

Understanding The Usage Of Whatsapp Group During COVID-19 Pandemic Among Perak State Of Public Work Department Employees

Mohamad Razali Ramdzan@Raaban¹, Shazleen Mohamed^{2,*}

¹Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University Teknologi Mara, 40450 Shah Alam Selangor

²Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University Teknologi Mara, 40450 Shah Alam Selangor
mrazalimc950@gmail.com^{1*}, shazleen@uitm.edu.my²

*Corresponding Author

Copyright©2021 by authors, all rights reserved. Authors agree that this article remains permanently open access under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International License

Received: 15 April 2022; Revised: 30 April 2022; Accepted: 15 June 2022; Published: 30 July 2022

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has yet to find a comprehensive solution. Therefore, all employment sectors, whether public or private, have significantly changed their work environment since the Movement Control Order (MCO) implementation on March 18, 2020. Thus, most organizations began to adopt alternative communication methods to carry out routine tasks with social distancing, and no longer necessary to have a face-to-face meetings. All discussions and meetings have taken place online with the employee. Since many employees Work from Home (WFH), WhatsApp groups have become a viable option for discussing work matters during the pandemic. Besides, Malaysia's public service faces a challenge in adapting to this new normal of using digital technologies as a part of communication. Thus, the study focuses on the Perak State of Public Work Department. The qualitative study will using semi-structured interview questions among Perak State of Public Work Department employees. Ten (10) informants will be selected for this study. The sampling technique is non-probability sampling. The qualitative method is chosen due to the appropriateness of the study matter as it adds depth, details, and meaning. This study employs a Social Presence Theory and Media Richness Theory. Researchers need to understand its relation to social media usage in the organisation. Implications for conducting this study will provide findings to researchers to see the use of WhatsApp groups among employees in the Public Work Department. After that, the researcher can identify weaknesses, challenges, and problems arising from WhatsApp usage during the pandemic. The findings will be able to facilitate the Public Work Department to improve a more effective medium for communication between the organization, employees, and customers.

Keywords: COVID-19, MCO, WFH, WhatsApp, Communication, New normal

1. Introduction

In Malaysia, the number of active social media users until January 2021 is 28 million, which is equivalent to 86% of the total population of Malaysia. Digital Report 2021, released by Hootsuite and We Are Social, showed that Malaysians spend three (3) hours daily using online social networks. It is not a surprise as everyday users spend nine (9) hours 17 minutes on internet usage through various digital devices [1].

Since the beginning of the Internet era in Malaysia in 1992, the percentage of Malaysians who use the Internet has risen year after year [2].

With the introduction of smartphones in 2008 and the High-Speed Broadband initiative in the same year, Internet penetration has skyrocketed yearly [3]. According to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission

Corresponding Author: Mohamad Razali Ramdzan @ Raaban, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Universiti Teknologi Mara, 40450 Shah Alam Selangor, no tel: 0192730741, Email: mrazalimc950@gmail.com

(MCMC), the number of internet users in Malaysia is 88.7% of the current population, and smartphones have become the most popular device, with a saturation usage level of 98.7% in 2020 [4].

Even when looking at online activity, the most popular activities include watching video clips, managing network profiles, uploading photos, and instant messaging on social media. By connecting its users, social media enables and facilitates interaction. Web or mobile applications are used to create (post, upload, or blog) and consume (read, watch, or listen) the content in this medium. In addition, individuals can also use social media apps to control and manage apps (ratings, tagging, layout), as well as settings that include profiles and privacy options. As a result, it can be said that social networking interactivity can be used to achieve a variety of purposes, including creation, communication, control, and use [5].

Social media's capabilities and features have made it an effective medium for digital networking, collaboration, and communication. This is evident when a majority of the studies have proved that finding and maintaining current and new relationships with no restrictions can be attained using social media [6]. In addition, users can now have many friends on one social media platform, such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, or even Flickr.

The advancement of technology in the information age transforms old forms of organization-based systems in human experience into digital systems that enable constant expansion and realignment, overcoming traditional systems limitations to supervise complications when dealing with large networks, according to Castells [7]. In a world without borders, this medium creates a virtual community. This demonstrates that McLuhan's concept of a "global village" [8] and Castells' concept of a network society is becoming a reality as new media are shrinking the world and bringing distances closer than ever before [7]. Social interaction in cyberspace has transformed physical and social networking into digital networks, particularly the gathering place of family and friend networks and work and life. Individuals, governments, political parties, non-governmental organizations, associations, and businesses use social media to build large networks. Furthermore, these media can bring together users with similar interests or preferences.

According to Appel et. al [9], it is culturally significant because social media has become the primary place where many people receive lots of information, share content with others, receive information about the world around them and receive information about their lives. Social media, in particular, is dynamic and ever-evolving where it is vastly different from what it was even a year ago. According to Rani

[10], Facebook, Wikipedia, Twitter, WhatsApp, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Reddit are some of the most popular social media sites. These aren't just tools for social networking; they're also places where individuals can disclose personal information to members of the public and the broader community. This activity occurs among those who know each other personally and some who do not know each other. Increased use of computers and cell phones to communicate has resulted in a demanding task; interpersonal communication and face-to-face interaction lead to differences in practitioner interactions.

The digital network supports better communication by allowing people to interact in various ways, such as through wikis, blogs, forums, instant messaging and direct messaging such as email. Forming a community or digital network aligns with creating an offline community. Through this media, continuous communication with consumers or the market can be done quickly. For example, one of the popular social media is WhatsApp. WhatsApp users can send text, audio messages, videos, and images and form groups through it. With the application's ability that allows for speedy engagement, it has become a popular medium of internal communication within the organization.

According to eMarketer, the number of mobile messaging app users will increase from 2 billion today to 2.5 billion by 2021, representing a 25% increase over the next three years and many companies are becoming more aware of this [11]. According to Ovum's Secure Enterprise Messaging Survey 2017 [12], 67 per cent of respondents allowed employees to use consumer mobile messaging apps because they were widely used. It was impossible to prevent their use effectively. Forty-seven per cent of respondents indicated that they would like to allow their employees to use a messaging app but that consumer messaging apps would not allow them to comply with relevant industry regulations. As their communications records were closely monitored for regulatory compliance, 96% of respondents across the four countries felt secure communications were essential to their company.

2. Research Background

The presence of COVID-19 has completely changed human lives around the world. Generally, Coronavirus refers to a large group of viruses that includes other viruses that can cause disease to humans, including MERS-CoV (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) and SARS-CoV (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared the Coronavirus (COVID-19) as a pandemic on March 11, 2020 [13].

Since the Movement Control Order (MCO) implementation

on March 18, 2020, Malaysia has undergone several changes to adapt to new norms in various aspects of life, health, and employment. The government has made every effort to carry out various planning, prevention, and treatment activities to ensure that the number of cases is kept to a minimum [14]. As a result, Malaysia has dealt with a variety of MCOs, including MCO 1.0 to 3.0, Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO), Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO), Administrative Enhanced Movement Control Order (AEMCO), and Enhanced Movement Control Order (EMCO), and the government is currently working to keep the number of daily cases under control, even though the number continues to rise [15]. The new virus variant's rapid spread in the community contributes to the daily case count, which has now surpassed four figures. The Ministry of Health (MOH) has also warned that the number of positive cases will skyrocket by June, potentially exceeding 6,000 cases per day [16].

For most people, adjusting to a new normal for a few weeks, months, or years while staying at home is difficult. While there are numerous benefits to staying at home, the ability to spend quality time with family is one of them. Not everyone or their households will enjoy the atmosphere or feel at ease in the situation. The reality of COVID-19 transmission has a significant impact on various aspects of life, particularly the working sector, forcing people to work from home (WFH). When COVID-19 hit the world in 2020, it marked a turning point in the workplace. This pandemic ushered in a new era for WFH, posing a significant challenge for many employees.

For government employees, a service circular JPA.SARAAN(S)256/6/31JLD.6(2) has been issued by the Public Service Department (PSD) dated March 17, 2020, and JPA.100-1/4/2(12) dated December 21, 2020, for the implementation of the Work from Home Policy for officers serving in the Federal Public Sector. General Order 5 Chapter G of 1974 on Working Hours and Overtime provides that all officers working office hours, including the Heads of Departments themselves, should adhere to working hours and be at the office within the allotted time. The Government has agreed to create a WFH policy as an option, as the Service Circular No. 5 of 2020: Work from Home Policy has provided a continual effort to enhance the public service delivery system and the need to balance officers' well-being and the job requirements. The WFH provides for an officer to perform essential duties or other official duties at home on his working day, either full-time or part-time, for a period, as appropriate subject to the public service interests and considered as present on duty [17].

The most important thing to do with WFH is a stable internet network, laptop, or mobile phone. With the advent of various state-of-the-art technologies, tasks that previously could only

be done at work can now be done at home and anywhere. The WFH technology has been provided by multiple technology giants such as Microsoft, Google, Cisco, and available social media such as WhatsApp and Telegram that become a leading choice to ensure the smoothness of daily work [18].

3. Problem Statement

This millennial era has seen the role of digital communication become very important as leaders are required to understand and be sensitive to technology and implement communication in organizations. Good leadership communication will ensure that every organization member can do their job well [19]. Therefore, it involves a specific form of communication such as verbal, written, printing, and telecommunications.

It combines information and computer technology, communications networks, and digital media content. This information differs from technologies in printed or broadcasting because the new media offers functions such as digital networks and interactivity. All communication, writing, visual, data, and sound elements combine to integrate them into one platform using computers and telecommunication tools.

However, the developments in social media channels as a communication tool by employers and employees have raised concerns. Therefore, it may have seen that the development and implementation of policies for social media is a necessary recommendation to address the usage of social media among employees in an organization. According to Jong [20], Organizations have a wide range of options for using social media. Departments can engage in back-and-forth discussions with questions and answers on a blog. The CEO can blog or record a podcast, and companies can immediately deliver news to employees by using wikis to manage projects, share best practices, and research case studies. Understanding and teamwork improve, relationships are built, and lateral communication is developed through collaborative technologies

When MCO 1.0 came into force, the Perak State of Public Work Department (PWD) was required to WFH and strived to provide the best possible service despite the technological constraints and jobs that required physical presence. Communication technology is fully utilized for formal and informal communication, discussion, and execution of essential work. Communication in any organization is fundamental to relationships and the sharing of meaning. Therefore, digital communications such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Telegram have significantly reduced the daily workload.

According to Malaysian Trades Union Congress President, Abdul Halim Mansor [21] work matters are still going on through the WhatsApp application after office hours. It puts employees under pressure, and this app cannot consider the official medium for office matters. Civil servants have also expressed dissatisfaction with social media applications, claiming that they affect the quality of time with their families and rest time. Thus, the Public Service Department (JPA) must clarify whether the WhatsApp application has been gazetted as the official communication tool among civil servants [22].

In the Malaysian context, the Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) has released 'Penerapan Etika Penggunaan Media Sosial Dalam Sektor Awam' as general guidelines on the management of social media in the government sector [23]. However, the procedures are available to all forms of social media and focus only on government agency communication with external parties. It does not involve the organization's internal communication, and there is no policy specifically for WhatsApp as a formal communication tool. Thus, this study will examine WhatsApp use among PWD employees as formal and informal communication in their organizations.

Referring to Part D: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on Facilities, Infrastructure, and Digital Facilities, on the other hand, states that ICT equipment and devices are the basic requirements for WFH compliance. As a result, officers must be equipped with mobile phones and internet access. Officers can receive appropriate ICT equipment and devices from the department based on their needs. Laptops, mobile devices (such as tablets), and other related hardware are among the equipment and devices. Therefore, relevant ICT equipment or devices must be equipped with the appropriate software. As a result, personal equipment or hardware may be allowed if it meets safety requirements and is certified by the Officer from the Department of ICT [17].

4. Rational of the Study

This study aims to understand the usage of WhatsApp group during COVID-19 pandemic among Perak State Of Public Work Department employees. WhatsApp has long been used in Malaysia's private and public organisations. By allowing people to exchange images, videos, audio, and even written messages, WhatsApp which is derived from the English word "What's up?" [24] has become a popular communication method via smartphones. This demonstrates the importance of user-friendly, flexible applications in today's society for connecting with the government and resolving issues affecting the local community and society. In keeping with the public service motto of "*Berkhidmat*

Untuk Negara," [25] civil servants are responsible in delivering their task to the public. In addition to improving the quality of services provided, fostering a culture of accepting technological advances among civil servants will have a positive impact on the interpersonal relationships that exist in the organization and in society as a whole.

5. Literature Review

Formal communication in the organization has well related with their truly function. Thus, organizational communication is directed at the organizational function rather than the individual holding the organizational role. In other words, the person's role within the organization is more important than the person's [26]. According to Fatimayin [27], the ability of humans to communicate is what allows them to socialize. Additionally, communication is used to accomplish goals or express intentions and feelings. People primarily communicate with predetermined goals in mind. It can be done verbally via text-based media to communicate information to employees of an organization, such as the moment of a meeting or by policy statements.

To communicate with colleagues, superiors, and partners, organisations frequently rely on formal communication tools in the workplace, such as email and telephone [28]. Nonetheless, a new pattern of social media communication has emerged, which is altering the way we communicate. Social media is an online platform or service that promotes the development of social networks or social relationships between individuals with similar or related interests, activities, backgrounds, or real-world connections. Social media has emerged as part of technological advancement by emerging as one of the essential factors of intercultural communication. Due to their impact on employee performance and productivity, the prevalence of social media usage in the workplace can no longer be disregarded [29].

The prevalence of social media such as social networking sites and instant messaging in everyday life and the workplace are continues to grow. Lee [30] has discovered that the use of social media in the workplace has a positive impact on individual job performance. In addition, the results may have significant implications for different organizations to review their social media policies. However, the organization may consider enhancing the capacity of using social media in the workplace since it can improve job performance. Specifically, the organization may encourage employees who perform tasks with high ambiguity to use instant messaging platforms such as WhatsApp.

Linjuan Rita Men [31] has conducted a studied that aims to ascertain whether and how internal social media affects worker engagement. The 1,150 US employees had

participated on online survey a embraced an internal social media. The findings showed that using internal social media by employees increased perceptions of organisational visibility and identification, which enhanced employee engagement.

As a result, WhatsApp is a unified messaging app that connects to a phone number without a password or login. It has evolved into a more personal social network. Due to its low cost and ease of use, WhatsApp provides many advantages to its users. WhatsApp has been described as a medium for information sharing and gaining knowledge It sends and receives messages, shares learning resources, and leaves comments. Students also use WhatsApp in the classroom to create class publications by publishing their work in groups. Social interactions between students and instructors are essential. WhatsApp promotes school performance by facilitating online collaboration and communication [32]. According to Riskyta [33], the WhatsApp application is vital in supporting organizational communication functions, including production and management, renewal, maintenance, task and command.

Many organizations, no matter small or large, use WhatsApp as a platform to communicate between employees. A survey estimated that more than 500 million users worldwide use WhatsApp for work purposes. This is a large number, comprising up to 30% of the 2 billion WhatsApp users worldwide [34]. In the context of Malaysian organizations, Bahtiar et al. [35] concluded from their research is part of the key factors contributing to WhatsApp's rise as an essential communication tool in Malaysia is undoubtedly the country's rising Internet penetration rate. Employers sometimes issue urgent work-related instructions via WhatsApp Messenger that require their employees to be alert and prepared for upcoming tasks even when they are away from the office. As a result, employees believe that task notification and instructions sent via WhatsApp Messenger increase their workload and divert their attention from non-work activities, making them resentful of their assigned tasks. Although not all employees face these circumstances, they still feel that work has taken precedence over their families and personal time.

Although many studies investigate WhatsApp usage in the workplace, actually they are more focused on the essence of WhatsApp discussion and its relevance to employee interaction and engagement for the work-related purpose instead of using WhatsApp as a personal matters [36].

According to Hassan [37], the use of group-based interaction has enabled planning, sharing, and discussion to be executed in a proper way. Hence, WhatsApp is a more convenient tool and modern compared to conventional text messaging

programmes such as Short Message Service (SMS). As employees, they communicate with their contacts, including friends, coworkers, and managers. The group members can discuss work-related issues and share information efficiently and effectively. All group members can participate in a group discussion because their contributions and ideas are visible to everyone.

Around 13 million people downloaded the WhatsApp April 2021 which represents an increase of 18.2 per cent from the prior month [38]. After the social media apps TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram, it was also the fourth most widely downloaded non-game app worldwide. More people have downloaded WhatsApp's app than some of its main competitors, Facebook Messenger and Telegram [34]. WhatsApp have 2 billion active users around the world [34] with 100 billion message per day [39] and 7 billion voice message every day [40]. If an organisation takes advantage of this feature, online or virtual meetings allow for productive interaction. Managers can share information with organisational staff, initiate planning, and even direct staff to take action or receive feedback. Decisions can be made quickly by forming virtual groups, which improves effective communication within the organisation.

Based on the studies reviewed, social media, especially WhatsApp, plays a significant role in channelling various information and can be used in directing information in organizations. Among the critical factors influencing the use of social media is the level of employee readiness, the characteristics of social media, and the need for information. The risks from using social media can be viewed positively through the rapid sharing of knowledge and negatively impact if the organization's staff is not knowledgeable in managing information.

6. Methodology

This study uses a semi-structured interview method as a tool to obtain research data. Respondents will involve ten (10) employees from various departments in PWD. Selection of respondents based on purposive sampling technique and between semi-structured questions posed to informants to understand the usage of WhatsApp group during the COVID-19 pandemic among Perak State of Public Work Department employees.

The following are examples of interview questions to informants:

- a) How often do you use WhatsApp on your phone in a day?
- b) Is your WhatsApp widely used for work or personal purposes?

- c) In your opinion, why is social media like WhatsApp used to convey information within an organization?
- d) What are the advantages and disadvantages of WhatsApp in the delivery of information?
- e) Do you care about the cost of using internet data and your mobile phone as a medium to manage work?
- f) Are you comfortable using WhatsApp as a medium to communicate about work?
- g) How do you manage work instructions received via WhatsApp?
- h) Do you think as an employee you must follow the instructions given even if the instructions are via WhatsApp?
- i) Is it appropriate for WhatsApp to be used as a formal medium by organizations and governments?

Additional questions will also be asked based on the answers submit by the informants. Data collection will appear in verbatim interviews that contained dialogue between the researcher and the study informant. The voice recorder will be used to execute the transcription process. Each transcript has one paragraph containing study participant information, observation/interview period, and studies theme as an index for audit trail purposes. Data will analyze using qualitative analysis. The results of the recorded interviews will copy into written form. The researcher lists the themes that exist and analyzes the frequency of themes mentioned by the respondents.

7. Discussion

Besides, PWD has used various communications among the employee to ensure that the connection goes well and helps them carry out their activities. One of the most used communication tools is WhatsApp. WhatsApp is one of the most practical applications because users can send text, images, videos, and audio messages. It can form specific groups through it and attach various files such as images, documents, videos, and music to make the app a complete communication tool [41].

Although not yet recognized as an official medium for PWD, among the factors contributing to WhatsApp usage as an internal communication tool are the features available on it. It facilitates users to interact quickly and effectively where users can communicate in real-time, track when a message has been received, and find out whether the recipient has received or read the sent message (blue tick). It can also actively participate in any discussions made through WhatsApp groups and share images, videos, voices, or attached files. It can even delete any messages sent previously and various other benefits that help communication become more effective and efficient. With most mobile phone users equipped with this application, contact via WhatsApp is becoming increasingly popular and is often used as an internal communication tool of an

organization.

WhatsApp statistics in Malaysia in January 2021 has 21.4 million monthly traffic through 23.1 million internet users (age 16 to 64 years old) [1], and Malaysia at the ranked of number five (5) of world Malaysia was ranked fifth (5) among world WhatsApp users and surpassed other countries such as Colombia, Brazil, Turkey, Spain and Indonesia [42].

Communication can occur at any time and location thanks to smartphone technology and WhatsApp applications. The use of WhatsApp as a medium of communication between employees and employers is every day nowadays. This technology has the advantage of speeding up the delivery of information and instructions. Even so, excessive use of it can result in another issue.

Employee satisfaction and interactions between management and employees, productivity, and job performance are all indicators of effective communication. According to Asmah et al. [43], effective information delivery is linked to transmission, influencing organizational management patterns. Accurate information delivery is required to ensure timely and efficient completion of the task. According to Sharita [43], WhatsApp has proven to be the most effective and fastest method of delivering information to employees.

Another aspect of strategic communication that aims to ensure effective communication is selecting and using appropriate communication tools. According to Zuliana and According to Lekara [44] organizations must fastly take advantage in order to stay competitive. Technological challenges and organization management focused on the new advancements and challenges that modern organizations face in human resources and business due to continuous and highly complex changes in technological resources. Organizations must employ more efficient and adaptable management to meet human and business requirements. As supported byRaji Ridwan et al. [45], the study found that social media plays a significant role in advertising product brands. Through social media, their study of advertising found that promotion and word of mouth through social media had a significant positive relationship with consumer-based brand equity. This means that the appropriate communication channel selection strategy can create communication effectiveness.

As a result, communication technology can potentially improve the efficiency of business operations. All parties must work together to ensure that the chosen technology has a positive impact. Several studies have shown that organisations that effectively utilise communication technology accomplish their objectives more quickly and provide a competitive advantage to other companies. It is

now possible to perform many previously tricky tasks through email, social media, instant messaging, texting, video chatting, and other similar services. The channel of communication used affects the quality of the information received. This is because to solve problems; employees require accurate information with a high degree of validity [46]. As a result, selecting the proper communication channel can effectively disseminate information.

Although the top management supports all activities/programs of the organization by delivering specific messages to the desired target audience using the proper communication channels, sometimes there are problems in providing messages that become communication distortion.

As stated by Siti [47], when Covid-19 hit the world, technology and communication became the platform to strengthen the economy and people's lives even in difficult situations. In order to drive the use of digital information technology, society must change and shift strategies by using communication technology more efficiently, effectively and able to deliver information faster and more influentially. While employers and employees can interact by using mobile technology services, update documents and share information along with their latest job status.

According to Krause [48], Communication is vital in all aspects of life, especially in the workplace. Employees who are disconnected and uninformed can harm the business. Companies must implement practical communication skills, tools, and strategies in the workplace to maximize performance and maintain competitiveness. Companies that suffer from a lack of constructive interaction likely lack defined communication strategies and tools. This can result in misunderstandings, stressed-out employees, stifled creativity and decreased profits. Based on the current COVID-19 pandemic, employees need digital and mobile tools for communication very much, and management can be seen to be able to provide the right tools for communication so that daily work doesn't get interrupted. The importance of communication technology as a way to spread messages was found to have a positive effect on the organisation and top management. However, compared to previous pandemics, we have a plethora of technological tools available today in the current COVID-19 pandemic. People can now stay in touch with one another in new and creative ways thanks to today's technology [49].

In the era of the Covid-19 pandemic, humans had to make the smartphone a high necessity as much important information and things were channelled through it. This is so because the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the country caused employees to rely more on a smartphone to get information, gain access to a service and stay connected with other

workers. Applications like Whatsapp, Skype and Telegram really help people stay connected. The apps in the virtual world have made so much progress that it allows them to hold online meeting with co-workers even when they are not at the workplace. This will be able to reduce travel time during meetings.

Therefore, employee productivity is augmented by digital technology and requires one to change perceptions about setting up a new workplace. With instructions from the government to work from home, it is the right time for employees to learn what they have always wanted and the right time to facilitate technological advancement. Many companies have invested in gadgets, apps and e-learning platforms that allow employees to learn new skills and improve existing skills during the pandemic. All this effort is to make sure the employees can manage their existing work without decreasing their performance

8. Conclusion

Overall, some limitations limit the study regarding the small number of informants and the organization that focuses only on PWDs. This study is expected to answer the use of WhatsApp, which is increasingly popular in organizations. It is one of the internal communication tools often used by employees in the organization apart from face-to-face meetings, emails, memos, and others. The contributing factor is also because most employees have to work from home and use this app to speed up instructions and group discussions.

Based on these changes, can it be used as a proper, valid, and useful internal communication tool of the organisation in the formal communication of the organisation? whether the flow of communication is up, down, or sideways? Studies show that when an organisation uses WhatsApp as an internal communication tool, all three (3) formal channels will be used: instructions from bosses to employees, complaints or opinions from employees to bosses, and discussions between peers and co-workers.

However, its use is still at a semi-formal stage where most information discussed via WhatsApp should be followed by minutes, memos, or emails that can prove the information's or instructions' validity. Even though some decisions are made using this mechanism, the organisation has yet to acknowledge WhatsApp as a standard communication tool. This may differ from informal WhatsApp groups, such as research groups where the administrator is the principal researcher. The instructions and decisions generated by WhatsApp may apply to this group. All group members have been informed of the specified notifications and regulations. It, therefore, depends on which organisations are willing to

recognise WhatsApp as a formal communication tool that can be adopted within their respective organisations.

Further research is required to identify the appropriate policies and guidelines for WhatsApp communication. It is because the miscommunications to understood messages cannot be recorded and are uncontrolled. Thus, future research has the potential to investigate aspects of policy frameworks and guidelines that can be proposed to organisations in response to the pandemic that has struck the nation. Therefore, all factors, including rules of time, message content or discussion, ethics, and organizational details, are considered.

9. References

- [1] S. Kemp, "Digital in Malaysia: All the statistics you need in 2021," *Datareportal*, Feb. 2021. .
- [2] S. Wok and S. Mohamed, "Internet and social media in Malaysia: Development, challenges and potentials," in *The Evolution of Media Communication*, InTech, 2017.
- [3] "Industry performance report 2018," Putrajaya, 2018.
- [4] "Internet users survey 2020," Putrajaya, 2020. doi: ISSN 1823-2523.
- [5] L. H. Donna and P. N. Thomas, "Social media strategy," in *Handbook of marketing strategy*, V. Shankar and G. S. Carpenter, Eds. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2012, pp. 198–216.
- [6] L. Barkhuus and J. Tashiro, "Student socialization in the age of Facebook," in *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 2010, pp. 133–142, doi: 10.1145/1753326.1753347.
- [7] H. Van Den Bulck, K. Donders, and G. Ferrell, "Public service media in the networked society what society? what network? What role?," *Public Serv. Media Networked Soc. RIPE@2017*, no. 2018, pp. 11–26, 2018, [Online]. Available: http://www.nordicom.gu.se/sites/default/files/kapitel-pdf/01_van-den-bulck_donders_lowe.pdf.
- [8] Valerie Forgeard, "Why the world is a global village," *Brilliantio*, Dec. . <https://brilliantio.com/why-is-the-world-a-global-village/> (accessed Jun. 26, 2022).
- [9] G. Appel, L. Grewal, R. Hadi, and A. T. Stephen, "The future of social media in marketing," *J. Acad. Mark. Sci.*, vol. 48, no. 1, pp. 79–95, 2020, doi: 10.1007/s11747-019-00695-1.
- [10] P. U. Rani and Padmalosani, "Impact of social media on youth," *Int. J. Innov. Technol. Explor. Eng.*, vol. 8, no. 11 Special Issue, pp. 786–787, 2019, doi: 10.35940/ijitee.K1138.09811S19.
- [11] J. Enberg, "Global mobile messaging 2020," *Insider Intelligence*, Apr. 2020. .
- [12] P. Skeldon, "New Ovum report reveals strong enterprise appetite for RCS messaging and chatbots while confirming the continued growth of A2P SMS," *Telemedia Online*, Jul. 2017. .
- [13] T. Adhanom, "WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 21 August 2020," *World Health Organization*, Aug. 21, 2020. <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---21-august-2020>.
- [14] A. Tang and S. B. Rashvinjeet, "Implementing WFH will create challenges, say bosses," *The Star*, Petaling Jaya, Oct. 21, 2020.
- [15] E. Ong, "Full list Of EMCO SOP for affected areas in KL & Selangor," *Klook*, Jul. 06, 2021. <https://www.klook.com/en-MY/blog/emco-kl-selangor-malaysia/> (accessed Jul. 06, 2021).
- [16] L. J. Wyn, "MoH predicts daily Covid-19 cases to exceed 8,000 by first week of June if SOPs not followed," *The Edge Market*, May 2021. .
- [17] A. R. Mohd Khairul Adib, "Pekeliling perkhidmatan bilangan 5 tahun 2020," *Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam*, 2020. .
- [18] S. Teoh, "Malaysia to impose total nationwide lockdown from June 1-14 as Covid-19 cases hit new record, SE Asia News & Top Stories," *The Straits Times*, May 28, 2021. <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/full-lockdown-for-malaysia-from-june-1-14> (accessed Jul. 06, 2021).
- [19] D. J. Isya *et al.*, "Strategi komunikasi kepemimpinan pada era digital," *Divers. J. Ilm. Pascasarj.*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2021, doi: 10.32832/djip-uika.v1i2.4979.

- [20] D. Jong, S. C. Chen, A. Ruangkanjanases, and Y. H. Chang, "The impact of social media usage on work efficiency: The perspectives of media synchronicity and gratifications," *Front. Psychol.*, vol. 12, p. 3165, Jul. 2021, doi: 10.3389/FPSYG.2021.693183/BIBTEX.
- [21] Y. Shahrul, "Bos hantar Whatsapp selepas waktu bekerja, manfaat atau malapetaka dari Teknologi?," *Harian Teknologi*, Feb. 2019. .
- [22] Aman, "Penggunaan aplikasi sosial seperti WhatsApp dikatakan mengganggu psikologi penjawat awam," *Amanz Media*, Apr. 22, 2016. <https://amanz.my/2016110274/> (accessed Dec. 27, 2020).
- [23] "Penerapan etika penggunaan media sosial dalam sektor awam."
- [24] A. Pahwa, "The history of WhatsApp," *Feedough*, Sep. 08, 2021. <https://www.feedough.com/history-of-whatsapp/> (accessed Jun. 26, 2022).
- [25] Unit Pemodenan Tadbiran dan Perancangan Pengurusan Malaysia, "Panduan penulisan surat rasmi, memo dan emel," 2014. [Online]. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.biochi.2015.03.025%0Ahttp://dx.doi.org/10.1038/nature10402%0Ahttp://dx.doi.org/10.1038/nature21059%0Ahttp://journal.stainkudus.ac.id/index.php/equilibrium/article/view/1268/1127%0Ahttp://dx.doi.org/10.1038/nrmicro2577%0Ahttp://>
- [26] L. Felipe Gómez and S. L. Dailey, "Formal communication," *Int. Encycl. Organ. Commun.*, pp. 1–15, Mar. 2017, doi: 10.1002/9781118955567.WBIEOC083.
- [27] F. Fatimayin, "What is communication?," 2018.
- [28] C. Archer-Brown and J. Kietzmann, "Strategic knowledge management and enterprise social media," *J. Knowl. Manag.*, vol. 22, no. 6, pp. 1288–1309, 2018, doi: 10.1108/JKM-08-2017-0359.
- [29] T. Wushe and J. Shenje, "The relationship between social media usage in the workplace and employee productivity in the public sector: Case study of government departments in Harare," *SA J. Hum. Resour. Manag.*, vol. 17, pp. 1–10, 2019, doi: 10.4102/sajhrm.v17i0.1116.
- [30] S. Y. Lee and S. W. Lee, "Social media use and job performance in the workplace: The effects of Facebook and KakaoTalk use on job performance in South Korea," *Sustain.*, vol. 12, no. 10, 2020, doi: 10.3390/SU12104052.
- [31] L. R. Men, J. O'Neil, and M. Ewing, "Examining the effects of internal social media usage on employee engagement," *Public Relat. Rev.*, vol. 46, no. 2, p. 101880, 2020, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101880>.
- [32] C. Barhoumi, "The effectiveness of WhatsApp mobile learning activities guided by ativity theory on students' knowldege management," *Contemp. Educ. Technol.*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2020, doi: 10.30935/cedtech/6151.
- [33] R. Riskyta, "Penggunaan aplikasi WhatsApp dalam komunikasi organisasi pegawai dinas lingkungan hidup dan kebersihan sidoarjo," *J. Ilm. Manaj. Publik dan Kebijak. Sos.*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 77–90, 2018, doi: 10.25139/jmnegara.v1i2.788.
- [34] Y. Lin, "Top 10 WhatsApp statistics you should know," *Oberlo.Com*, May 11, 2021. <https://www.oberlo.com/blog/whatsapp-statistics> (accessed Jun. 22, 2022).
- [35] C. Su Mustaffa, C. Hasniza Che Soh, H. Abu Bakar, and B. Mohamad, "Understanding the usage of Whatsapp among Malaysian employees through the lens of social influence theory," *Int. J. Eng. Technol.*, vol. 7, no. 4.38, p. 1039, 2018, doi: 10.14419/ijet.v7i4.38.27635.
- [36] A. Zaifunizam and O. Siti Zobidah, "Usage of Whatsapp in relation to employee engagement in a telecommunication company," *Int. J. Acad. Res. Bus. Soc. Sci.*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 426–444, 2018, doi: 10.6007/ijarbss/v8-i1/3818.
- [37] M. A. Sohyla, E. Jalan, A. Hassan, A. R. Najibah, and M. Nabishah, "Staff reflection on the effectiveness of whatsapp usage for organizational communication: A study in a private Malaysian medical school," *Malaysian J. Med. Heal. Sci.*, vol. 16, pp. 57–62, 2020.

- [38] S. Chan, "No WhatsApp rivals see nearly 1,200% growth ahead of privacy policy deadline," *Sensor Tower*, 2021. <https://sensortower.com/blog/whatsapp-signal-telegram-install-growth>.
- [39] B. Dean, "WhatsApp 2021 user statistics: How many people use WhatsApp?," *Backlink*, Mar. 2021. .
- [40] S. Manish, "Telegram, nearing 500 million users, to begin monetizing the app," *TechCrunch*, Dec. 23, 2020. <https://techcrunch.com/2020/12/23/telegram-to-launch-an-ad-platform-as-it-approaches-500-million-users/> (accessed Feb. 12, 2021).
- [41] J. Dove and P. Beaton, "What is WhatsApp? here's everything you need to know," *Digitaltrends*, Feb. 05, 2021. <https://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/what-is-whatsapp/> (accessed Feb. 13, 2021).
- [42] H. Rollason, "What countries are the biggest WhatsApp users in 2021?," *Conversocial*, Mar. 2021. .
- [43] O. Asmah, A. G. Sharita, and A. Nora, "Kajian keberkesanan penyampaian maklumat di jabatan kejuruteraan elektrik, Polimas," in *e-Proceeding National Innovation and Invention Competition Through Exhibition (iCompEx17)*, 2017, pp. 1–9.
- [44] P. B. Lekara, "Technological challenges in management of organizations," *Int. J. Bus. Law Res.*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 99–111, 2019.
- [45] A. Raji Ridwan, M. R. Sabrina, and I. Mohd Sobhi, "Social media marketing communication and consumer-based brand equity: An account of automotive brands in Malaysia," *J. Komun. Malaysian J. Commun.*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 1–19, 2018, doi: 10.17576/JKMJC-2018-3401-01.
- [46] A. R. Lubis, M. Lubis, and C. D. Azhar, "The effect of social media to the sustainability of short message service (SMS) and phone call," *Procedia Comput. Sci.*, vol. 161, no. July, pp. 687–695, 2019, doi: 10.1016/j.procs.2019.11.172.
- [47] Si. R. Baharin, "Ruang kerja dan penggunaan teknologi merubah pekerjaan masa kini : Satu kajian," *Researchga*, no. March, 2021.
- [48] K. Liz, "The effects of poor communication in the workplace," *The Alternative Board*, Aug. 15, 2019. <https://www.thealternativeboard.com/blog/the-effects-of-poor-communication-in-the-workplace> (accessed Jun. 24, 2022).
- [49] A. Gabbiadini, C. Baldissarri, F. Durante, R. R. Valtorta, M. De Rosa, and M. Gallucci, "Together Apart: The Mitigating Role of Digital Communication Technologies on Negative Affect During the COVID-19 Outbreak in Italy," *Front. Psychol.*, vol. 11, no. April, pp. 1–11, 2020, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.554678.