WhatsApp Usage in the Workplace among SME Employees in Metropolis

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Abstract

Purpose – As cellphones have become increasingly prevalent, instant messaging apps have surged in popularity. People's communication and business activities are altering as a result. This study looked into the use of WhatsApp in the workplace, with an emphasis on SMEs in Malaysia's Selangor and Kuala Lumpur metropolises.

Design/methodology/approach – The study explored the use of WhatsApp in the workplace using a quantitative approach, with data collected via Google Forms. Thus, this study analyzed data using SPSS on the main variables after obtaining responses from 100 SMEs employees.

Findings – From the quantitative perspective, the findings show a significant relationship between information, entertainment, work needs, social motives, and gratifications derived through WhatsApp usage. In general, the study found that when it comes to utilising WhatsApp in the workplace, SMEs employees' main motivations are work-related.

Research limitations/implications – Our study examined at how SME employees in two Malaysian cities used WhatsApp. This paves the possibility for comparable research to be conducted in other Malaysian states and countries to gain further insights by comparing contexts and places. Future research should differentiate the gratifications acquired while analysing the level of satisfaction with using WhatsApp in the workplace, and can take a longitudinal or qualitative approach.

Originality/value –This study has filled a gap by addressing instant messaging application knowledge in a Malaysian working perspective by testing the chosen variables as motives for usage and comparing it to other motives based on the Uses and Gratifications theory. The findings underscored that employees' needs had been the main motives of using WhatsApp in the workplace amongst SME employees.

Keywords: WhatsApp, Uses and Gratifications, instant messaging, SMEs, workplace.

1. INTRODUCTION

Smartphones have opened the path for instant messaging apps and changed the way people communicate and conduct business (Opeyemi et al., 2018). According to Chang and Ian (2014), individuals can now overcome time and geographical boundaries in interacting with new communication technologies. This offers unrestricted connectivity, but most modern mobile technologies are also low-cost and do not impose additional costs on customers. According to Ling and Lai (2016), new technology such as messaging apps has grown in popularity and importance, and people are growing more reliant on it in their daily lives.

People in this mediated environment are said to rely significantly on their mobile phones, which are growing increasingly personal and portable for users all over the world (Ariffin and Omar, 2018). As a result, Opeyemi et al. (2018) stated that smartphones and instant messaging applications have become integral in quotidian to the extent that one might feel incomplete without it.

For the new way of communication through mobile phones, Pauleen et al. (2015) argued that mobile technologies such as instant messaging applications have changed how people interact privately and professionally. Take WhatsApp, for example, this instant messaging programme is well-known as a mobile technology that allows digital communication with its large user base throughout the world (Chang and Ian, 2014). As of 2018, 60 billion messages have been delivered by 1.5 billion WhatsApp users around the globe (Caetano et al., 2018). From Ariffin and Omar (2018), the number of messages sent through this instant messaging application is larger than that of SMS sent. Like other instant messaging applications, WhatsApp provides its users with the ability to send a real-time message and share media content such as images and videos (Ahad & Lim, 2014). Besides, this instant messaging application allows its users to conduct a group-based interaction amongst their family members, friends, and co-workers.

According to the literature, one of the world's most popular instant messaging applications in the 21st century is WhatsApp, used extensively as global communication and information infrastructure, especially in developing countries (Ahad, & Lim, 2014; Caetano et al., 2018). WhatsApp is the most popular instant messaging application (We Are Social, 2018). Malaysian is ranked second for the most active WhatsApp users in the world (Statista, 2017). According to Bernama (2017), WhatsApp has been the popular choice for Malaysians since it offers many advantages. In this case, this instant messaging application simplifies and enables fast communication and information sharing between users.

The need for permanent connectivity has encouraged many organisations to adopt technology in supporting their communication and task completion in the workplace (Pazos et al., 2013). As a result, tools like instant messaging applications are becoming more present in the working environment. In general, Chang and Ian (2014) have shown that most organizations employ instant messaging applications to support administrative work, problem-solving, requesting suggestions, discussing dialogue not related to the job, and sharing information amongst co-workers and clients (Li et al., 2011). On the one hand, these researchers stated that instant messaging applications had been considered valuable for employees to improve their work scheduling and inter-organizational interaction. On the other hand, Darics (2014) explained that instant messaging applications had created a sense of co-presence for dispersed employees and also enable colleagues to check if they have a quick question regarding their work. Li, et al (2011) indicate that some firms have adopted instant messaging technology to build a more conducive working environment that encourages social presence and diminishes transactional distance at work.

Most of the study of instant messaging usage in Malaysia has focused on employee engagement and performance. Similarly, Iskandar et al. (2017), who researched different computer-mediated communication tools in one public service department in Malaysia has found out that there is a significant relationship between the usage of the instant messaging application and work performance. On the other hand, Omar et al. (2017) have highlighted that instant messaging application, specifically WhatsApp, does not affect the workload among Malaysian government employees. They added that WhatsApp usage had generated a positive impact on the work-life satisfaction of the employees. Also, Ariffin and Omar (2018) have discovered that instant messaging has helped create employee engagement in the workplace. And most employees claimed WhatsApp to be a helpful communication tool (Attalla et al., 2020). Moreover, in Aripin et al.'s (2011) study, instant messaging in the

workplace centers around obtaining information, maintaining work orders, keeping employees' relationships, and expressing feelings.

WhatsApp is the most widely used instant messaging software among Malaysian employees, with 96 percent of them using it once a month or more frequently (Digital News Asia, 2015). However, there is little study on its use among Malaysian employees of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). However, according to Wong (2018), more SMEs are implementing communication technologies in their businesses. The purpose of this study is to fill in the gaps by looking at how SMEs in Malaysia's Selangor and Kuala Lumpur metropolitan areas use instant messaging apps. The study's objectives are:

1.   To examine WhatsApp usage in the workplace amongst SMEs employees in Klang Valley.

2.   To measure the satisfaction level from using WhatsApp in the workplace.

3.   To evaluate the relationship between motives and gratification obtained from the usage of WhatsApp in the workplace.

2.   LITERATURE   REVIEW   AND THEORY

2.1 Instant Messaging Application

According to Opeyemi et al. (2018), the instant messaging application has become very popular with the Internet and smartphones. Indeed, Ling and Lai (2016) argued that instant messaging has snowballed in the mobile ecosystem. In today's networked environment, there are a variety of instant messaging applications made available on smartphones such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Line, Viber, and Telegram and can be connected on computers and tablets (Ariffin & Omar, 2018; Ling, & Lai, 2016). Increasingly, more social media platforms have adopted the features and functionality of instant messaging applications for their users. Darics (2014) explained that one of the major elements of instant messaging

applications is supporting both written and spoken communication. Pazos, et al, (2013) stated that the popularity of instant messaging applications is associated with their ability to support parallel communication. In this case, the instant messaging application does not only allow users to communicate synchronously, but it also lets its users send messages when their communicative partners are not available to communicate (Chang, & Ian, 2014).

With the instant messaging application, users can now exchange communication with multiple people at once and share files like images and videos through the application (Ariffin & Omar, 2018). Moreover, Opeyemi (2018) argued that users can now easily create a chat group with their social circle. In this case, the members of a specific chat group can engage with each other through the entire thread of messages (Ling & Lai, 2016). Indeed, such activities can be done without extra charges since the instant messaging application is normally free to download (Munyingo, 2017). The instant messaging programme, which is also considered a hybrid media (Chang and Ian, 2014), includes numerous capabilities for its users to express their status and availability for interactions (Ling and Lai, 2016). The instant messaging tool, according to the researchers, allows users to see the recipient's availability to respond to a message at a specified time. However, as Li et al. (2011) indicated, messages delivered through the instant messaging software will encourage users to be proactive because of this feature. Furthermore, according to the researchers, the built-in alert function would anticipate receivers to respond to the communication right away. This mobile application, which was meant to improve communication between the sender and the recipient, has had little influence on its users in diverse circumstances.

2.1.1 Factors Influencing the Usage of Instant Messaging Application

In their study, Ling and Lai (2016) explained that instant messaging applications vary geographically. They argued that a push in the social factor influences a specific community to choose   a   particular   instant   messaging

application as their communication channel. Opeyemi et al. (2018) have shown that different countries adopt different applications that support their native language: Example, WeChat became the first choice in China since it supports Chinese characters. The people in India choose the instant messaging application that supports Hindi text characters. In this case, this new technology has encouraged its users to select the application that adapts well to their needs and society (Pauleen et al., 2015). From Ling and Lai (2016), different audiences use another channel corresponding to their social context. And Chang and Ian (2014) explained that users would adapt themselves to their social environment regarding their media selection.

Ariffin and Omar (2018) stated that friends could be one of the main factors influencing mobile instant messaging applications. In this case, Khoir and Davison (2014) argued that the fear of missing out had led people to use a specific type of mobile application in their daily activities, such as in the workplace. Generally, Pazos et al. (2013) differentiate two factors that influence the usage of instant mobile applications between users: individual and environmental factors. These researchers explained that individual factors are the factors that englobe users' experience, proficiency, and preference towards the application. On the other hand, Pazos et al. (2013) stated that environmental factors describe how the environment affects media use and user choice. Indeed, in this mediated world, Ling and Lai (2016) argued that those who do not possess the messaging application will create a challenge for others since their inclusion in the group demands extra effort. Therefore, the researchers show that environmental factors influence individuals to use the messaging application that is accepted locally.

According to Pauleen et al. (2015), individuals need to adopt instant messaging applications in their daily activities. In this case, Khoir and Davison (2014) argued that digital natives might have a different approach to integrating this new technology into their daily lives. However, the researchers explained that it is essential to highlight that older people

can still embrace digital technology since cognitive age is more important than the chronological age when using instant mobile applications.

2.2 Motives for Using Instant Messaging Application

With the increasing usage of smartphones, it is becoming more relevant to understand the invention of mobile technology (Quan-Haase, 2012). Gan and Wang (2015) argued that motives drive using instant messaging.

According to a similar study by Gan and Wang (2016), instant messaging applications have expanded significantly in comparison to other communication-type applications. Data gathering is one of the gratifications obtained through the use of mobile technology. Likewise, Di and Guangsheng's (2018) study on the usage of two different mobile applications in China: users are said to be using instant messaging applications to gain diverse information such as news. Gan and Wang (2016) found that instant messaging programmes have been used to seek various information, including information relating to one's work, in their study on the use of instant messaging in organisations. Instant messaging applications, according to Iskandar et al. (2017), allow employees to exchange information through the group.

Given the interactivity feature of the instant messaging application, Quan-Haase and Young (2010) argued that instant messaging applications are also used as a medium of entertainment amongst the users. In the working environment, Aripin et al. (2011) have shown that some employees use instant messaging to communicate with their colleagues who have similar interests with them. Remarkably, this mobile application has been used to relax and kill time (Gan and Wang, 2015).

Furthermore, Aripin et al (2011) argued that instant messaging applications had become the communication medium between employers and their employees in the workplace. The researchers argued that many organisations have realized that this mobile

application can support communication within their organisation and stakeholders. According to Iskandar et al. (2017), communicating via the instant messaging application in the workplace enables the users to respond quickly and speak with a larger audience with no extra cost. Besides, they have highlighted in their study that employees prefer to use this mobile application since it can reduce geographical boundaries when communicating about their work. Specifically, Aripin et al. (2011) claimed that most organisations use instant messaging applications to schedule a meeting with co-workers, coordinate complex tasks, and schedule works within firms.

Regardless of endless prospects of this new mobile technology, Di and Guangsheng (2018) explained that the motives of using the instant messaging application can be observed by the social factors where users feel the need to keep updated with the adoption of new technology. In the context of the working environment, Aripin et al. (2011) stated that global competition in this mediated era had encouraged many organisations to adopt the new technology in their working culture. Indeed, the researchers argued that this new era had created the need to embrace new technology and related skills such as multitasking in the workplace.

2.3 Users' Satisfaction from Instant Messaging Application

Consequently, much research on the usage of instant messaging applications in the workplace has shown that this new mobile technology can increase users' satisfaction and performance (Khoir and Davison, 2014). In this case, the researchers have demonstrated in their study that new technologies help in facilitating efficient communication in the workplace amongst employees and stakeholders. Besides, Opeyemi et al. (2018) found out in their research that more than half of the respondents claimed to be more effective and productive when using the instant messaging application at work. According to Li et al. (2011), polychronic individuals are more satisfied by the nature of the instant messaging application that encourages the multi-tasking work process.

In addition, the researchers have also shown that different types of tasks and sources of information can affect the level of users' satisfaction.

Nevertheless, Chang and Ian (2014) claimed that former research regarding the matter has highlighted that the adoption of instant messaging applications in the workplace engenders a lot of interruptions, especially because users feel overwhelmed by the unexpected messages received from others. As Ling and Lai (2016) explained, users might feel disturbed with the flow of messages they receive from the instant messaging application. Indeed, both researchers argued that the adoption of instant messaging applications could be interruptive. Moreover, Pazos et al. (2013) explained that the experience of conflicts is higher when users rely heavily on electronic communication like instant messaging applications. They argued that using instant messaging applications can sometimes pose a problem to users, especially when they prefer face-to-face contact for discussion or more conflicting tasks.

Moreover, Ariffin and Omar (2018) stated that some employees who use the instant messaging application at work claimed that they do not want to be in the same group with their supervisors. In this case, although messaging application provides some benefits to its users, it can also trigger some challenges that affect their level of satisfaction (Li et al., 2011). Hence understanding how information technologies are being used can be observed by examining the user's satisfaction.

2.4 WhatsApp as a Communication Medium in the workplace

In this age of digitization, the advancement of communication technology has prompted the use of numerous instant messaging applications in daily communication, including interactions between coworkers and employers (Omar et al., 2017). WhatsApp has been used in several studies researching media usage for diverse audiences as one of the most popular mobile applications in the mobile technology ecosystem (Hashim et al., 2015). Smartphone

users prefer to use this mobile application for a variety of reasons. WhatsApp usage has been linked to its cost-free communication medium, interactive features, and high social influence, according to Church and Oliveira (2013), because it is one of the most popular instant messaging applications in today's mediated world. Instant messaging software are used in the workplace, as per (Ariffin & Omar, 2018; Hashim et al., 2015).

Despite the advantages offered, Mhlanga (2018) argued that WhatsApp usage in the workplace urged its users to always be alert and ready about their work even after working hours. This is because WhatsApp comes with several features that create the expectation of high-attentiveness, such as the last-seen feature, which allows users to see when the other users last opened the application (Pielot, 2014). Surprisingly, in a study conducted by Omar, et al (2017), the researchers have found out that WhatsApp users do not consider this mobile application as interruptive when determining their work-life balance. In line with the findings from Hashim et al. (2015), the usage of WhatsApp as a communication medium offers both pros and cons to its users, depending on how they utilize this technology. Given the forgone discussion, the conceptual framework of Figure 1 and hypothesizes are presented as:
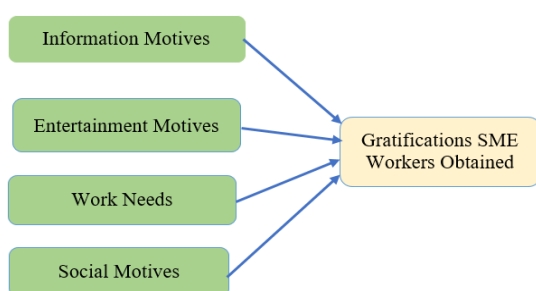

Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework*

The research generated the following hypotheses:

H1: Information motives and gratifications acquired from WhatsApp usage in the workplace have a significant relationship.

H2: There is a strong link between the motivations for using WhatsApp in the workplace and the gratifications gained.

H3: There is a strong link between work needs and the gratifications gained from using WhatsApp by SMEs in the workplace.

H4: There is a strong connection between social motives and the gratifications attained from using WhatsApp in the workplace.

3. METHODOLOGY

This is a cross-sectional study that used a quantitative technique with questionnaires delivered to SMEs employees in the Selangor and Kuala Lumpur metropolitan areas about their use of WhatsApp at work. Employees aged 18 and up with a variety of educational backgrounds were chosen as samples. Employees from SMEs were chosen for this study because SMEs use technology to communicate in their daily operations. The data was collected at random from SMEs employees in the two metropolises using Google Forms, an online survey application where respondents were told of the study's aim and assured of their confidentiality. Because it can reach a wider audience, the online survey became vital to reduce the geographical limit in the questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was used as a research instrument designed using a 7 point Likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 7 for strongly agree. The questionnaire was adapted from previous literature like Gan and Wang (2015, 2016), Chang and Ian (2014), Omar et al. (2017), and Di and Guangsheng (2018). The survey was organised into six sections thus, 1 through 6 in this case, as shown in Table 1. Employee demographic information, including age, gender, race, level of education, household income, years and daily usage time, and commonly used WhatsApp features, are collected in section A. The data for the study's independent and dependent variables was collected in Sections B through F. As shown in Table I, all of the items that assessed the variables were graded on a 7-point Likert scale

ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Table I. *Summary of items*

Sections	Items	Number of Items
1	Employees' demographics	8
2	Information motives	4
3	Entertainment motives	3
4	Work needs	10
5	Social motives	4
6	Gratifications obtained	23

3.1 Data Analysis

For this study, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to code, measure, and interpret the data. Initially, the collected data was entered into SPSS to ensure no missing data. Additionally, a descriptive analysis was conducted with output on the employees' demographics, usage, and satisfaction level of WhatsApp use. Moreover, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was also utilized to interpret and analyze the relationship between independent and dependent variables in the study. In general, the data are presented by calculating frequency, percentages, median, and standard deviation (SD).

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Respondents' Demographic Information

The employees' demographic information was collected and illustrated in Table 2 below. In particular, 54% of the respondents aged between 18 to 25 years old, 24% aged between 26 to 35 years old, 13% aged between 36 to 45 years old, whereas a minority of 9% were aged 46 years old and above. Out of 100 respondents, 47% were male, and 53% were female. Concerning their ethnicity, 63% of the respondents were Malay, 31% were Chinese, while a similar percentage of 3% for both Indian and other unclassified ethnicities. In terms of their education level, the highest rate of respondents had Bachelor's Degree, which is 64% followed by Postgraduate at 21%, Diploma at 11%, and SPM/STPM at 4%. Of all the employees who participated in the study, 32% claimed that their household income is more than RM 5000 monthly. And for other items, 23% was for those who gained RM 2000 – RM 3000 and RM 3000 – RM 4000 whereas 11% for those with household income below RM 2000 and those ranging between RM 4000 – RM 5000.

Besides, on respondents years and daily time of using WhatsApp, 96% reported using the mobile application for more than 2 years, while a minority of 4% have used WhatsApp for 1 to 2 years. As expected, none of the respondents has chosen the other item used for less than 1 year. On the other hand, 41% use WhatsApp for 3 – 5 hours daily, followed by 29% for 1 – 2 hours, 20% for more than 5 hours, and only 10% for less than 1 hour daily. On WhatsApp usage, 100% of respondents use the instant messaging application, followed by 81% who reported using the group communication feature, 68% for file sharing feature, 34% for video calls. In comparison, only 18% use the video call feature.

Table 2. *Information of respondents' demographics (n=100)*

Item (s)	Number	Percentage (%)	Item (s)	Number	Percentage (%)
Age Group			**Gender**		
18 - 25 years old	54	54.0	Male	47	47.0
26 - 35 years old	24	24.0	Female	53	53.0
36 - 45 years old	13	13.0			
46 years old and above	9	9.0			

Ethnicity			Level of Education		
Malay	63	63.0	SPM / STPM	4	4.0
Chinese	31	31.0	Diploma	11	11.0
Indian	3	3.0	Bachelor's degree	64	64.0
Others	3	3.0	Postgraduate	21	21.0
Household Income			**Years of Using WhatsApp**		
Below RM 2000	11	11.0	0 -1 year	0	0.0
RM 2000 - RM 3000	23	23.0	1 - 2 years	4	4.0
RM 3000 - RM 4000	23	23.0	2 years and above	96	96.0
RM 4000 - RM 5000	11	11.0			
RM 5000 and above	32	32.0			
Daily Time Spent on WhatsApp			**Frequently Used Features**		
Less than 1 hour	10	10.0	Instant messaging	100	100
1 - 2 hours	29	29.0	Voice call	34	34.0
3 - 5 hours	41	41.0	Video call	18	18.0
More than 5 hours	20	20.0	File sharing	68	68.0
			Group message	81	81.0

4.1 Information motives

The items in this section measured the usage of WhatsApp amongst SMEs employees in searching or obtaining information in the workplace. In all, 4 items were measured. The highest mean score of 6.17 arose from item 4 – "The group feature in WhatsApp allows me to exchange information with my group of colleagues." In contrast, the lowest mean score of 5.81 is measured from item 3 – "I use WhatsApp to exchange information with my clients." The mean and standard deviation values of all items as seen in Table 3 below:

Table 3. *Descriptive statistics of information motives*

No.	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I use WhatsApp because it facilitates information sharing in the workplace.	6.06	0.983
2	I use WhatsApp to exchange information with my colleagues.	6.11	1.10
3	I use WhatsApp to exchange information with my clients.	5.81	1.245
4	The group feature in WhatsApp allows me to exchange information with my colleagues.	6.17	0.933

4.2 Entertainment motives

On the entertainment motives of SMEs employees in using WhatsApp, 3 items were measured. The highest mean score of 5.14 came from item 1 – "I use WhatsApp to chat with my colleagues who share similar interests." And the lowest mean score of 4.61 came from item 2 – "I share funny pictures or videos with my colleagues through WhatsApp." All mean and standard deviation values for each item are in Table 4.

Table 4. *Descriptive statistics of entertainment motives*

No.	Items	Mean	Std. Dvtn
1	I use WhatsApp to chat with my colleagues who share similar interests.	5.14	1.627
2	I share funny pictures or videos with my colleagues through WhatsApp.	4.61	2.03

3	I use WhatsApp to chat during my downtime in the workplace.	4.65	1.961

4.3 Work needs

Table 5 illustrates 10 items with their mean and standard deviation values of SME employees need to use WhatsApp in facilitating work. The highest mean score of 6.32 is from item 2 – "I use WhatsApp to communicate with my colleagues in the workplace because it is free." In contrast, the lowest mean score of 5.53 came from item 9 – "I use WhatsApp for rapid file sharing in the workplace".

Table 5. *Descriptive analysis of work needs*

No.	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I use WhatsApp in the workplace because it is user-friendly.	6.17	1.129
2	I use WhatsApp to communicate with my colleagues because it is free.	6.32	1.062
3	I use WhatsApp to arrange a meeting with my colleagues.	5.55	1.527
4	I use WhatsApp to coordinate tasks with my colleagues.	5.78	1.382
5	I communicate through WhatsApp to get a prompt response from my colleagues.	5.98	1.303
6	I communicate through WhatsApp to get a prompt response from my clients.	5.87	1.376
7	I use WhatsApp to communicate with my colleagues who are not in the office.	6.08	1.22
8	I use WhatsApp to reduce geographical boundaries with my clients when communicating about work.	5.92	1.098
9	I use WhatsApp for rapid file sharing in the workplace.	5.53	1.617
10	I use WhatsApp to facilitate group communication in the	5.94	1.196

	workplace.		

4.4 Social motives

This section measured the use of WhatsApp amongst SMEs employees to socialize and maintain a relationship with their colleagues in the workplace. Item 3 has the highest average score of 5.29 in this context– "I use WhatsApp to keep in touch with my colleagues," while the lowest mean score of 4.05 was from item 4 – "I use WhatsApp to share emotions with my colleagues." Table 6 shows all mean and standard deviation values for all items.

Table 6 *Descriptive analysis of social motives*

No.	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I use WhatsApp to chat with my colleagues in the workplace.	5.17	1.875
2	I use WhatsApp to communicate with my colleagues about happenings in society.	4.8	1.891
3	I use WhatsApp to keep in touch with my colleagues.	5.29	1.647
4	I use WhatsApp to share emotions with my colleagues.	4.05	2.254

4.5 Gratifications obtained

The researchers calculated SME employees' satisfaction in using WhatsApp at the workplace using 23 items from different usage motives. In particular, the highest mean score of 6.52 was from item 9 – "I am satisfied with using WhatsApp to communicate with my colleagues in the workplace because it is free". However, the lowest mean score of 4.76 was from item 21 – "I am satisfied with WhatsApp because it enables me to share my emotions with my colleagues". Table 7 shows the mean and standard deviation values for all items.

Table 7. *Descriptive analysis of gratifications obtained*

No.	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I am satisfied with how WhatsApp facilitates information sharing in the workplace.	5.96	1.205
2	I am satisfied with using WhatsApp to exchange information with my colleagues.	6.08	1.061
3	I am satisfied with using WhatsApp to exchange information with my clients.	6.01	1.059
4	I am satisfied with the group features in WhatsApp because it enables me to exchange information with my groups of colleagues.	6.15	1.038
5	I am satisfied with how WhatsApp allows me to chat with colleagues who share similar interests.	5.45	1.473
6	I am satisfied with sharing funny pictures and videos with my colleagues through WhatsApp.	5.35	1.527
7	I am satisfied with using WhatsApp to chat during downtime in the workplace.	5.05	1.672
8	I am satisfied with using WhatsApp in the workplace because it is user-friendly.	6.38	0.862
9	I am satisfied with using WhatsApp to communicate with my colleagues because it is free.	6.52	0.797
10	I am satisfied with WhatsApp because it enables me to arrange a meeting with my colleagues.	5.76	1.498
11	I am satisfied with WhatsApp because it enables me to coordinate tasks with my colleagues.	5.83	1.288
12	I am satisfied with the rapid response I can get from my colleagues when communicating through WhatsApp.	5.86	1.223
13	I am satisfied with the rapid response I can get from my clients when communicating through WhatsApp.	5.85	1.226
14	I am satisfied with WhatsApp because it allows me to communicate with my colleagues who are not in the office.	6	1.064
15	I am satisfied with WhatsApp because it allows me to communicate with my geographically distant clients.	6.12	0.956
16	I am satisfied with WhatsApp because it allows me to share files rapidly.	5.84	1.461
17	I am satisfied with WhatsApp because it facilitates group communication in the workplace.	6.1	1.068
18	I am satisfied with using WhatsApp because it allows me to chat with my colleagues in the workplace.	5.5	1.554
19	I am satisfied with using WhatsApp because it allows me to communicate with my	5.43	1.584

	colleagues about happenings in society.		
20	I am satisfied with WhatsApp because it enables me to keep in touch with my colleagues.	5.57	1.358
21	I am satisfied with WhatsApp because it enables me to share my emotions with my colleagues.	4.76	1.99
22	I am satisfied with WhatsApp because it allows me to integrate into the working culture.	6.04	1.118
23	I am satisfied with WhatsApp because it allows me to adapt to my clients.	5.94	1.162

4.6 Inferential Statistics of Main Findings

This study's independent and dependent variables were tested using Pearson's Correlation. As stated in Statistics Solutions (2019), Pearson's Correlation Coefficient can be the best method to measure the association between variables. It gives information about the correlation, association magnitude, and direction of the relationship. Table 8 presents the Pearson's correlations of the study-tested variables.

Table 8. *Correlation test of research variables*

Variables	Gratifications Obtained	
	r	Sig value
Information motives	0.717	0.000
Entertainment motives	0.601	0.000
Work needs	0.826	0.000
Social motives	0.631	0.000

As in Table 8, there is a significant correlation between all variables and gratifications obtained. In particular, the correlation value

between information motives and gratification obtained is $r = 0.717$, $p = 0.000$ while the value of $r = 0.601$, $p = 0.000$ was recorded between entertainment motives and gratifications obtained. Besides, the correlation value of work needs with gratifications obtained is $r = 0.826$, $p = 0.000$ whereas the correlation value of $r = 0.631$, $p = 0.000$ was measured for social motives and gratifications obtained. The highest correlation value emerged from work needs and gratification obtained for this study. In contrast, the lowest correlation value revolves around entertainment motives and gratifications obtained. In brief, the results for the tested hypotheses are as follow:

H1 that predicts the significant relationship between information motives and gratifications obtained from WhatsApp usage in the workplace was supported, $r = 0.717$, $p = 0.000$.

H2 that predicts the significant relationship between entertainment motives and gratifications obtained from WhatsApp usage in the workplace was supported, $r = 0.601$, $p = 0.000$.

H3 that predicts the significant relationship between work needs and gratifications obtained from WhatsApp usage in the workplace was supported, $r = 0.826$, $p = 0.000$.

H4 that predicts the significant relationship between social motives and gratifications obtained from WhatsApp usage in the workplace was supported, $r = 0.631$, $p = 0.000$.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Considering the increase in adoption of instant messaging applications in the working environment (Pazos et al., 2013), this study examines WhatsApp usage in the workplace by surveying 100 SMEs employees in Klang Valley. Besides, this study also focuses on satisfaction and its relationship with usage motives. In line with previous studies, the findings of this study can be a reference to add to the understanding of WhatsApp usage in the workplace from the angle of SMEs employees in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur metropolitan areas.

This study indicates that group communication is the second most used feature in WhatsApp after instant messaging. Moreover, the file-sharing feature was used frequently, where more than half of respondents claimed to use it. In contrast, less than half of the respondents use the voice call feature, while the video call feature generated the least number of users amongst other features measured in the study.

For this study, the four motives for using WhatsApp in the workplace have been measured amongst the respondents. In particular, the respondents claimed that the group feature in WhatsApp has enabled them to exchange information in the workplace. Similar to the findings by Iskandar et al. (2017), this study's focus on SMEs employees has supported the fact that the group feature in WhatsApp has been used in the workplace to exchange information between the groups of colleagues. In terms of entertainment motives, the respondents argued that they have been using WhatsApp to chat with their colleagues who share the same interest with them. Indeed, this finding has supported the study conducted by Aripin et al. (2011), where employees use the instant messaging application to communicate with their colleagues who have similar interests. Besides, the study found that most of the respondents agreed that they have chosen to share through WhatsApp with their colleagues since it allows accessible communication in the workplace. This study has supported previous research by Church and Oliviera (2013) by showing that the respondents use WhatsApp for accessible communication.

Regarding the social motives of using this mobile application, the respondents stated that they have been using WhatsApp to keep in touch with their colleagues. Certainly, this novel study added to a new finding where WhatsApp is also being used in the workplace to stay in touch with colleagues.

In general, the study revealed that work needs had been the main motives of using WhatsApp in the workplace amongst SMEs employees. Indeed, the usage of WhatsApp has been associated with how it facilitates tasks in the workplace amongst the respondents. Most of the respondents are satisfied with using WhatsApp since it enables them to communicate with their colleagues without extra cost. In contrast, the gratification of sharing emotions amongst colleagues through WhatsApp was the least obtained.

Nevertheless, the study has shown that the four motives of usage have a significant relationship with the gratifications obtained by the respondents. In particular, all the study hypotheses are accepted. In this context, information motives, entertainment motives, work needs, and social motives are correlated with the gratifications obtained by the respondents.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

Our study has several important implications in line with the Uses and Gratifications theory. Since the adoption of the Internet and mobile technology is widespread in this mediated era, the Uses and Gratifications theory study is becoming more relevant in understanding new media usage amongst individuals (Liu, 2015).

Testing the three motives of usage for this study adopted from previous studies confirmed that the Uses and Gratifications theory is user-centric. Hence, media users must be aware of their media choices, specifically when choosing the media that leads to their satisfaction.

This study adds to the previous findings using SMEs in Malaysia by showing the significant relationship between work needs and gratifications obtained in the workplace. While most research about the theory focused on information, entertainment, and social motives of instant messaging usage in the workplace, this current study expanded the theory by adding the work needs as one of the variables. For this, work needs have been found to correlate the most with the gratifications obtained by the respondents. This study, therefore, filled in the gap by testing this variable as one of the motives for usage by measuring it with other motives of the Uses and Gratifications theory.

5.2 Practical Implications

Our study provides several inferences to instant message developers and employers from a practical perspective. Instant messaging developers can improvise the voice and video call features since the findings have shown that the two elements are the least used amongst the employees. Upgraded versions of the features might encourage employees to use them in their working environment. Besides, instant messaging developers, like WhatsApp, should have more features to facilitate work needs since they are the main motives for usage in the workplace.

On top of that, employers can use the group communication feature in WhatsApp to communicate effectively amongst the team. Likewise, firm-owners and employers should embrace instant messaging applications in the workplace since they correlate with the gratifications obtained in the working context.

5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study provides significant findings and implications. Nevertheless, we observed some limitations. Firstly, this study did not distinguish the gratifications obtained from the usage of WhatsApp, and the gratifications obtained from all of the motives were determined in one single gratification. Secondly, during data collection, we did not also consider the position and role of the respondents in the organisation.

From the discussed limitations, we recommend that future studies consider differentiating the gratifications obtained when examining the level of satisfaction of using WhatsApp in the workplace. Respondents' positions or roles should be part of attaining data on the motives and gratifications of using the instant messaging application. Moreover, future studies can also be conducted in other geographical locations, which might confirm or differ from the findings of this study. Finally, qualitative or mixed methods can be used for future studies.

5.4 Conclusion

To conclude, the gratifications obtained from using WhatsApp in the workplace correlate with information, entertainment, work needs, and social motives. Data collected were analysed quantitatively to measure usage, satisfaction, and how they relate. This study expanded the Uses and Gratifications theory by showing work needs as the primary motives for using WhatsApp among SMEs employees. Focusing on the usage of WhatsApp amongst SME employees, this study filled in the gap regarding instant messaging applications from a Malaysian working perspective. Thus, this study can serve the basis for much more in-depth research in the future, with its limitations corrected for a better understanding of WhatsApp usage in the workplace.

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