentially resulting in increased workloads (Lee et al., 2020, pp. 1-2).

Conversely, deficient communication within the workplace fosters a more authoritarian atmosphere. It fosters detrimental relationships among employees (Kholisoh and Sulastri, 2017: 21). Numerous studies have unveiled those inundating employees with excessive messages and transmitting surplus information beyond necessity yields adverse consequences (Ellwart et al., 2015; Memmi, 2014). Excessive communication with employees and the accelerated information flow can escalate uncertainty among staff members (Cho et al., 2019: 1746).

The research questions and hypotheses stem from the considerations mentioned above. This study seeks to provoke a discourse on the efficacy of instant messaging programs in internal communication. Consequently, five beliefs have been delineated.

- H1: Using instant messaging programs within the organization fosters positive employee integration.
- H2: Instant messaging programs employed in the corporate setting enhance workplace efficiency.
- H3: The usage of instant messaging programs contributes to democratization in the workplace.
- H4: Excessive utilization of messaging programs for business purposes within the workplace diminishes managers' perceived prestige in the employees' eyes.
- H5: Prolonged use of instant messaging programs within the organization adversely impacts employees' work-life balance.

Building upon these deliberations and assessments, this article aims to illuminate the impact of employing instant messaging applications within organizational activities on university staff. To delve into this matter, we conducted in-depth interviews with 17 individuals occupying diverse roles within several foundation universities in Istanbul. These interviews were analyzed using a descriptive approach, and the findings were examined through critical concepts, including productivity, democratization, compatibility, and the dissolution of the boundaries between professional and personal life.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Communication stands as the paramount element that molds an organization's identity. It is the quintessence of effective management, encompassing planning, organization, coordination, direction, and control. Daily planning loses its efficacy without a robust communication framework, rendering attain-

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