The mobile instant messaging interview (MIMI): Using WhatsApp to enhance self-reporting and explore media usage in situ

# Details

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## Sample

Via WhatsApp, we conducted eight daylong studies in October 2016 with young
adults (four female, four male) aged between 19 and 25 years.
8 in-depth follow-up interviews via WhatsApp

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

How do people use media technologies in everyday life and how do they make sense of them? This is one of the core questions in media and communication studies, gaining even more in relevance in light of the rapidly changing, convergent media environment. Yet, rich and context-sensitive data about media and technology use are difficult to generate when media consumption is increasingly pervasive, ubiquitous, and often goes on in passing. At the same time, the full potential of smartphones in qualitative research has not yet been realized. The mobile instant messaging interview (MIMI) introduced and assessed in this paper is intended to fill this gap by exploiting some of the unique communication and multimedia features offered by mobile instant messaging apps. Drawing on diary techniques and on the tried and tested mobile experience sampling method (MESM), the MIMI uses WhatsApp for an in situ exploration of distinct settings and situations of social action (e.g., media usage). To substantiate the approach, the results of a pilot study conducted with young smartphone users are presented, discussing the advantages and drawbacks of mobile instant messaging interviews in detail, from the researcher’s as well as the participant’s point of view.

# Outcome

"The objective of this article was to introduce and assess MIMI as a new qualitative approach that combines elements from diaries as well as the MESM and thus gives researchers the means to enter into a dialogue with the participants in the moment of experience. For this purpose, the study used WhatsApp as a data collection and communication tool in a pilot study that comprised data collection and a subsequent assessment of the applied approach with the participants." (Kaufmann/Peil, 2019, 241