

Impact of IMO messenger on the university level students: A sociological study

Md Golam Rabbani Sarker

Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh

Abstract

IMO is an amazing application and with the help of it we can connect ourselves to the society and the whole world. It is an effective medium for the flow of information and ideas. This application is advantageous for us from many ways which occupies a major part of our day-to-day life. However, it has some harmful effect on the life of students. Hence, it is essential to know how it is affecting the life of students and the society at large. The present study is an attempt to study the impact of IMO with reference to the students of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh. This empirical study has been conducted upon 300 respondents with a questionnaire, which was used as a tool of data collection for the survey. The study has revealed that being a medium of mass communication, IMO has also a profound negative impact on students and adversely affects their education, behavior and routine lives. It messes up much of study time of students and spoils their spelling skills and grammatical construction of sentences. This app has been found to be highly addictive, leads to lack of concentration during lectures, results in difficulty in balancing online activities and academic preparation and distracts students from completing their assignments. The impact is so powerful that users give up their real world interest. Their happiness or sadness depends on the reply which they receive from other users. They cannot control themselves from constantly chatting, replying and sharing of ideas.

Keywords: IMO messenger, Impact, Skype, WhatsApp

1. Introduction

IMO (In My Opinion) started in the year 2007, is a mobile messaging app which allows the users to exchange messages without having to pay for SMS. The IMO messenger was purposely created by Ralph and Georges Harik (2007) to make communication and the distribution of multimedia messaging more easily and faster. IMO works with internet connectivity and helps its users to stay in touch with friends and relatives in their contact list. IMO has done same for messaging what Skype and WhatsApp do for voice and video calls. IMO is free on the Android, iPhone and iPad. It is easy to get started. Simply enter the telephone number of the device into the app. It then sorts through the contacts (with your permission) on the phone to figure out who else also has the app already installed. Users can then invite more contacts or go ahead and start sending messages to the ones that the app discovered.

With the help of this application, an individual can chat with family, friends beyond the limit of seas and keep contact to everybody at one time. This amazing app is useful for us from many ways. The students are increasingly utilizing this application for personal update, event activities, notes and messages. But apart from this, it occupies their lives from all around and makes them addict of it which is difficult to control. Thus this paper will try to focus on the positive as well as negative impact of IMO on students.

1.1 Review of Literature

Little works on IMO have been done in Bangladesh. Some works are found in India and in other countries but they are on WhatsApp and overall social networking site based. IMO is an application of social media therefore literary review of this paper can also be covered herewith.

Cox and Rethman (2011) Social media can be defined as forms of electronic communication through which user can interact among people freely and can share, exchange and discuss the information, ideas, personal messages and other content between each other such as using a multimedia messages, personal words, pictures, video and audio and utilizes online platform only by connecting to the Internet.

Dr. Neelamalar and P. Chitra (2009) ^[1] they conducted a study to identify the issues regarding the youth's social networking usage and the resultant impact on their social interactions. The sample size was 100 (50 teens 17-19 yrs and 50 youths 20-22 yrs). The findings of the study include 98% of people who are the members in social networking sites in which 68% are strangers, 7% are those who have very intimate relationship with their online friends and 20% are good friends with the virtual strangers. Research shows that Indian youth are not only techno-savvy and socially active but they also possess social consciousness.

Tsai and Lin (2012) suggest that Internet addiction is an important concern among adolescents. In their study of 700 Taiwanese high school students, 88 were deemed Internet addicts according to the Internet Addiction Scale which conducted for high school students in Taiwan. The research shows that ego-identity achievement in middle school students is negatively related to pathological and extreme Internet use. This research says that these students are getting addicted to Internet which is the serious problem for the adolescents in present age.

Johnson Yeboah and George Dominic Ewur (2014) ^[4] conducted a research to find out the impact of WhatsApp messenger on academic performance of youth and data was collected from 550 students of tertiary institutions of Ghana. The result indicates that WhatsApp has negative impact on the study of youth. It engendered procrastination related

problem, error of spellings and grammatical construction of sentences. Therefore it is difficult to balance simultaneously the online activities and academic performance with WhatsApp.

Anshu Bhatt and M. Arshad (2016) [3] they also conducted a research to find out the impact of WhatsApp on youth. Data was collected from 100 samples of youth from Agra, India. Research shows that WhatsApp has positive as well as negative impact on youth. It affects their education, behavior and routine lives. It is highly addictive in nature. Findings show that youths are spending more time on this application rather than spending quality time with their family members.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- To examine the intensity of the usage of IMO messenger among the university level students.
- To know the purpose of using IMO messenger.
- To investigate the way how it affects the education, psychology, routine life and family life of the students.
- To know the positive as well as negative impact of IMO messenger on students.

1.3 Hypothesis of the Study

1. The intensity of usage of IMO messenger is very high among the female students of BRUR (Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur).
2. IMO messenger has negative impact on students.
3. IMO promotes unethical pictures, video clips and images among students.

2. Methodology

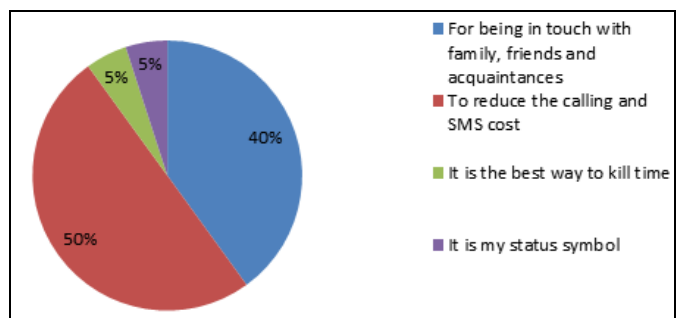
This research deals with qualitative approach with the help of quantitative analysis to find out in depth, how does it affect the psychology, routine life and family life of students.

The research has made the use of survey method. Survey was conducted among the IMO user of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh with sample size of 300 students between the age group of 18-23 years. This age group of students (18-23 yrs) who have been chosen for the survey are the heavy users of social media and early adopters of

advanced technological application. The survey was conducted through interview schedule. Some data were collected through personal interview to get a deeper insight and more information regarding the research.

The researcher used judgemental sampling to identify the samples for the study. Students of BRUR, who possess smart phones and are users of IMO messenger, were taken for the study. The population under study was all the students of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh (BRUR). Since the total student of BRUR is almost 7000 and it was impossible to get data from the whole population, so questionnaire was distributed among 300 students (Male 150 and Female 150).

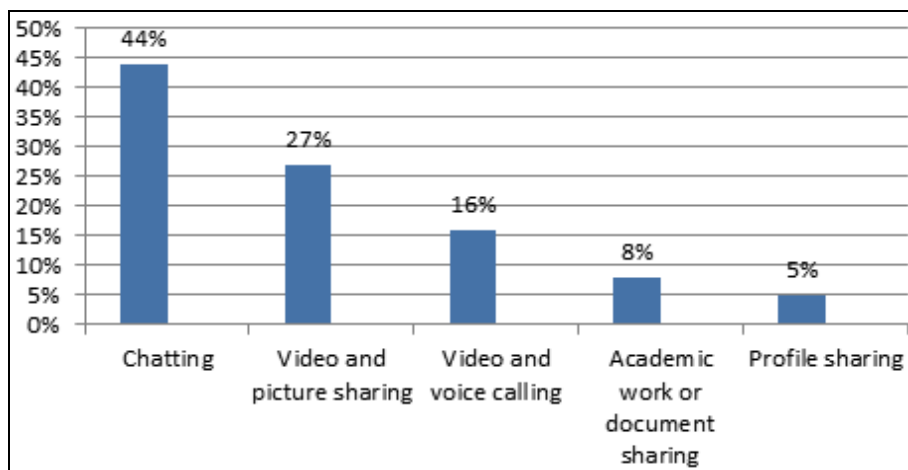
2.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation



Source: Survey data (2016)

Fig 1: Purpose of using IMO messenger

Students were asked about the purposes of using IMO messenger on their mobile phones. The researcher was amazed at their responds. The finding of the survey reveals that majority of students which is 50% of the sample make a view that they use IMO messenger because of its cheap cost which reduce the calling and SMS expenditure. And 40% of respondents have the opinion that they use IMO for being in touch with family, friends and acquaintances. 5% of respondents say that it is the best way to kill time, while another 5% of respondents say that it is their status symbol.



Source: Survey data (2016)

Fig 2: Feature of IMO that is mostly used by students

Researcher asked to the respondents about the activities or feature of IMO that is mostly used by the students. The study

reveals that 44% of respondents use IMO for chatting with friends on different issues rather than academic work on

campus. 27% of respondents give the reply that they remain engaged in video and picture sharing. In this case they share comedy videos and joking pictures to remove their tension. Sometimes they share unethical pictures also. 16% of respondents use the video and voice calling feature of IMO mostly. Sometimes they call strangers just to know how the other person looks like. 8% of respondents use the application for academic work or document sharing and very low percentile of 5% students update their status and see the profile picture of others on IMO. Research also shows that there is a link between usage of IMO and poor academic performance of the students. A student who has a lot of friends on IMO is most likely going to be responding to more people and thus spending more time in chatting.

Table 1: Time spent on IMO

Time spent on IMO	No. of respondent	Percentage
1-2 hours	28	9.3%
3-4 hours	42	14%
5-6 hours	84	28%
Over 7 hours	146	48.7%
Total	300	100%

Source: Survey data (2016)

The finding of the survey reveals that 9.3% of total respondents spent 1-2 hours per day on IMO. This group of students knows how to do best use of time. 14% of respondents spent 3-4 hours per day on IMO while 28% of respondents spent 5-6 hours per day. Most remarkable fact is that 48.7% of respondents spent 7 hours and more on IMO. They check frequently their cell phone in spite of engaging in studying, eating or doing something important.

Table 3: Impact of IMO on real relationship

Response	Agree		Disagree	
	No. of respondent	Percentage	No. of respondent	Percentage
IMO is overtaking your real relationship	192	64%	108	36%
Procrastinate work, assignment because of IMO	207	69%	93	31%

Source: Survey data (2016)

Above table shows that the vast majority of students 64% say that IMO is overtaking their real relationship. Now a day's most of the students take the well wishes from their friends, relatives and acquaintances on IMO and avoid to visiting their home directly. They seem to stick with their cell phone which destroys their real relationship and reduce communication between family members. While 36% of the respondents have the positive opinion, they have the view that IMO does not take over their real relationship because they think that it is

The study shows that the more time a student spends using IMO, the less time he or she has to attend to academic matters such as class work, assignments, preparation for class test, mid-semester exams and final examination which account for the students poor grade points. If students bring their mobile phones to class, they get bored of the lesson and find their way into IMO. This distracts their attention from the main lesson and they are not able to fully understand what is going on.

Table 2: Criteria to include in IMO list

Response	No. of respondent	Percentage
Close friends	126	42%
Acquaintances	99	33%
Closely connected communities	60	20%
Strangers	15	5%
Total	300	100%

Source: Survey data (2016)

To better understand the effect of IMO on students, it is analyzed that on what basis the students establish their virtual circle. Then 42% of the respondents stated that they include only those person in their IMO list on whom they have strong trust, hence they choose only close friends for it to share personal talks. 33% of the respondents revealed that they include only those people to whom they are well acquainted in real life, while 20% of the respondents choose closely connected community persons like family members and relatives and a very low percentile 5% of the respondents include strangers in their list. Thus the study reveals that students on IMO give high priority to their personal preferences and likeness rather than other logical reason.

Table 4: Psychological impact of IMO

Response	Agree		Disagree		Can't say	
	No. of respondent	Percentage	No. of respondent	Percentage	No. of respondent	Percentage
Have you been addict of IMO	198	66%	81	27%	21	7%
Do you feel psychological changes in yourself because of IMO	180	60%	84	28%	36	12%
Is IMO occupying your privacy	210	70%	75	25%	15	5%
Is IMO responsible for social isolation	177	59%	81	27%	42	14%

Source: Survey data (2016)

desirable to check the app but you must not be addict to check again and again this app.

Another question was asked to the respondents whether IMO procrastinate work or not. 69% of respondents agreed to this statement. They said IMO creates serious interferences with their assignment, studies and normal social functioning. But low percentile about 31% respondents has the idea that this app does not affect them in negative way because they give first preference to their real activities instead of online activities.

Students were asked whether they have been addict of IMO or not. 66% of the students stated the fact that at the initial level they use it to catch friends but ultimately spend too much time in chatting and sending pictures to the friends. They also said that many time they deleted the app but after some interval, they launched it again. Therefore they admit that they have become addict of this app which put an adverse impact on their mental health while 27% of respondents denied such fact. 7% of respondents were confused whether they have become addict or not.

In case of finding out the psychological impact respondents were asked if they feel any psychological changes in themselves because of IMO. A majority of 60% was strongly agreed that their mood fluctuate with responses of IMO message. Its impact is so powerful that users leave real world interest and even their entire emotions are dependent on this app. They become happy or sad on the reply of other users.

They have been hypnotized and controlled by other users while 28% of respondents were disagreed with this fact. The finding of the survey reveals that 70% of the respondents say that IMO occupies their privacy and personal life. But they feel helpless to control themselves from constantly chatting, replying and sharing information all the time. It is not good to know about each and every moment of other people’s personal life. For involving others in their small decisions and also forcing their ideas on other’s decision can be proved very dangerous and hazardous. On the contrary 25% of respondents did not agree with this fact in where 5% were confused about the answer.

To find out the psychological impact of IMO students were asked whether IMO is responsible for social isolation or not. 59% of respondents agreed with this fact, 27% did not agree while 14% of respondents could not decide the answer.

Table 5: Impact of IMO on study

Response	Yes		No		Can't say	
	No. of respondent	Percentage	No. of respondent	Percentage	No. of respondent	Percentage
Imo is affecting your academic activities	144	48%	102	34%	54	18%
IMO annihilates lavish time of career building of students	189	63%	90	30%	21	7%
Use IMO during class lecture	66	22%	234	78%		
Can balance online activities and academic assignments	84	28%	216	72%		
Send SMS with proper spelling and grammatical construction of sentences	54	18%	246	82%		
Use Banglish on IMO	237	79%	63	21%		

Source: Survey data (2016)

According to the survey 48% of the respondents stated that IMO takes lots of time of their study and they cannot complete their assignment in time. Many times they strive to control themselves to view IMO messages but they do not get satisfied until they check their app. While remaining 34% of respondents stated that IMO affects their study positively because through this app they can connect to their faculty and classmates and get quick responses of their query. They can also share notes and purposive information through it. Another 18% of respondents were confused about the answer. However, to better understand the impact of IMO on study students were asked whether IMO annihilates lavish time of career building of students or not. 63% of respondents were agreed with this statement, 30% did not agree while remaining 7% cannot decide the answer. While researcher asked to the respondents whether they can balance online activities and academic assignments, the researcher was amazed at their responses. Because majority of them about 72% of respondents give the reply that they cannot balance online activities and academic assignments, while 28% of respondents say that they give first preference to their academic activities instead of online activities.

In case of finding out the impact of IMO on study, a majority of 82% respondents used short hand in their conversation which destroys their grammatical construction of sentences. Respondents also stated that IMO is responsible for destroying their spellings. On the other hand, 18% of respondents send SMS with proper spelling and grammatical construction of sentences. From the survey it is seen that 79% of respondents admitted of the usage of Banglish during

conversation that weakens their grammar, while 21% of respondents did not agree with the view.

2.2 Test of Hypothesis

To test the hypothesis researcher used chi-square (χ^2) test and to show the correlation or to test the significance of chi-square result researcher used Tschuprow’s t test.

2.3 Hypothesis (1)

H_0 = The intensity of usage of IMO messenger is not very high among the female students of BRUR.

H_1 = The intensity of usage of IMO messenger is very high among the female students of BRUR.

Table 6

Time spent	Male	Female	Total
1-2 hours	20	8	28
3-4 hours	25	17	42
5-6 hours	60	24	84
Over 7 hrs	45	101	146
Total	150	150	300

Source: Survey data (2016)

At 3 degrees of freedom (df) and 5% level of significance our computed chi-square (χ^2) value (43.56) is bigger than table value (7.81).

C. $V > T.V$

43.56 > 7.81

We therefore reject null hypothesis (H_0) and accept alternative one (H_1). It means the intensity of usage of IMO messenger is very high among the female students of BRUR.

From the significant test of chi-square result (43.56) by using Tschuprow's t test formula, we get t value equal to 0.22. It means there is a negligible correlation between the intensity of usage of IMO messenger and female students of BRUR.

2.4 Hypothesis (2)

H_0 = IMO messenger has no negative impact on students.

H_1 = IMO messenger has negative impact on students.

Table 7

Response	Male	Female	Total
Positive	40	68	108
Negative	110	82	192
Total	150	150	300

Source: Survey data (2016)

At 1 degrees of freedom (df) and 5% level of significance our computed chi-square (χ^2) value (11.34) is bigger than table value (3.84).

C. $V > T$. V

11.34 > 3.84

We therefore reject null hypothesis (H_0) and accept alternative one (H_1). It means IMO messenger has negative impact on students. From the significant test of chi-square result (11.34) by using Tschuprow's t test formula, we get t value equal to 0.19

Therefore, it can be said that there is a negligible correlation between the usage of IMO messenger and negative impacts on students.

2.5 Hypothesis (3)

H_0 = IMO doesn't promote unethical pictures, video clips and images among students.

H_1 = IMO promotes unethical pictures, video clips and images among students.

Table 8

Response	Male	Female	Total
Agree	80	100	180
Disagree	54	42	96
Neutral	16	8	24
Total	150	150	300

Source: Survey data (2016)

At 2 degrees of freedom (df) and 5% level of significance our computed chi-square (χ^2) value (6.38) is bigger than table value (5.99).

C. $V > T$. V

6.38 > 5.99

We therefore, reject null hypothesis (H_0) and accept alternative one (H_1). It means IMO promotes unethical pictures, video clips and images among students. From the significant test of chi-square result (6.38) by using Tschuprow's t test formula, we get t value equal to 0.10

Therefore, we can say that there is a negligible correlation between IMO messenger and its promotion of unethical pictures, video clips and images among students.

3. Findings

1. Finding of the research shows that majority of students about 50% joined IMO to reduce the calling and SMS

cost. Apart from this it is a good source of communication and students can be in touch with their love one through it.

2. About 44% of respondents reveal that their favorite activities on IMO are chatting, joking videos and picture sharing.
3. It is revealed from the research that the intensity of usage of IMO is very high among the students of Begum Rokeya University especially among the female students. About 48.7% of respondents use IMO for 7 hours or more in a day.
4. According to the survey 42% of respondents include only close friends in their IMO list.
5. 64% of sample has reported that IMO overtakes their real relationship. Therefore it is strong reason for social isolation.
6. High percentile about 66% admitted that they have become addicted of IMO. Their entire emotions depend on this app, which create adverse impact on their psychology. 70% of respondents show that IMO made a serious interferences in their privacy.
7. According to the survey 63% of the sample stated that IMO occupies their studying time and responsible for a lot of grammatical mistakes, lack of concentration while lecturing. Thus it has negative effect on the study.

3.1 Recommendations

- Time management is essential for online activities. Students must learn to balance between online activities and academic activities.
- Students should give priority to their life and career building instead of giving priority to the IMO messenger.
- Unannounced quizzes should be conducted frequently by lecturers to compel students to sit up.
- Mobile phone should either be forbidden in lecture halls or switched off if allowed in, instead of the prevailing practice of allowing them in but must be put on silent mode.

4. Conclusion

The main goal of this paper is to find out impact of IMO on students. IMO is beneficial from many ways like to keep in touch with their dear ones, especially when they live far from their home. It is very helpful even for those people who feel shyness in social interaction. It is also a boom for those who are disable and unable to go to the others homes. But through this they can deal with the world.

IMO has also adverse impact on the life style and culture of students. Students are spending more time on this application rather than spending quality time with their family members. Many students are addicted to it and cannot abstain themselves from constantly chatting, replying and sharing of ideas or information. It also has negative impact on the study of the students. It encourages the grammatical mistakes, error in sentence constriction, lecture bunking. It annihilates lavish time of career building of students. Therefore IMO is like a sharp knife, if you do not know the way of using it, you can cut yourself. Hence students must be careful while using IMO.

5. References

1. Neelamalar M, Chitra P. New Media and Society: A Study on the Impact of Social Networking Sites on Indian Youth. *Journal of Communication Studies*. 2009; 6(1):125-145.
2. Sharma, Ashish, Shukla, Aditya Kumar. Impact of Social Messengers Especially WhatsApp on Youth: A Sociological Study. *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*. 2016; 2(5):367-375.
3. Bhatt A, Arshad M. Impact of WhatsApp on Youth: A Sociological Study. *IRA- International Journal of Management and Social Sciences*. 2016; 4(2):376-386.
4. Yeboah, Johnson, Ewur, George Dominic. The Impact of WhatsApp Messenger Usage on Students Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Ghana. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 2014; 5(6):157-164.
5. Kuppuswamy S, Narayan P. The Impact of Social Networking Websites on the Education of Youth. *International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking*. 2010; 2(1):67-79.
6. Church, Karen, Oliveira de Rodrigo. What's up with WhatsApp? Comparing Mobile Instant Messaging Behaviors with Traditional SMS. *Mobile HCI (2013) Collaboration and Communication*. 2013, 352-361.
7. Tsai, Chin-Chung, Lin, Sunny SJ. Internet Addiction of Adolescents in Taiwan: An Interview Study. *Cyber Psychology and Behavior*. 2003; 6(6):649-652.