What's up with the WhatsApp application in the classroom?

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Abstract

This study investigated how lecturers and university students used WhatsApp as an academic tool. The study employed an ANT methodological and analytical framework to investigate WhatsApp as an academic tool in a university set-up in post COVID-19 era. Participants were selected from one state university. The snowball purposive sampling approach was used to select twenty students and five lecturers who provided some deep insight into how WhatsApp was used in academic activities. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, following actors on the WhatsApp platform and document analysis. Findings revealed that WhatsApp was used in various ways to build students' networks of learning. The study concluded that lecturers could leverage the WhatsApp platform to enhance students' academic engagement by expanding the networks of learning to enable students to acquire and share knowledge. Therefore, the study recommends the wider use of WhatsApp to enhance academic performance among students by focusing on a community of learning.

Keywords: WhatsApp, Actor-network theory, Higher education