



WhatsApp Polls: A Creative Strategy to Enhance Student Interest and Learning Engagement

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ABSTRACT

The internet and technology are now spreading into the world of Education, including the WhatsApp application. According to the World Population Review 2024, there are 853.8 million WhatsApp users in India. After Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen a shift in conventional education system. Today's classrooms are more vibrant and alive. Teaching-learning has become more than a paper-pencil and blackboard work. It has liberated itself from the four-walled classroom and reached to the pockets of a student and available just one click away. WhatsApp is an application commonly used to communicate remotely, and users can also create groups for friendship between communities in different places. This research aims to find out the benefits of using the WhatsApp application as a learning medium to increase student interest in learning. The study employed a quantitative research approach. The population consisted of secondary school students and teachers, and a sample of 290 students was selected using a convenient sampling method. The study showed that using WhatsApp polls as a unique way to teach really got students interested, involved, and participating in the learning process. Students thought the polls were interesting and vibrant, which led to active participation



and group discussions both inside and outside of class. Teachers observed that students were paying more attention, getting feedback more quickly, and understanding their learning styles better. This basic digital tool helped everyone learn better, especially children who weren't very active or were weaker. In general, WhatsApp polls were a good and easy way to get secondary school students more interested, involved, and engaged in meaningful learning.

Introduction:

21st century has brought tremendous advancements in technology and so in our education system. After Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen a shift in conventional education system. Today's classrooms are more vibrant and alive. Teaching-learning has become more than a paper-pencil and blackboard work. It has liberated itself from the four-walled classroom and reached to the pockets of a student and available just one click away. They can learn whenever, wherever, however they want. Today, as we know, schools usually run offline where students physically attend the school but sometimes, due to some environmental, climatic or any disastrous conditions, schools run in online mode or in hybrid mode as per the requirement. This has led to the use of internet and social media sites for making teaching-learning possible. Efforts are made to make education of an individual unaffected in adverse conditions because education should never be stopped. To realize this promise, the teacher seeks various ways. In this line, the students are given online assignments, homework and teaching-learning instructions. With the use of latest technology, they ask their queries, questions and get the solutions in no time.

It is a bitter truth that we all have become very much social media addicted and so our students. Students love to open WhatsApp, Facebook than Textbooks. Use of internet and social media sites looks inseparable in this technological advancement era (Tiryakioglu, F., & Erzurum, F. (2011). Everyone is so much addicted that it looks an inseparable part of life. Everyone is reliable on internet for most of their daily activities whether it is education, marketing, or for maintaining the social relationship. Education is also being provided at various online platforms.

Gulbahar et al., (2010), in Tiryakioglu, F., & Erzurum, F. (2011), concluded that social media sites improve communication skills, enhance participation as well as social commitment, reinforce peer support, and ensure realization of education based on collaboration strategies. These social networking



sites can be also be easily and inexpensively used without getting much support from the system and management. That is also to say that they can be successfully integrated into educational processes.

Talking about students' perspective specially, this excessive use of internet and social media sites is both benefitting and exploiting the students, but the great threat is their exploitation and killing zeal towards academics. Therefore, the teachers and parents try to save the students from this addiction which seems to be a wild goose chase in the current scenario. We, the teachers, and the students' parents find ourselves helpless in restricting them from using internet and social media sites. Then, why should we not find a way to change this curse into a boon? We can reshape their habit in the way that it may become beneficial for them. Learning to be happened demands no specific time and place. A person can learn anywhere anytime and in their own possible ways. In this sense, creating Polls in WhatsApp groups for the purpose of engaging students especially weaker ones may be helpful. It has potential to engage the students more and that too, for weaker students, they may get some learning and get prepare for the exams.

Learning of Weaker students:

Generally, in our classrooms there are three categories of students; high achievers, low achievers and average students on the basis of their academic performance. High achievers are self-motivated, self-guided or very clear to their future goals and achievements. They have strong ethics, study habits and consistency in their performance. Average sstudents perform at an average level in the classroom.

Low achievers or weaker students show a gap between their potential and academic performance. They are not able to plan effective study strategies and have strong fear of failure. They have self-doubts and lack of confidence in themselves. Sometimes, these students are over-confident, and sometimes, they are the mischievous gang of the class who overlook classroom teaching-learning activities and enjoy bunking the class or teasing the teachers in various unethical manners. Low achievers or weaker students' this behaviour is very pathetic for the teachers. They plan a lot of strategies to engage them in the teaching-learning process and most of the time they get themselves helpless. Therefore, this strategy tries to engage all the students and specially such low achievers or weaker students in teaching-learning process so that they can also learn in their enjoyable manner and feel free from the boredom of classroom teaching.



Use of WhatsApp in India:

According to the *World Population Review 2024*, there are 853.8 million WhatsApp users in India. It means more than half of our population uses this social media site which makes a logical sense that among them the ones who use it very frequently are our kids and children. As per the data, Indians spent approximately 38 minutes per day on WhatsApp. This shows that this app is being used very frequently and excessively.

Poll in WhatsApp groups:

There is one feature in WhatsApp i.e. Create Poll which is very frequently used for gathering people's opinion about starting a meeting, planning a tour, or votes in favour of or against a motion. This feature can be used for study purpose too. As I have used this feature for teaching-learning purpose and found very helpful in engaging weaker students in the process. The researcher starts a poll in the form of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs). The students select the correct answer according to them. This poll runs and when the researcher sees most of the students have given their responses, the researcher gives the correct answers. After the poll, students get feedback. Student has option to change their responses. Thus, it makes teaching-learning very engaging and interesting.

How did the researcher find “Poll in WhatsApp group”, an innovative way of teaching-learning:

While thinking about enhancing weaker students learning, their participation and helping them in their Board exam preparation, the researcher observed people using WhatsApp poll for planning and scheduling a meeting, a trip or any other activities and asking for confirmation by the other mates. For this, they just run a poll in WhatsApp group and people responded in a Yes/No. After getting the responses from the participants, they decide whether they should move ahead or give up a plan. This led the researcher to think about its adoption in our teaching-learning process for the students' better engagement and to make learning enjoyable. Thus, the researcher created a separate WhatsApp group for the students and started to send Multiple Choice Questions in the form of a Poll where four options were given against the question. In this Poll, students have to select the correct option. They may opt multiple options, if enabled. After sometime, the researcher provides the correct answers to the questions. The group is left on “only admins” mode and hence, students are unable to do unnecessary chat in the group. In this way, the group is used only for learning purpose.



Research Questions:

How does creating a WhatsApp group and using polls?

What is the impact of WhatsApp polls on students' interest and engagement in classroom?

Objectives:

To assess the impact of WhatsApp polls on students' interest and engagement in classroom.

Methodology:

The study employed a qualitative research design to explore the use of WhatsApp polls as a strategy to enhance student interest and learning engagement. The population consisted of secondary school students and teachers, and the sample included 50 students and 10 teachers selected through purposive sampling based on their familiarity with WhatsApp-based learning. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews of WhatsApp group interactions to gain insights into participants' experiences and perceptions. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns related to engagement, interest, and implementation challenges. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly maintained throughout the research process.

Necessary precautions:

While adopting this practice, teachers must tell the students' parents about this innovative way and convince them so that they may allow the students to use the smartphones for that particular time span.


Group should be kept on only admins mode so that the students do not indulge in unnecessary chat.

How to create a Poll in WhatsApp group:

It is a very easy and handy feature and anybody can use it whether the person is a techno savvy or not. The students and the teachers both can use it very frequently and effectively. Today's students are very smart in using social media sites and so the teachers are. Even senior teachers use WhatsApp very smartly. So, it makes its adoption a very simple and easy task for everyone using WhatsApp.

Here are the following very simple ways to create the Poll in a WhatsApp group:



Open the **chat box** → Click on the + sign or Attachment symbol  in the comment section → Select **Poll** → Write the question in the **Ask question** section → Add options in the **OPTIONS** section

You can **Allow multiple answers** if requires. Otherwise, you may **restrict the students to select only one option**.

How does the researcher use WhatsApp Poll for teaching-learning purpose?

The researcher usually starts WhatsApp Poll either in the morning or in the evening when students get their parents smartphones to see the updates in the school groups. There are approx. 350 students in all the sections of Class 10, out of them 290 students have joined the group and respond to the Multiple Choice Questions regularly. Before this WhatsApp poll, only a few students used to respond in the classroom but now they are engaged and enjoying the learning.

Now the question is how does the researcher use WhatsApp Poll. It is very simple. The researcher sends the MCQs in the form of WhatsApp Poll with 4 options in which 1 is correct. The students opt the correct answer as per their understanding. The question starts getting responses in no time. This shows their readiness and active participation. Most of the time they provide correct answers. They also see what option has chosen by which of their friends and if they are in doubt or incorrect they quickly correct themselves. Most chosen option helps weaker students to choose the correct option. This is a kind of peer learning. At the end, the researcher announces the correct answers and they immediately get feedback also.

Students' feedback:

Student 1- *Sir, ismein achha lagta hai. Agar kisi question ka answer nahi ata to main book mein dekh leta hoon ya google kar leta hoon fir main answer bata deta hoon. Mujhe yad bhi ho jata hai.* (Sir, I like it. If I do not know the answer, I search in it in the book or google it and then reply. In doing this, I also remember the answer.)

Student 2- *Sir mujhe class me bolne me dar lagta hai, sharm aati hai sabke samne bolne mein. WhatsApp poll me sahi lagta hai bolna nahin padta bas correct option select karna hota hai.* (Sir, I am hesitant in front of the whole class, but in WhatsApp Poll, I feel good, I just have to select the correct option.)



Student 3- *Main to class me bhi response deta hoon sir. Lekin is platform pe bhi achha lagta hai. Mai question se related other topics bhi google kar leta hoon. Topic ko lekar meri clear understanding ho jati hai aur extra learning bhi ho jati hai. (Sir, I respond in the classroom. But I feel good at this platform too. I also google other topics related to the question. It helps me in having my clear understanding about the topic and I get extra learning too.)*

Student 4- *Mujhe ye ek KBC game ki tarah lagta hai jis mein questions ke answer dena mujhe achha lagta hai. Mujhe bahut sari chizein asani se yad ho jati hain. (It is like a KBC game in which I like answering the questions. I remember and learn the things easily.)*

Student 5- *Mere teacher ne mujhe bhi WhatsApp Poll create karna sikha diya hai. Kabhi kabhi main bhi WhatsApp Poll create karke syllabus se related questions send karta hoon. Is activity mein hum bahut si chizein bina bore huye sikh lete hain. (My teacher has taught me how to create WhatsApp Poll. Sometimes, I also create Whatsapp Poll and post the questions related to the syllabus. In this activity, we learn a lot of things without getting bored.)*

There were other numerous responses from the students regarding this which are very much similar to the above mentioned responses. This shows that this innovative way of teaching is engaging the students and helping them in various ways.

Teachers' feedback:

Teacher 1- One of the colleagues teaching a section of Class 10 told that the students took more interest in responding the questions sent in the form of WhatsApp Poll. He admitted that now he is able to connect actively with more students than previously. *Classroom me to only kuchh students hi response dete hain jinmein se mostly toppers students hi hote hain, lekin WhatsApp Poll mein ab low achievers and non-engaged students bhi options dekh kar aur dusre students ke response dekh kar answer kar rahe hain. (Only a few students respond in the classroom in which most of the students are toppers, but in WhatsApp Poll, low achievers and non- engaged ones are also giving responses taking help from the responses given by other students.)*

Teacher 2- Another colleague responded that this method is helping a lot. It is engaging the students at all levels of learning. *Low achievers dusre students ke reponses dekh kar, ya books aur internet se answer search kar ke response de rahe hain. Isse ye bachche engage ho rahe hain aur kuch seekh rahe hain. Aur unke response dekhkar lagta hai ki wo is tarah ki activity mein zyada enjoy kar rahe hain aur joyful learning ho rahi hai. (Low achievers are responding by copying other students' responses, or by*



going through the books or by googling the answer using internet. Therefore, they are getting engaged in learning. And seeing their responses looks like they are enjoying this activity and joyful learning is taking place there.)

Teacher 3- *Mere section mein low achievers ki sankhya zyada hai aur classroom teaching mein bhi unka passive participation rehta hai, lekin is activity mein maine dekha ki jo bachche class mein bolte nahin the aur unse response nikalwana mushkil hai, wo bachche bhi WhatsApp Poll mein participate kar rahe hain.* (There are a greater number of low achievers in my section and also they show passive participation in the classroom, but through this activity I found that those students who do not respond in classroom and it was very difficult to get any response from them, they were participating actively in WhatsApp Poll.)

Teacher 4- *Main Social Science ki teacher hoon aur main isko apne subject pe bhi apply karungi. Ye mujhe effective lagta hai kyunki ismein bachche bina kisi hichkichahat aur jhijhak ke response kar rahe hain. Kuch bachche other students ke samne aur teachers ke samne bolne se darte hain lekin online khoob response dete hain.* (I am a Social Science teacher and will apply it in my subject. It seems to be effective because the students respond without hesitation as some students have fear of facing students and teachers but respond online in a very impressive manner.)

Teacher 5- *Main isko apne bachchon ki competitive exam ki preparation ke purpose ke liye use karungi. Yeh kuch new laga mujhe kyunki bachcon se social media ko dur karna possible nahi lagta isliye ye behtar hai ki hum unko is tarah se engage kar dein ki wo iska behtar use kar sakein.* (I will use it for my students' competitive exams preparation. This is an innovative approach because keeping students away from social media seems a herculean task so it is better to engage them in such activities so that they can make better use of social media.)

The above responses from the teachers shows that this way of teaching-learning is very much interesting and helpful in engaging the learners and enhance their learning. It also shows that the other teachers are also interested in adapting it into their teaching activity.

Benefits of Creating WhatsApp polls for learning:

This is an innovative and interactive teaching practice which motivates those students who do not usually engage in the classroom teaching and are very much addicted to social media sites. In this way, they respond to the questions hurriedly. Chatting and responding questions in WhatsApp group becomes fun for them. This brings joy among them and ensures their active participation at the same time. After using



this WhatsApp Poll, I saw an increase in the students' motivation, participation and learning. Their responses suggested that they are trying to generate their interest. They began to respond in the class too.

Here, we can enlist the benefits of adopting this strategy in teaching-learning as following:

- i. Technology assisted learning
- ii. Easy to adopt
- iii. Time, money and energy efficient
- iv. Helps in learning actively rather than passively
- v. Helps in connecting and collaborating outside the classroom
- vi. It is like a game and an enjoyable activity which makes teaching-learning enjoyable
- vii. Instant responses from students
- viii. Students can change their options if they had given wrong answer.
- ix. Instant assessment of responses and feedback
- x. Easy to analyze the students' progress
- xi. Beneficial for the preparation of weaker students for Board examinations of Class 10 & Class 12 and also for other competitive exams.
- xii. Helpful in practice of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs), one liners or single statements type notes or bullets.
- xiii. Teacher has the control over the activity and can decide when to provide the answer key.
- xiv. They can search the right answer and respond accordingly, hence, their curiosity increases. Thus, guiding them towards access to many other online educational resources.
- xv. Board exam preparation of weaker students can be done effectively.
- xvi. We can also guide the students towards better use of internet and social media platforms for learning.
- xvii. Mostly weaker students or the low achievers will be benefitted.



- xviii. High achievers will sense a feel of proud by giving the correct answers most of the time. They will also be motivated towards learning more and more new topics and facts regarding the content so that they can maintain their status in the class.
- xix. Making habit of regular study
- xx. Keeps parents and teachers informed regarding the students' progress.
- xxi. Also engages learners who are away from school or absent on regular basis.
- xxii. If group is left on only admins, then the students will not be able to make conversations with their classmates or any personal chats.
- xxiii. The WhatsApp Poll runs very silently without too much notifications and thus, not disturbing the persons.

Reinforcement during WhatsApp Poll:

At the end of the Poll, the name of students who gave most numbers of correct answers can be announced separately. They can be given reinforcement in the form of motivating images, emoji reactions, thumb up, trophy or flowers which we usually use in our WhatsApp chats to strengthen the desired responses and to appreciate their participation.

Opportunities:

Using WhatsApp poll for teaching-learning provides numerous opportunities which are as follows:

- It provides opportunity to engage every learner in a very interactive way.
- It motivates weaker students to participate in the process.
- It makes teaching-learning an interesting activity.
- It provides flexibility of time, and place.
- It fosters competitive skills among the learners.
- It may helpful in boosting their logical ability due to the objective nature of questions.
- Sensitize them about better use of social media sites.



- To connect the students who are staying away from classroom due to some injury or other personal commitments.

Challenges:

Though this way of teaching-learning is very much engaging and fruitful but it has a lot of challenges in its adoption. Access to technology, availability of internet & multimedia phones, and electricity are the big concerns. Parents, teachers and schools may help in this regard by providing them the necessary support.

Conclusion:

In this era of technological advancement, students have become very much addicted to internet. They have lack of interest in traditional classroom and teaching methods. Therefore, they lack in their motivation and their achievement in academics. Their academic performance becomes a matter of concern for the parents and the teachers. Thus, the teachers have to find and adopt new and innovative ways to enhance their learning and achieve the desired goals. Problems can be turned into solutions if one thinks and reflects on them. Staying away from smartphones, internet and social media sites seems uncontrollable in today's world. Thus, we should think ways to take this change as an opportunity rather than just taking it as a curse. This innovative way has a potential to engage the learners in interactive way where they will be the active participants in teaching- learning process rather than just coming to school, sitting in the classroom and becoming passive listeners. Taking the learning from the WhatsApp group to the classroom is very easy. Teachers can start the class with yesterday's questions on the WhatsApp poll can have a promising impact on teaching-learning. This way of teaching is according to the need of the hour and will surely be fruitful in order to restore the students' motivation and engage them actively in the teaching-learning process at any level.

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